2022

Understanding and Supporting Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) in Massachusetts: A Review of Literature

Report from the Center for Applied Linguistics
Date of Submission: November 4, 2022

CAL CENTER FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS

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1. Introduction

Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education, or SLIFE, represent a group of English Learners who have experienced a significant disruption in formal education. Through this literature review, we seek to provide a broad overview of issues facing SLIFE today. Conducted in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), this report is part of a larger project conducted by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) designed to better understand SLIFE, to synthesize national trends and best practices, and ultimately, to support the state in meeting the academic and socio-emotional needs of these students.

1.1 Research Questions

In this literature review, we focus on two primary research questions:

1. What can the department learn about SLIFE nationally and in MA that would help the department to accurately identify and provide effective, differentiated services for SLIFE students?; and
2. What are effective policies, practices (definitions, processes, program models, curricula, and tools), and programmatic approaches for supporting the academic success and well-being of SLIFE in Massachusetts and the nation?

To address these research questions, we cover a wide range of topics related to SLIFE education, from federal and state-level policies and national trends to classroom-based best practices and community supports. The structure of the literature review is organized in three main sections:

1. SLIFE demographics: Who are SLIFE?
2. SLIFE academic success: What are documented strategies to support SLIFE academic success?
3. SLIFE socio-emotional needs: What are documented strategies to support SLIFE socio-emotional needs?

1.2 A Culturally Contextualized Approach

Understanding SLIFE's identities, academic strengths and needs, and socio-emotional strengths and needs requires an understanding of ways in which culture impacts SLIFE's educational experiences. All students, including SLIFE, bring their cultural contexts and backgrounds to the classroom and use these to interpret and evaluate their new surroundings. Once enrolled in U.S. schools, SLIFE are not only learning language, literacy, and academic content, they are also being socialized into the U.S. Western schooling environment, and all the practices, perspectives, and products that comprise their new classroom settings.

Policy makers, researchers, administrators, and educators who work with SLIFE must keep in mind that the previous learning experiences and learning context of SLIFE are likely quite different from those of U.S. educational settings. As SLIFE may have a variety of different backgrounds and come from a variety of different countries, their prior schooling experiences are also likely quite different from each other. As practitioners reflect on how to best support SLIFE, they must remember that just as this group of students may have different academic needs due to their differing circumstances, they will also require different cultural supports. This stems from the reality that, while SLIFE are often considered as one demographic, these students are not homogenous. SLIFE differ not only by country of origin but also by motive for leaving their respective home countries and by reason(s) for schooling interruption, and SLIFE may include (among others) "refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants fleeing countries undergoing civil,

military, and political unrest, and individuals who chose not to participate in formal education" (Pentón Herrera, 2022, p. 66). As new members of U.S. schools, SLIFE may encounter unfamiliar assumptions, routines, and/or relationships within their schools. Throughout this literature review, we take a view of learning as a social act (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and understand it as a holistic social practice that involves relationships to and between socially and culturally different communities. SLIFE will likely experience stages of culture shock as they begin school in the U.S., realizing that their new community members may have different, and potentially conflicting understandings of their shared environments (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2016). The act of attending school may contribute to or even exacerbate students' culture shock (DeCapua, Marshall, & Tang, 2020), and for that reason, it is particularly important for those supporting SLIFE to reflect on their school's practices, expectations, and values that may be unexpected for SLIFE.

While reading this literature review, we encourage readers to keep in mind questions like: What does it mean to help students acclimate to these norms? How can educators support students in navigating these differences in ways that respect their own backgrounds, skills, and ways of learning? We hope these questions help readers to consider how their own cultural backgrounds, their students' cultural backgrounds, as well as the culture of their schools, impact SLIFE's adjustment into their new learning environments. Additionally, we want to emphasize that it is essential that those working with and providing services to these students understand that the very term "SLIFE" is culturally bound by the U.S. perspective of what constitutes "formal education" and U.S. expectations of the duration of enrollment and regular attendance in school. Variations in how SLIFE and their caretakers perceive these concepts may impact how they engage with the identification process and available programming discussed in the sections below.

2. Who are SLIFE?

The term Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) describes English Learners (ELs) who have some degree of interruption or limitation to formal schooling in their native country. This may include refugee or migrant students in addition to students who have experienced disrupted education because of economic, social, political, and/or environmental factors. In addition to learning another language, this group of learners must adapt to the organization and culture of education and schooling the U.S., which is often quite different than that which they have experienced in their home countries. While other groups of ELs, like newcomer students, must also adjust to U.S. schooling practices and expectations, they do not experience the same interruptions in education prior to their move to the U.S. and may therefore draw on prior experiences in schooling environments and/or with grade-level course content to navigate the transition to U.S. classrooms. In comparison, for SLIFE, the lack of consistency in their home country schooling environments combined with the adaption required during the transition to the U.S. system creates specific challenges inherent to this group of students.

EL status is the foundational characteristic of SLIFE, and federal law is clear that ELs must receive equitable educational opportunities as a civil right, including both English language and content instruction. To ensure that SLIFE, as a group of students within ELs, receive equitable treatment and meaningful education, it is essential to identify SLIFE and provide language and content support tailored to their needs. There is no standard national definition of SLIFE in the U.S., although the U.S. Department of Education Newcomer Toolkit (2016) cites Calderón's (2008) definition of Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE), a term that is used alternatively with SLIFE. This definition

describes SIFE as: “Students in grades four through 12 who have experienced disruptions in their education in their native countries and/or the United States, and/or are unfamiliar with the culture of schooling” (p. 3). This definition is provided in the context of federal guidance and resources for programs to serve newcomer students. It is widely used by states, in research literature, and in SLIFE guidance, but is not a legal definition, and states vary in how they define and identify SLIFE.

2.1 State Definitions

To review state definitions and identification criteria, we conducted an analysis of state Department of Education websites for all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The information reported here is based on publicly available information collected from June through August 2022.

A total of 31 states mention SLIFE on their websites, and of these, 20 provide a definition for this group of students. Note that some states use the term SIFE (Students with Interrupted Formal Education). Although these terms generally refer to the same students, we use the term SLIFE in this section and throughout this report as it reflects a broader interpretation of who should be included in this group of students.

State definitions include descriptions and characteristics of SLIFE, and in some cases, criteria for determining whether students should be considered SLIFE. Broadly speaking, states define characteristics of SLIFE with regards to five areas: (1) immigration status or history, (2) school history, (3) grade-level knowledge and skills, (4) native language literacy, and (5) age or grade level. In addition to these five characteristics, most states include EL status as an explicit component of the definition of SLIFE, although in some cases this is implicit. Only two states define specific English language proficiency (ELP) levels for the purposes of SLIFE identification: Pennsylvania, which limits SLIFE identification to students with literacy levels <3.5 on the W-APT, MODEL Screener, or WIDA Screener, and Virginia, which limits SLIFE identification to students at ELP levels 1 and 2.

Table 1 lists definitions for the 20 states who provide this information in documents posted on their Department of Education websites and indicates which of the five criteria are included in the definition. This table also indicates whether the definition has been codified in state legislation and the year the definition was added to state law, and the table includes hyperlinks to SLIFE definitions for each state.

Table 1. SLIFE/SIFE Definitions Used on Websites of State Departments of Education

State	Definition	Legal Definition	Immigration Status/ History	Limited or Interrupted Education/ Schooling	Grade-level Skills or Knowledge	Native Language Literacy	Age/Grade Level
California	"Students in grades four through 12 who have experienced disruptions in their education in their native country and/or the United States, and/or are unfamiliar with the culture of schooling (Calderón, 2008)."		●	●			●
Connecticut	"English language learners who have experienced interrupted education due to war, civil unrest, migration, or other factors; who have never had the opportunity to participate in any type of schooling before entering school in the United States; or who have experienced limited education in their home countries due to lack of resources or trained teachers, the type of schooling they participated in, or other circumstances." (Citing DeCapua & Marshall, 2011)		●	●			
Delaware	"ELs arriving from other countries [who] may have intermittent education or no exposure to formal education." *Note: Delaware's SIFE Oral Interview Questionnaire is administered to students in Grades 4-12.*		●	●			●
Georgia	"[R]ecent arrivals in the U.S. who have little or no formal schooling and are at least three grade levels behind peers their own age. They exhibit pre- or semi-literacy, will perform significantly below grade level, and lack awareness of the organization and culture of school."		●	●	●	●	
Indiana	"Students who have experienced disruptions in their education in their native countries and/or the United States, totaling at least two years, and/or are unfamiliar with the culture of schooling."		●	●			
Louisiana	"To be identified as SIFEs, students must meet the following criteria: • Identified as English Learners • Age 13 or older • Two or more years of education interrupted in their native country • Two or more grade levels behind in reading and mathematics (when able to assess). Additionally, these students may be preliterate in their native language[…]."		●	●	●	●	●
Maryland	"Students who have missed six months or more of formal schooling prior to enrollment in a US school above the age of seven can be counted as having experienced interrupted schooling."			●			●
Massachusetts	"Meets all of the following criteria: (1) The DOE025 SIMS field indicates the student is an English Learner, (2) is 8-21 years old, (3) entered the U.S. school after grade 2 or exited the U.S. for six months or more and did not attend school during that time, (4) prior exposure to formal schooling is characterized by one of the following: no formal schooling; interruptions in formal schooling, defined as at least two or fewer years of schooling than their typical peers; consistent, but limited formal schooling, (5) functions two or more years below expected grade level in native language literacy relative to typical peers, (6) functions two or more years below expected grade level in numeracy relative to typical peers."		●	●	●	●	●

State	Definition	Legal Definition	Immigration Status/ History	Limited or Interrupted Education/ Schooling	Grade-level Skills or Knowledge	Native Language Literacy	Age/Grade Level
Minnesota	"Meets three of the following five requirements: (1) comes from a home where the language usually spoken is other than English, or who usually speaks a language other than English, (2) enters school in the U.S. after grade 6, (3) has at least two years less schooling than the English learner's peers, (4) functions at least two years below expected grade level in reading and mathematics, and (5) may be preliterate in the English learner's native language."	● Minn. Stat. §124D.59, Subd. 2a. (2021)	●	●	●	●	●
Nebraska	"Limited English proficient students who have entered U.S. schools and function at least two years below grade levels. They are generally recent arrivals enrolling in upper elementary, middle, and high school, whose backgrounds and educational experiences may be quite different from the school environment they are entering. They may have limited literacy skills in their native language. Their education may have been interrupted for a variety of reasons, including war, civil unrest, migration, poverty, relocation, or having limited access to school."		●	●	●	●	●
New Jersey	"A subset of ELL newcomers to U.S. schools above the age of seven, who have missed more than six consecutive months of formal schooling prior to enrolling in a U.S. school and/or are more than two years below grade level content due to limited educational supports."		●	●	●		●
New York	"English Language Learners (ELLs) who have attended schools in the United States (the 50 States and the District of Columbia) for less than twelve months and who, upon initial enrollment in such schools, are two or more years below grade level in literacy in their home language and/or two or more years below grade level in Math due to inconsistent or interrupted schooling prior to arrival in the United States (the 50 States and the District of Columbia). The definition above is inclusive of SIFE with developing literacy, students who have literacy at or below third grade in their home language. This means that they are not yet fluent readers in any language and do not independently use text as a resource to build new knowledge" [154-2.2(y)].	● CR Part 154 (2015)	●	●	●	●	
North Dakota	"An umbrella term used to describe a diverse subset of the English learner population who share unifying characteristics. SLIFE students (1) are identified English learners in grades 2-12, (2) are new or returning to the U.S. school system from outside of the U.S., (3) have had interrupted or limited schooling opportunities equivalent to more than two cumulative years. They may also (1) have limited backgrounds in reading and writing in their native language(s) and (2) be below grade level in most academic skills as determined by district or state assessment."		●	●	●	●	●
Oregon	"Immigrant students or English learners who enter school in the U.S. after grade two and experience all of the following (1) have at least two fewer years of schooling than their peers of the same age, (2) function at least two years below grade level expectations in reading and mathematics, and (3) be preliterate in their native language."		●	●	●	●	●

State	Definition	Legal Definition	Immigration Status/ History	Limited or Interrupted Education/ Schooling	Grade-level Skills or Knowledge	Native Language Literacy	Age/Grade Level
Pennsylvania	"Is enrolling after grade two, and has a literacy score of less than 3.5 on the W-APT, MODEL Screener, or WIDA Screener, and has at least two fewer years of age appropriate schooling than peers or has disenrolled from U.S. schools in other countries (including Puerto Rico) more than two times in the past four years, and has limited encoding/decoding skills in native language (as indicated by family interview and/or native language measures and/or review of academic records and/or local measures)."		●	●		●	●
Rhode Island	"MLLs/ELs enrolling after grade two, and have at least two fewer years of age-appropriate schooling than peers, or have disenrolled from U.S. schools to enroll in schools in other countries (including Puerto Rico) more than two times in the past four years, and have limited encoding/decoding skills in native language and/or two or more years below grade level in math due to inconsistent or interrupted schooling prior to arrival in the U.S. (as indicated by family interview and/or native language measures and/or review of academic records)."		●	●	●	●	●
Tennessee	"ELs who have missed more than two years of formal education and who require basic literacy instruction in order to advance into general ESL and academic coursework that is age appropriate."			●	●		
Utah	Found to meet all the following criteria: (1) the student is an ELL as defined in federal law if they (a) are aged 8-21, (b) entered a U.S. school after grade 2, or (c) exited the U.S. for six months or more, (2) prior exposure to formal schooling is characterized by (a) no formal schooling, or (b) interruptions in formal schooling, defined as at least two years of schooling less than their typical peers, or (c) consistent, but limited formal schooling, (3) functions two or more years below expected grade level in native language literacy relative to typical peers, and (4) functions two or more years below expected grade level in numeracy relative to typical peers.		●	●	●	●	●
Virginia	"An English learner who enters or re-enters any school in the U.S. at or after the age of eight, and is identified at ELP Level 1 or 2, and has at least two years less schooling than similar-age peers."	● Virginia Senate Bill 933 (2020)	●	●			●
Wisconsin	"Students who are a subset of newcomers to U.S. schools, above the age of 7, who have missed more than six consecutive months of formal schooling prior to enrolling in a U.S. school, and/or who are more than two years below grade level in content due to limited educational opportunities."		●	●	●		●
Total		3	18	20	13	11	15

2.1.1 Differences in state inclusion criteria

In this section we discuss comparisons across states according to various inclusion criteria.

Immigration status

All 20 states describe students' educational experiences as foundational to SLIFE status, and 18 states also include immigration status or experiences within or while migrating from their home country. This is a key distinction as many ELs were born in the U.S. This feature highlights the importance of knowing information about students' backgrounds and histories for identification. In several cases, states also specify that students may have left and returned to the U.S. For example, Utah identifies SLIFE as either a student who entered a U.S. school after grade 2 or who exited the U.S. for six months or more, and North Dakota notes that SLIFE may be "new or returning" to the U.S. school system.

Education disruption

Although limitations or disruptions to formal education appear in the SLIFE definitions of all 20 states, the states differ in how this is specified. To determine the extent of the disruption and its impact on a student's education, most states assess learners' academic content knowledge, with a particular focus on reading and math. Across the country, when considering student literacy, states use "reading skills" and "native language literacy" interchangeably to describe students' encoding/decoding skills in their first language. Those that do not incorporate formal measures to assess academic performance rely on data from student and/or caretaker interviews to determine the existence and magnitude of the gap in learning. For some states (*n* = 11), students must be two years behind grade-level peers in their performance on academic content area tests to be identified as SLIFE. For others (*n* = 4), a student's academic discrepancy is one of several factors that informs the SLIFE designation process. "Limited" or "preliterate" are also terms used to describe a student's native language literacy in states that do not use the two-year benchmark but still consider general discrepancies between the student's academic abilities and those of their grade-level peers.

Literacy and numeracy skills

Methods for assessing literacy and numeracy skills vary across the states, with some states including assessments in the student's first language(s), others featuring assessments in English, others using an academic review of a student's prior schooling records, and others incorporating a combination of these three methods. Within the two assessment-based methods, some states use standardized assessments and others use locally-developed assessments. The use of one method over another may depend on the student's first language and age, the school's resources (e.g., availability of an evaluator or translator who can proctor a literacy assessment in the student's first language), and the accessibility of the student's academic records. Our research found that, in general, states have limited information on their websites about how they assess literacy and numeracy skills.

Age and grade level

Most states (*n* = 15) indicate an age or grade level minimum or range as a determinant for SLIFE status. There appear to be two general approaches to age/grade level requirements for SLIFE. The first, more common, approach (*n* = 9) is a minimum age of 7 or 8 years, or a minimum of grade level 2. This may be tied to the need to look for either missed educational experiences or a lag in grade-level skills, generally identified as two years missed or two years behind peers; this would only be identifiable when peers have attended school for more than two years already. This approach may also be used to prevent misidentification of SLIFE among ELs who are born and raised in the U.S. and entering kindergarten or

first grade, which may be their first time enrolling in formal schooling due to variations in compulsory education at the PreK or kindergarten level across states. The second approach is to limit SLIFE to adolescents/secondary students; this is the case in Minnesota's (grade 6+) and Louisiana's (age 13+) definitions. More frequently, though, states establish the minimum age for SLIFE identification as students entering U.S. schools at grade 2, or age 7 and 8.

2.1.2 Discussion of state criteria

For states that provide guidance for identifying SLIFE, there are significant common threads, but also a high degree of variation both in the criteria themselves (such as age), how requirements are specified (such as grade level skills), and how progress towards these requirements is measured (such as numeracy assessments). Moreover, variation in educational standards across countries further complicates the process of determining the difference between the last grade level completed in the home country and U.S. grade-age cutoffs. While the age of commencement in the U.S. is similar in many countries, some begin schooling at a younger age, which may also skew measures of "interruption" (Potochnick, 2018).

This analysis also highlights what we do not yet know about state SLIFE identification practices. In many states, we could not identify a definition. Our findings are supported by a similar analysis conducted in 2021 by New America as part of a larger state-by-state look at EL data for its English Learner Accountability Hub. While this analysis identified many of the same state definitions, it also resulted in some cases where they identified a definition where we did not, or vice versa. This further demonstrates the difficulty of locating and analyzing this information, as well challenges in determining which definitions and criteria are used for identification purposes and which are simply a point of reference.

2.2 SLIFE Prevalence Among English Learners

In this section we discuss research and data about the prevalence of SLIFE among U.S. English Learners. Because, as we discussed in the previous section, there is not a standard SLIFE definition used across the U.S. and practices for SLIFE identification and reporting vary, it is challenging to estimate the proportion of ELs who are SLIFE. However, a small number of empirical studies and as well as state-reported data do provide baseline information about SLIFE prevalence.

2.2.1 Data from empirical research

A study by Fleischman & Hopstock (1993) marks one of the first estimates of the number of students with interrupted schooling. They used survey data from program coordinators to estimate that overall, 14.6% of school-aged, foreign-born children in the U.S. had experienced interruptions of more than two years of formal schooling, accounting for 20% of high school, 12% of middle school, and 6% of elementary school foreign-born students. They also reported that 27% of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) high school students were "assigned to grade levels at least two years lower than age/grade norms" (p. 6) according to survey reports. However, given the design of this study, which was based on self-reported data from program coordinators, limitations in tracking of English learners' academic achievement data at this time, and differences in English language education compared with current practices, these findings must be interpreted with care.

In a widely-cited study, Fry (2005) analyzed 2000 U.S. Census data for 15–17-year-old foreign born youths and found that 6% of this group had some form of interrupted schooling or other disruption

based on whether students were above the typical age for their grade level in the U.S. Because this method relied on placement in the U.S., interrupted schooling may have been under-identified in this study. However, it does provide a baseline indicator of SLIFE prevalence based on a large-scale, national dataset.

Potochnick (2018) conducted an analysis of 10th grade students using data from the 2002 Educational Longitudinal Study, a national survey of U.S. 10th graders with data about age of arrival and last grade completed in home country, as well as follow-ups conducted in 2004 and 2006. Through using detailed data on age of arrival and last grade level completed in the home country, along with grade-age placement charts from the Los Angeles Unified School District and Fry's (2005) grade enrollment cutoff benchmarks, Potochnick arrived at calculations of the interruptions in schooling for each student. The analysis found that 11.4% of 10th grade foreign-born students had experienced interruptions in schooling. This study also showed that students with interrupted schooling often arrive in the U.S. at age 12 or older. Moreover, these students with interrupted schooling are about two grade-levels behind their peers when they arrive in the U.S. based on last level of school completed before migration. However, more detailed information on how this grade-level gap is determined (e.g., specific reading and/or math achievement data) is not included in the report. Overall, Potochnick's findings suggest the prevalence of SLIFE within the EL student group and call for the re-evaluation of older SLIFE estimates within the general student demographic.

2.2.2 State-reported data

In addition to these empirical studies, we identified two states that report data about SLIFE prevalence. In New York state, which has identified and counted SIFE students since at least the early 2000s, approximately 1 in 10 English language learners are thought to have experienced interruptions in their schooling (Advocates for Children of New York, 2010). However, during the 2018 – 2019 academic year, only 3.5% of ELs in New York were identified as SLIFE (Alvarez, 2020). Changes in migration trends, as well as changes in approaches to classifying SLIFE contribute to these fluctuations. New York provides a diagnostic tool for assessing SLIFE's numeracy skills and literacy skills in their home language and other standard resources for identification. A report from Maryland states that about 5% of the state's ELs are identified as SLIFE (Blueprint for Maryland's Future, 2022).

In an article published in the American Educator journal, Custodio and O'Laughlin (2020) draw on data from New York (Advocates for Children of New York, 2010) to state that 10 to 20% of ELs are SLIFE. This statistic is generally consistent with the empirical research we have reviewed here and these numbers are widely cited. However, recent data from New York and Maryland show prevalence rates from 3.5-5%. Thus, while this general group size estimate is useful, the prevalence of SLIFE within the overall EL group does not necessarily reflect patterns within particular districts and schools or reflect differences based on state or local identification practices.

2.3 SLIFE Demographics

Given challenges with SLIFE identification and reporting of SLIFE prevalence, there is limited data about SLIFE demographics, including country of origin, home language, gender, and age. In this section, we first present demographic data for the U.S. EL and newcomer student groups followed by a discussion of implications for SLIFE.

2.3.1 English Learner demographics

In 2022, the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) reporting on the U.S. Census Bureau's 2019 American Community Survey found that 10.4% (5.1 million) of public-school students in the U.S. were identified as ELs in fall 2019. The top three most spoken home languages among these English learners were Spanish (75.7%), Arabic (2.6%), and Chinese (2.0%). The 2022 NCES report provides additional information about the distribution of ELLs across the primary and secondary levels during the 2019 American Community Survey. In fall 2019, the majority of ELs were enrolled in lower, primary grades. While 15% of incoming kindergartners were ELs, only 9.6% of incoming 6th grade students were ELs. That percentage continues to decrease at the secondary level, with 7.7% and 5.5% of incoming 8th and 12th grade students, respectively, identified as ELs.

Within Massachusetts, there were 107,537 ELs in the 2021–2022 school year based on preliminary test data for ACCESS for ELLs, the state's English language proficiency assessment, and this accounts for about 11.7% of the total student body. The highest incidence native languages are Spanish (53.1%), Portuguese (17.8%), Haitian Creole (3.7%), Crioulo (3.7%), and Mandarin Chinese (2.9%)

2.3.2 Newcomer demographics

Newcomer students, a term for foreign-born students who have recently arrived in the U.S., are a subset of ELs, and SLIFE often overlap with newcomers and other Recently Arrived Immigrant English Learners (RAIEL), including students categorized as migrants and/or refugees. Approximately 575,000 undocumented and asylum-seeking children entered the U.S. through its southern border between 2017-2019 (Culbertson et al., 2021). The majority (77%) of the children who migrated to the U.S. with their families were under the age of 12, and the majority (74%) of the children who migrated to the U.S. alone were adolescents aged 15–17. The 10 states (California, Texas, Florida, New York, Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, Georgia, North Carolina, and Louisiana) that have been most strongly impacted by this increase in school-aged migrant children have supported 75% of these learners in the U.S (Culbertson et al., 2021). Because SLIFE are a subset of ELs with significant overlaps with newcomer students, these migration trends provide some context for understanding SLIFE. See Section 2.5 for a discussion of how the COVID-19 pandemic has also affected migration trends in recent years.

2.3.3 Data about SLIFE demographics

Potochnick (2018) found that, similar to the larger group of EL students, students with interrupted schooling are predominantly Hispanic/Latino, coming from either Mexico or Central America (44%) or another region in Latin America (8%). However, this data comes from a 2002 survey, dating the findings by two decades. While the SLIFE demographics in that study may have paralleled larger EL demographic trends at that time, since then, migratory patterns have brought large numbers of students from African, Southeast Asian, and Middle Eastern countries. These constantly evolving trends in migration contribute to an increasingly diverse and heterogenous group of SLIFE in the U.S. that, combined with inconsistency in the SLIFE identification process, make it challenging to identify demographic characteristics and trends. Robust state-level identification reporting is necessary to understand SLIFE demographics and how these change over time with evolving migration patterns.

2.4 Characteristics of and Diverse Factors Impacting SLIFE

There are many other student characteristics relevant to SLIFE beyond those listed in the definitions and demographics discussed above. SLIFE arrive in the United States from a variety of countries, speaking many different languages, and with a broad range of cultural backgrounds and experiences. As noted by

Pentón Herrera (2022), "SLIFE are far from uniform and should not be thought of as a one-size-fits-all population [...] within the SLIFE population we can find refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants fleeing countries undergoing civil, military, and political unrest, and individuals who chose not to participate in formal education" (p. 66). Some students experience disruptions in schooling during their migration journeys, due to, for example, the long process of migration, or prolonged detention upon arrival in the U.S. (Pentón Herrera, 2022). Additional reasons for interruptions in students' education could include "poverty, isolated geographic locales, limited transportation options, societal expectations for school attendance, a need to enter the workforce and contribute to the family income, natural disasters, war, or civil strife" (WIDA, 2015, p. 1).

Additionally, the nature of the interruption in schooling directly and significantly impacts the type of linguistic and academic needs of students. DeCapua, Marshall, and Tang (2020, p. 8) urge educators to "resist making assumptions about potential SLIFE," stressing that "[n]ot all interruptions in formal education are equal; when, how, and why an interruption has occurred has varying consequences." As educators learn more about what experiences students bring to the classroom and when and how their education was interrupted, they can better understand and address students' needs.

Factors impacting SLIFE can be broadly grouped into three categories: pre-migration, during migration, and post-migration. They reflect SLIFE journeys to and through U.S. classrooms. Reports on SLIFE journeys to the U.S., which provide student-centered perspectives, suggest that the three most prevalent factors that may create interruptions in schooling are socioeconomic status, migration routes, and/or violence in countries of origin (García & Kleifgen, 2010; Olivares-Orellana, 2020). DeCapua and Marshall (2011) call for researchers and educators to additionally consider students' cultural backgrounds and characteristics as these may influence how pre- and post-migration factors are realized differently between SLIFE from different contexts.

2.4.1 Pre-migration

Pre-migration factors include home country variables like political stability, civil unrest, education quality, schooling availability, and educational requirements. Family-specific variables like socioeconomic status and family constraints that impacted students' educational backgrounds before moving to the U.S. also fall into this category. For example, the oldest child from a single-caretaker home may have had to work to financially support younger siblings instead of attending school, thus creating gaps in schooling experience. Within the body of research dedicated to investigating SLIFE's academic experiences in the U.S., pre-migration resources and experiences are underexamined because U.S. school districts often experience difficulty gathering information about students' home country educational background (Potochnick, 2018).

Global trends on the development of literacy and opportunities for education based on geographic region, gender, and socioeconomic status offer a snapshot of the larger international circumstances that contribute to SLIFE. Apart from events like natural disasters and civil unrest, variations in compulsory education and attendance across different countries are a key factor in understanding this group of students. Lukes (2015) found that in Latin American countries, nine years of compulsory education were required in many countries compared with the 12 years that the U.S. mandates. Completion rates across Latin American countries also vary tremendously. The percentage of eligible students who enrolled in the final grade ranged from 21% in Honduras to 60% in the Dominican Republic, and these rates are much lower than the U.S, which Lukes estimates to be at 96%. The quality of pre-migration education

may also differ and be affected by teacher quality, school facilities, length of the school day, and quality of instruction (Lukes, 2015).

Recent studies have considered investigating refugee SLIFE separately from SLIFE who voluntarily immigrate to the U.S. because of the impact home country conditions may have on students' social, emotional, and academic needs (Hos, 2016). Violence in countries of origin can lead to emotional trauma, as well as interruptions in schooling, and may motivate students or families to immigrate. The emotional trauma of these experiences may be triggered during the resettlement process, and refugee students' adjustments to U.S. schooling expectations and/or extenuating family circumstances may contribute to continued interruptions in schooling, even after students have relocated and been enrolled in a U.S. school.

2.4.2 During migration

During migration, considerations include the length and conditions of a student's journey to the U.S, which in turn are often shaped by documentation procedures, family constraints, socioeconomic status, and political stability. For some SLIFE, the migration process itself creates the largest interruption in their schooling (Olivares-Orellana, 2020).

The migration process has surfaced as an influential factor in student-centered investigations of SLIFE. The conditions of the migration journey have been found to contribute to learners' emotional trauma and the length of the interruptions to their schooling, and the extent to which they are identified as SLIFE (Olivares-Orellana, 2020). Students with shorter migration journeys of only a few weeks may not have been flagged as having experienced schooling interruptions on SLIFE screeners or home language surveys even though the differences in schooling cultures may necessitate additional academic support.

As educators and administrators may not have the linguistic or cultural resources to translate and understand student experiences and backgrounds, translators and cultural brokers from SLIFE's own communities are often an essential resource in understanding and supporting students at this key transition point, though they may not be available for all students. In her study, Olivares-Orellana collected oral and written testimonies from a group of high school students in their home language in order to learn more about students' perspectives, experiences, and needs throughout their academic careers. Whenever possible, colleting narratives in students' languages provides an opportunity for rich insight into their experiences.

2.4.3 Post-migration

Schools typically have the most access to and awareness of the post-migration factors that may impact SLIFE. As a result, much of the research on SLIFE has explored the impact of these factors. Factors that have surfaced in recent explorations of SLIFE include acculturation stress, urban resettlement issues, transient lifestyles, frequent school mobility, under-resourced schools, and academic marginalization (Flores, 2022; Drake, 2017; Hos, 2016).

Economic circumstances can contribute to formal schooling interruptions because students may work or care for younger siblings while older family members work rather than attending classes themselves. While attending school, SLIFE may be juggling a number of out-of-school responsibilities that affect their ability to meet learning goals and objectives (Olivares-Orellana, 2020). Socioeconomic status also informs the housing and resources available to SLIFE in the U.S., which may impact whether students feel comfortable leaving their houses to attend school (e.g., having (or not having) safe, accessible, and

reliable transportation options) or whether they have the space that they need to focus on their studies (Hos, 2016).

The studies discussed above demonstrate that programs should strive 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 learning options and support systems that best advance their personal and educational goals.

2.5 COVID-19 and SLIFE

The potential impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on U.S. public education and on both ELs and SLIFE are still emerging. This section focuses first on the impact of COVID-19 on migration trends on prospective SLIFE and then on the COVID-19 educational experiences for SLIFE already in the U.S. at the time of the pandemic.

2.5.1 Immigration trends

Presently, the data gathered during the COVID-19 pandemic has focused on the number of immigrants nationally and internationally; SLIFE and ELs have not received substantial individualized attention. However, because SLIFE and ELs overlap with immigrant groups, trends within these groups may offer a preliminary understanding of how the pandemic has affected these students. Restrictions on travel during the first year (2020 – 2021) of the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted cross-country mobility, with predictions estimating a 30% decline in global migration, and this disproportionately impacted family migration more than other migrant groups (OECD, 2021). Though overall migration declined, in the same time period, the percentage of refugees among the general migrant group increased from 9.5 to 12% due to the prevalence of forced displacements around the world (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2021).

2.5.2 COVID-19 policies in other countries

When considering the effects of COVID-19 on SLIFE who have migrated to the U.S. during the pandemic, educators should investigate how other countries (specifically the home countries of the SLIFE in their districts) experienced different phases of the pandemic and how those experiences impacted the quantity and quality of schooling, as variation in how different countries responded to the pandemic have impacted students differently. For example, some countries may have closed schools for the entirety of the pandemic, while others have provided continued access to education during this time. Gathering data on how COVID-19 affected education worldwide is anticipated to present a challenge to researchers, given the great variation of if and how countries tracked data throughout the pandemic (Laczko, 2021).

2.5.3 Impact on students

For SLIFE already enrolled in U.S. programs at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, concerns encompass both academic considerations, such as negative effects on learning outcomes, as well as socio-emotional considerations, as shutdowns disrupt peer relationships and students navigate concerns about safety and experience increased isolation (McInerney, 2021; Mancuso, 2021). Many schools that serve ELs and immigrant students are often under-resourced and therefore struggled to provide technology support and communication, including in accessible languages to ELs and their families, needed for effective remote learning (Sayer & Braun, 2020).

Emerging research does show some negative impacts for SLIFE in particular related to remote learning. In a doctoral dissertation study, Richter (2022) found that in-person learning was more effective than remote learning for students from Central America enrolled in a SLIFE school, as measured by their end-of-semester grades in a mathematics courses, and that remote learning had a significant negative effect on English learning. These results are broadly consistent with emerging research that shows that school lockdowns during COVID-19 had the greatest impact on the most vulnerable students (Ohio Department of Education, 2021). In a dissertation study at a high school in Massachusetts, Flueckiger (2020) found that in a small SLIFE program with 24 students, SLIFE students graduated at a rate 15.5% below their non-SLIFE EL peers in the same school. These small-scale results further highlight the need to identify and track SLIFE students to adequately understand how the pandemic affects SLIFE now and in the long term through measures such as test outcomes and graduation rates.

2.6 SLIFE Strengths

Often framed as students with acute educational needs, SLIFE bring significant strengths that are the starting point for developing effective, culturally responsive programs that recognize and build on their assets as students and community members. The following strengths are frequently mentioned or highlighted in instructional guidance for working with SLIFE (Alvarez, 2020; Barba et al., 2019; DeCapua, 2016; DeCapua & Marshall, 2015; DeCapua & Marshall, 2011; Digby, 2019; Hos et al., 2019; Kennedy & Lamina, 2016), and include both individual learner characteristics as well as social and cultural capital students bring from their contexts and communities:

- **Funds of knowledge/student expertise:** Educators acknowledge students as experts on topics related to their lived experiences and backgrounds.
- **Home language:** Students have existing language proficiency that can be built on by encouraging the use of oral expression in students' native languages.
- **Informal learning skills:** These skills, including discourse styles and ways of accessing knowledge, may be unrecognized or undervalued in formal education settings.
- **Oral language skills:** Oral language skills are often cited as a strength of SLIFE students. Beyond speaking and listening capabilities, these may include the ability to retain information, conversational and interpersonal skills, and playful and creative language use.
- **Cultural assets:** The skills and values that emerge from a student's cultural background. Some SLIFE guidance notes the importance of understanding collectivist cultural approaches to learning as many SLIFE may have this background.
- **Resilience:** SLIFE often have strategies for expressing agency and building connections that reflect resilience and endurance.

SLIFE guidance often recommends an assets-based approach when working with this group of students, as well as culturally-responsive pedagogy in which students' backgrounds and experiences are understood, acknowledged, and leveraged within instruction as bridges to new learning.

In addition to general assets-based SLIFE guidance, a small number of empirical studies have focused specifically on SLIFE strengths. Through interviews and classroom observations with newcomer students from Central America and Mexico, Mendez and Barko-Alva (2022) found that students were adept at building social connections with their peers that helped create a sense of belonging and support. While the school featured in their study had few institutional practices (e.g., training for teachers, programs to communicate with newcomer families and school administrators) established to support newcomers,

the students and ESL teachers were still able to foster inclusive environments through the close relationships that formed during class and in common spaces, like the cafeteria. These relationships helped students adapt to school, both academically and socially. Mendez and Barko-Alvo also observed how newcomer students' social strategies created a sense of belonging in school and interpreted these strategies to be evidence of an inner resilience that could be leveraged in the classroom. Still, the researchers recommend that schools work to build upon these skills through structural reforms and supports rather than relying exclusively on students and teachers to create inclusive spaces. While the authors advocate strongly for "school programming and supportive infrastructures that holistically address [ELs'] language, social, and educational needs, while incorporating their strengths as resilient, multicultural agents" (p. 2), specific information on what these types of programs and infrastructures might look like and/or how they may intersect with other school practices aimed at promoting inclusivity and culturally responsive instruction is not discussed.

In a qualitative study of 30 Mexican and Central American newcomer students, Szlyk et al. (2020) found that students were motivated as learners and saw their education as a means to gain employment and improve their family's quality of life. They note that this motivation is an indicator of resilience and can support successful integration into the community.

Finally, Kennedy & Lamina (2016) described strong oral skills as a strength of SLIFE at Arlington Mill High School in Virginia and noted that they found no empirical research had previously been conducted on SLIFE's oral language abilities in English and the ways in which these speaking skills can be leveraged to support students' development of literacy skills in English. Their paper reports on efforts to build an intervention using oral communicative competence to strengthen students' academic literacy skills that primarily focuses on pronunciation and writing.

2.7 SLIFE Needs

In addition to strengths, SLIFE have complex and diverse needs as they acclimate to U.S. schools. The first section below describes general needs common to most SLIFE entering U.S. schools, and the second section addresses some differences among SLIFE and how these differences may influence students' varied needs.

2.7.1 Impact of SLIFE background on learning

SLIFE learners' experiences before entering U.S. schools deeply impact the ways in which they interact with teachers and other school staff, with other students, and with curricular materials and concepts. The diversity of SLIFE backgrounds means that defining precisely how learning will be impacted for SLIFE is complex and, while some generalizations are useful, individual students will have their own needs and pathways.

Custodio & O'Loughlin (2017) state that SLIFE "often represent the neediest of our English learners because of their limited first-language literacy, frequent gaps in academic knowledge and skills, and, sometimes, critical social and emotional needs" (p.1), and they emphasize how many SLIFE arrive to the U.S. as teenagers, making it necessary for them to catch up on many years of schooling. Below we discuss focal areas of need that frequently appear in guidance for working with SLIFE.

Literacies in native languages

SLIFE students may enter school with language skills in one or more native languages. If they come from multilingual contexts, for example, they may have oral proficiency in multiple languages, or may have

attended school and developed literacy skills in a language that is different than the one they use at home. Research on cross-linguistic transfer in the fields of bilingual and heritage language education suggests that students' literacies in their native languages can facilitate literacy in English (Cummins, 2001; Prevoo et al., 2016). Because of this, it may be beneficial for SLIFE to simultaneously receive support with their native language proficiency so that they may leverage this knowledge as they develop their English skills. With this mindset, SLIFE's multilingualism is framed as a resource and tool that enhances future learning. Therefore, as SLIFE enter English-based instructional settings in the U.S., educators who support these students can understand and build on the literacies they have in their native language(s) using an assets-based approach, and they can also understand gaps in students' native language(s) literacies caused by interrupted schooling or other contextual factors.

Research shows that first language literacy can provide a useful foundation for building literacy in other languages such as English (August & Shanahan, 2006). Providing opportunities for students to leverage their native languages to access content in English through, for example, bilingual education, use of cross-linguistic instructional strategies, translanguaging practices, or access to translation tools, may be useful programmatic or instructional practices, but SLIFE students may need more support in developing native language literacy, and reading and writing skills in particular. Identifying ways for SLIFE to build or further develop their native language literacy skills can provide a foundation for other linguistic and academic skills in addition to being a powerful way to support the value of students' backgrounds.

Academic knowledge and skills

Having experienced limited or interrupted formal education also means that students likely do not have the grade-level academic knowledge and skills expected of students in the U.S. educational context they are entering. This "gap" is defined within the context of a grade-based system, with curriculum and skills associated with certain school grades, whereas educational systems in some countries are mastery- or competency-based and focus on skill progressions.

Based on many definitions, students are considered SLIFE when they are at least two years behind in grade-level academic knowledge, as defined by the grade-level standards in place in their district and state. Educators should strive to understand the existing skills and knowledge SLIFE possess within each content area, particularly when the knowledge is cumulative, although there are certainly challenges in assessing SLIFE's knowledge due to language differences (DeCapua, Marshall, & Tang, 2020) and the paucity of assessments. Determining and addressing the academic content needs of SLIFE relative to the U.S. educational context they enter is essential when working with this group of students.

Social-Emotional needs

The interruption of schooling for SLIFE is often related to difficult circumstances encountered by students in their home countries or during migration, which may be a source of trauma that negatively impacts their mental health and may continue to impact their ability to engage and participate fully in U.S. schools after migration (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011; DeCapua, Marshall, & Tang, 2020).

In this literature review, the term mental health encapsulates the emotional, psychological, and social dimensions of a student's internal state and wellbeing. Unsurprisingly, the need for additional social-emotional support is a theme within the literature on newcomer students and SLIFE. While schools may already implement social and emotional learning (SEL) in their curriculum to support all students in developing the skills necessary to manage their emotions, cultivate positive relationships, and make

responsible choices, traditional SEL initiatives may not be adequate to support SLIFE experiencing mental health issues as a result of their previous experiences. Some SLIFE students may need or benefit from social-emotional support that falls outside the scope of what is often readily available within the schooling context (e.g., therapy); this is distinct from the kinds of social-emotional support that students might typically receive at school, though some schools may have clinical therapists who can provide students with mental health services.

Saulsbury-Molina's (2019) ethnographic case study of a newcomer program identified socioemotional support as a key need for students in the program, and Hos' (2020) ethnographic study similarly concluded that socioemotional support was a "dire need" (p. 1021) for refugee SLIFE in a newcomer program, describing how past traumas impacted the ways in which students were engaging with school activities and how the severity of trauma sometimes prohibited students from participating in these activities at all. The study also noted school counseling, while being available, was insufficient due to the number of students with significant needs for support. SLIFE's socioemotional health and wellbeing should be viewed not just as a distinct or separate need, but as foundational to effectively addressing the other needs of SLIFE in a school context, a point that is widely supported in the research literature (DeCapua, Marshall, & Tang, 2020). Regular communication between the teachers and administrators that support SLIFE, as students' needs can be triangulated, identified, and successfully addressed.

Socialization to U.S. schooling

Another common need for SLIFE is socialization into the cultural practices of the U.S. school context. There are ways of interacting within U.S. schools that are culturally-specific and foundational to students' success. SLIFE have more limited exposure to school contexts that resemble U.S. schools and therefore may need support navigating their participation in this cultural context (Chavajay & Rogoff, 2002; DeCapua & Marshall, 2010; Needham, 2003). Further, there are cultural aspects to living in the U.S. that students are still learning as well. One finding in Hos' (2020) ethnographic study was a need for refugee SLIFE to better understand the expectations of the school system, graduation requirements, and what they might need to do to attain various desired careers. This study demonstrated that in some cases educational systems could benefit from having plans in place for communicating key information to students and their families around academic and career trajectories, the benefits of education, employment education requirements, and how to achieve their goals of finishing school and pursuing various jobs (Hos, 2020). These skills are all highly contextualized in a U.S. cultural context and students and families would benefit from clear communication, training, and counseling within these areas.

2.7.2 Unique learning needs of SLIFE

While there are common needs among SLIFE learners, there are also some differences among SLIFE that may impact their needs, including the diversity of SLIFE backgrounds and experiences, their experiences with displacement, their age/grade levels, and their specific learning needs or disabilities.

Diverse language backgrounds of SLIFE

SLIFE come from a wide range of countries and cultural backgrounds, and educators are discouraged from generalizing or making assumptions that may not reflect students' individual histories or lived experiences. For example, some students arriving from Latin American countries may be presumed to know Spanish, whereas some of these students may, in fact, come from Indigenous backgrounds and have linguistic and cultural resources related to this heritage, and they may or may not know Spanish.

SLIFE need to be understood on their own terms, without assumptions being made with regards to their language or culture based on isolated information, such as country of origin. Each SLIFE is different and understanding students' experiences will help educators appropriately identify each individual's needs.

Refugee SLIFE

Refugee students are a smaller group within SLIFE who are likely to experience difficulties in adjusting to their new school environments" (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017, p. 49). Refugees may have mental health and socioemotional needs as a result of the situation in their home countries that led them to leave. In addition, there are barriers to participation in education in refugee camps, including violence, fear about being away from their families, and a need to work to support life in the camps, as well as practical challenges such as getting to the school building and having access to restrooms (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017). The home countries, or in some instances, refugee camps, these students come from typically are quite different from the U.S., resulting in culture shock upon their arrival (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017). Cultural orientation for refugees is typically covered in training sessions for adult refugees, but children must learn how to participate in a U.S. cultural context primarily through school (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017), making this an essential consideration.

Age and grade level differences among SLIFE

There are also unique needs associated with the ages and grade levels of SLIFE, with younger and older students encountering different types of challenges and bringing different personal resources into the classroom. Elementary-aged SLIFE may encounter challenges because of the greater likelihood that they enter U.S. schools with minimal or no experience with schooling. In addition to little, if any, literacy skills, elementary SLIFE may still need to develop basic school competency skills, including "learning to wait in line, taking turns, sitting down at a desk for long periods, using school instruments (i.e., holding a pencil and using scissors), raising their hands to ask a question, using the American-style lavatory, eating at a school cafeteria, and working cooperatively with classmates" (Pentón Herrera, 2022, p. 70-71).

For secondary SLIFE, the challenges in rising to meet the expectations of schooling expand to include mastering content knowledge in addition to English language and literacy skills. Custodio and O'Loughlin (2017, p. 9) describe these challenges as follows: "By middle school, the type and amount of coursework carries with it the expectation that the student have a strong level of background knowledge of the subject...and a sufficient grasp of English to understand both the teacher and the text. Even in cases where there are courses available in the native language of the student, these courses will probably follow grade level expectations and are not designed to be remedial."

Secondary SLIFE have a greater load to bear compared with elementary SLIFE, as their peers have had much more time in U.S. schools to gain the relevant language and content knowledge expected of students in this context. The linguistic and cultural resources of secondary SLIFE may not be utilized or valued in the classroom, and they are tasked with trying to attain appropriate grade-level knowledge in many areas simultaneously (Pentón Herrera, 2022). The many expectations of incoming secondary students can make the transition into U.S. schools even more challenging when SLIFE enter as adolescents and can contribute to their risk of dropping out before graduation (Fry, 2005).

SLIFE with disabilities

Although there is little research and guidance published around identifying and working with SLIFE with disabilities, research on best practices for working with ELs with disabilities can provide some guidance and support, but educators should keep in mind that SLIFE comprise a smaller group nested within ELs

and likely have different experiences contributing to their learning needs (see sections above for more information). The Council of Chief State School Officers report on ELs with disabilities (Park, Martinez, & Chou, 2017) provides guidance around this topic, and includes an additional word of caution for SLIFE, noting that it may be challenging "to determine whether their difficulties stem from disabilities, lack of appropriate instruction, or the impact of previous life experiences" (p. 11). SLIFE with disabilities may have other learning needs, and appropriate identification of these needs, although challenging, can be critical in helping educators and schools provide the right types of support to help students' succeed.

2.8 SLIFE Identification and Placement

In this section we build on the discussion of state-level definitions of SLIFE (Section 2.1) as well as an understanding of these students' strengths and needs, to in detail at processes and practices for identification. SLIFE identification practices may be dictated by state-level definitions policies, may be determined locally by schools or districts, or by a combination of these. In this section, we first review state-level practices through publicly-available information, followed by a discussion of factors that may be relevant for local identification and placement of SLIFE.

2.8.1 Overview of state processes

All states are required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to utilize a uniform, language-based procedure for identifying English Learners (ELs). Because SLIFE are a subgroup of Els, identification processes are often integrated into EL identification processes. As discussed in previous sections, SLIFE is not a legal status and there is no common definition used across all states and districts, which results in varying processes for identification across states and locally. In this section, we discuss publicly-available information about identification processes for SLIFE. While this information often overlaps with the definitions provided in Section 2.1 of this report, we have analyzed identification processes separately.

We identified eighteen states (Connecticut, District of Columbia, Delaware, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, Utah, and Virginia) that make explicit reference to identifying SLIFE within their EL identification process. From our state-level analysis, we cannot determine for all states if SLIFE are identified and counted at the state level or if identification is a more informal process used to inform instructional and support services at the district and/or school level. In this section, we use the term identification broadly to mean processes for determining if students qualify as SLIFE according to whatever state or local criteria are in use in a particular context.

2.8.2 EL identification

Per federal guidelines, the EL identification process must begin within 30 days of enrollment for students joining a district at the beginning of the academic year and within two weeks of enrollment for students joining in the middle of the academic year. Thirteen of the 18 states that make explicit reference to further identifying SLIFE include samples of the EL identification materials they use on their publicly available websites. Exemplars of these resources will be featured to highlight the language used in identification and placement resources currently in use throughout the U.S. and to contextualize SLIFE identification.

By federal law, all EL identification processes must include a home language survey (HLS) and a valid and reliable English language proficiency assessment. Home language surveys may be either translated into a child's home language or may be completed with the assistance of a translator. States may also elect

to include other steps in the EL identification process, including interviews with guardians and students, literacy and numeracy assessments, and academic records reviews.

2.8.3 State identification processes

EL identification steps used by states may include SLIFE identification components. For example, in Virginia, English language proficiency (ELP) level is part of the state's definition of SLIFE, and thus ELP assessment scores are used for SLIFE identification. In this section, we discuss how states use EL identification steps for SLIFE identification with a focus on comparing criteria and processes.

Most states of the 18 we analyzed (i.e., those which make explicit reference to SLIFE identification practices) utilize a brief home language survey (HLS) that is focused exclusively on language use, rather than educational background. Two states (New York and Virginia) in our analysis include additional questions designed specifically to identify SLIFE in their home language surveys. In 2014, New York State Education Department's Board of Regents added a question designed to identify schooling interruptions in their Home Language Questionnaire:

- Indicate the total number of years that your child has been enrolled in school

Additionally, parents/guardians are asked to provide the following information, which may indicate first language literacy skills:

- What language(s) does your child read?
- What language(s) does your child write?

Virginia, which has defined SLIFE in state law and mandates that schools identify and count SLIFE, provides recommendations for determining SLIFE status, but school divisions are responsible for determining and documenting their own identification procedures. As one of two recommended options for identification, the *Virginia Department of Education SLIFE Guidebook* offers an extended question sequence aimed to identify interruptions in education. In Virginia, parents or guardians of students above age 8 who are registering a student in U.S. schools for the first time are asked the following questions:

- What year did your child start school?
- In which country or countries has your child attended school?
- What was the last grade your child attended?
- What was the last date your child attended school?
- Did your child often have to miss school?
- About how much time has your child missed since they started in any country? This should only include time missed when schools were opened for student attendance.

In general, home language surveys may be administered to students' caretakers with the assistance of a translator, administrator, and/or an EL teacher to ensure that the guardians understand the content and purpose of the survey, as required by law. While some states provide translated versions of their home language surveys on their website (e.g., Wisconsin offers translations in Spanish, Hmong, Chinese, Arabic, Dari, Pashto, Somali, Russian, and Ukrainian), others require the use of live translators to assist in the completion of the questionnaires when caretakers elect to take them in a language other than English. As migration trends shift with certain home languages becoming more prevalent in areas where

they previously had not been as common, cross-state collaboration could facilitate the exchange of language-specific resources to streamline the translation of identification instruments into all the represented home languages.

A 2010 federal court ruling deemed the one-question home language surveys used in Arizona inadequate for identifying and serving the greater EL student group, thus breaching civil rights afforded to these students and their guardians (Zehr, 2010). As a result, typical home language surveys range between two and four questions to capture what languages students hear and/or use in their households.

In states with multi-step identification processes, guardians who indicate a student uses a language other than English more than half of the time in their daily communications may be flagged for additional screening processes. These may include a caretaker interview, a student interview, and an academic records review in addition to the required ELP assessment, and these procedures may integrate SLIFE identification or may lead to additional steps for students who meet initial criteria.

2.8.4 Language access considerations

Language access is an essential issue in both EL and SLIFE identification as guardians must clearly understand identification questions. In our analysis of the language of caretaker and student interviews, we found that some states specify that the interviews must be in the caretakers' or students' native language, but this is not always the case. A review of the interview protocols made publicly available online indicated that these conversations often do not include specific questions around interruptions in formal education. New York State's *SIFE Oral Interview Questionnaire* is an example of a comprehensive and robust protocol with questions about family and home background, education history, and language and literacy practices inside and outside of school.

2.8.5 Massachusetts state practices

Massachusetts provides one of the most detailed EL and SLIFE identification and intake overviews that is publicly available online, with resources for each of the six steps readily available, as well as instructions for use and implementation provided in hyperlinked guidebooks and an online course. In the MA process, newly enrolled students first complete a Home Language Survey to determine whether they are ELs.

Students identified as ELs receive an academic records review and if there is insufficient evidence of English language proficiency, their English proficiency level is formally assessed using the WIDA Screener. Students who do not receive a composite proficiency level and composite literacy (reading/writing) proficiency level above a 4.0 are identified as ELs and then move into the SLIFE-specific identification process. First, the student completes a SLIFE pre-screener, which consists of student and guardian interviews. If they are identified as SLIFE, the MA Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE) recommends the use of literacy and numeracy assessments conducted in the student's native language to assess academic skills.

With the data from the stages described above, a school-based placement team is convened to develop a placement plan for the student. This plan must be communicated with the guardians, as familial contexts often inform placement decisions. While articulation at the state level provides a clear model for districts within MA to follow, like within any state, adherence to this identification process is largely

dependent on the availability of and ease of access to resources like assessments in the students' home language, cultural brokers, and translators.

2.8.6 State guidance

In addition to official identification processes, several states recommend best practices for identification and intake in SIFE/SLIFE guidebooks. The New York State Education Department recommends the following best practices in its *SIFE Manual*:

- "Conduct intake and identification that reveal SIFEs' needs, literacies, and funds of knowledge
- Build environments that respond to the immediate social, cultural, and linguistic needs of SIFE
- Create structures that transcend content areas to support simultaneous linguistic, academic, and personal development
- Flexible scheduling to reflect the real needs and obligations of SIFE students
- Align high school programs with higher education and adult education
- Use the full resources of the community to support SIFE"

(New York State Education Department, 2019, p, 38–40)

In reviewing the identification processes described on state education agency (SEA) websites, common challenges include communicating information between schools, students, and their caretakers due to linguistic and/or cultural obstacles. Providing translations, interpreters, cultural brokers, and structured opportunities for adults involved in the student's education to meet in person are recommended during the identification and intake processes rather than relying on email or telephone calls as the primary mode of communication. Accessing a student's previous academic records and/or locating literacy and numeracy assessments in the student's native language are other common challenges that may hinder the tight timelines that districts must follow to place students appropriately and efficiently.

Finally, this section has focused on official policies and procedures, but SLIFE identification often has varied implementation at the local level. For example, in describing research conducted in New York City Public Schools, Klein & Martohardjono (2006), noted that identification practices were not systematic across schools even though they were using the same pre-screening tools provided by the state. Schools had local and differing practices for native language and literacy screening. While this research finding was made prior to New York State's updates to their SLIFE criteria and identification process, it highlights the challenges that schools and districts may face, particularly regarding the availability of a SLIFE screening tool and native language assessments.

2.9 SLIFE Reclassification Processes

As with SLIFE identification, it is helpful to contextualize SLIFE reclassification within a state's EL reclassification processes and criteria, although these are separate distinctions. Because EL status carries with it legal implications, the reclassification process is clearer than that of the reclassification processes of SLIFE, which may be left up to the judgement of school- and/or district-level personnel rather than outlined in detail at the state-level. In some states, SLIFE reclassification may indicate that the student is no longer counted as a SLIFE in state tracking and no longer receives instructional or academic support designed for SLIFE, even though the student may remain classified as an EL and continues to receive EL-related services.

Most states rely exclusively on annual English language proficiency (ELP) test scores (e.g., ACCESS for ELLs 2.0) to determine students' EL status, and there is a range in accepted exit scores, with composite scores ranging from 4.0 (NE) to 4.8 (RI). While ACCESS for ELLs is the most widely used assessment to determine students' ELP levels, some states use their own state-based language proficiency assessment (e.g., NY) for this purpose. This complicates the determination of shared linguistic benchmarks necessary for exiting SLIFE/EL programs, both for this review and for policy makers and administrators working across multiple states to support this group of learners through the creation of a common definition and identification criteria. In addition to administering ELP tests, other components of the reclassification process include notifying caretakers, completing reclassification request forms, and officially changing the student's status within the district's Student Information System.

Several states outline more detailed, SLIFE-specific exit plans on their Department of Education websites. In Virginia, a student's school-based SLIFE committee, comprised of EL and content teachers, administrators, counselors, and any other relevant stakeholders, reviews teacher observations and recommendations, local benchmark performance results, socio-emotional observations, and academic habits (e.g., staying on task) in addition to ELP assessment scores. In Utah, students are assigned a redesignation team that reviews local assessments, diagnostic assessments, teacher recommendations, classroom observation data, content area tests, attendance, and social/emotional screenings to determine whether a student is ready to transition from the SLIFE support options available at that school. Similarly, in Massachusetts, local support teams may consider student performance on local academic assessments and district-determined measures, local diagnostic language assessments, academic grades, and MCAS content area tests. Teams also consider factors like written observations and recommendations from classroom teachers, attendance, social/emotional screening results, academic habits and behaviors, and special education status when applicable.

3. Supporting SLIFE Academic Success

Once SLIFE are identified, what program models and supports are effective? This section reviews research on effective programming and instructional practices for serving SLIFE and supporting their academic success. Program and service models are discussed first, followed by attention to instructional practices.

3.1 SLIFE Programs and Service Models

SLIFE programs may be embedded within EL programs, may be a component of newcomer programs, or may be established as separate programs. These differences reflect the number of students served and available resources. Districts with high incidence of SLIFE may be more able to create entire programs for SLIFE, whereas this could be more challenging in low-incidence districts.

SLIFE benefit from programs that are designed specifically for their needs. While existing EL service models are the starting point in SLIFE program design, SLIFE need programs that provide both accelerated and attainable courses of study tailored to meet the needs of students with limited academic experiences (Cohan & Honigsfeld, 2017).

3.1.1 Research on factors shaping program design and implementation

Existing research shows variation in SLIFE program models as well as how SLIFE are supported within existing EL programs. The studies presented in this section demonstrate how the beliefs and educational philosophies of decision-makers at all levels shape program design and impact students, and how the

availability of sufficient resources and staff with appropriate qualifications can either facilitate or restrict the implementation of any desired program. Perceptions regarding who SLIFE are, what strengths they bring, and what needs they have directly impact how they are served.

Umansky et al. (2018) reported on a case study of newcomer programming in six school districts, which were diverse in terms of district size, concentration of ELs, and region. Overall, the researchers found that the districts in this study implemented new and innovative approaches for newcomer students. The study showed that, within these six diverse districts, SLIFE were more often placed into courses and programs that separated them from the general student body, as compared with other newcomer students. Two of the six districts offered newcomer programs only to SLIFE. In a third district, in which newcomers were mainstreamed for most of the day, there was a mathematics course taught by a dually-certified math and EL teacher for SLIFE with limited experience in this content area.

Umansky et al. (2018) also found that programmatic decision-making reflected how administrators viewed newcomers and SLIFE, and which of these students' diverse needs were prioritized. For example, one district prioritized students' basic needs, viewing students' physical and emotional safety as prerequisites to their academic growth. In another district, an emphasis on educational equity led to a district-wide strategy that focused on linguistic and academic supports for students. Districts' views of students also impacted whether districts pushed to include newcomers in mainstream classrooms, provide separate spaces or programs, or create career and technical education programs for these students.

Drawing from the same case study data, Umansky, Hopkins, and Dabach (2020, p. 45) identify three core factors that impact newcomer and SLIFE program design: "(1) district leaders' ideals related to how best to serve newcomers, (2) organizational capacity and resource constraints, and (3) school-based educators' perceptions of newcomers' needs." At the district level, they described how the foundational decision to either integrate newcomers/SLIFE with other students or to provide separate programs and spaces reflected district leaders' ideals of either desiring to integrate students, or separating students to prioritize their specific needs in unique instructional spaces.

These ideals were mediated by the second factor, as district leaders encountered challenges in identifying the funding, staffing, and other resources necessary for implementing the desired programming. For example, in three districts, leaders created policies emphasizing integration, but found that effective integrated programming was resource-intensive, requiring professional development for general education teachers and specialized staff to provide push-in or co-teaching for newcomer ELs in general education classrooms. As a result, all three changed their approach to emphasize separate newcomer services, including pull-out English Language Development (ELD) services and classes designed specifically for newcomers. This was also due in some cases to push-back from school staff, who felt unprepared to effectively serve SLIFE in mainstream classrooms.

The ideologies and perceptions of school-based staff further mediated district leaders' visions for programming, shifting implementation in programs in locally specific and responsive ways. For example, some teachers working in districts with policies emphasizing integration shared that they would do pull-out instruction for students when they saw it as a need. Alternatively, some school staff in districts with separate newcomer services expressed concerns about these courses, which did not provide credits toward graduation, and would thus place some newcomers into mainstream classes. School-based

staff's beliefs about how specialized or different newcomer students' needs were from other students directly impacted whether they provided separate, focused services or integrated supports.

Beliefs and perspectives of educators about languages and linguistic diversity can also impact newcomer programming, and two ethnographic studies highlight the impact of language attitudes on program implementation. Although these studies focus on newcomers, there are clear implications for SLIFE as well. Seilstad's (2018) ethnographic study of the experiences of students aged 15–21 in a high school newcomer program demonstrated the practical impacts of an approach that emphasized the use of English within a newcomer program. Programmatic practices resulting from this view included little or no attention to first language literacy, although these skills can serve as a bridge for SLIFE to gain literacy skills in English. Seilstad describes cases of students with first language literacy skills and more prior years attending school who make gains in the program, contrasted with cases of students with more significant gaps in education and limited first language literacy who struggle significantly within the program to progress with language and content learning, and, in some cases, drop out of the program entirely.

As a contrastive example, in Saulsbury-Molina's (2019) ethnographic study of a newcomer program, teachers' and a principal's beliefs in the value of students' diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds led to acceptance of home language use within instructional contexts, cultural sensitivity, and a high degree of student autonomy. Within this newcomer program, "Allowing students the freedom to make mistakes both in their language usage and their choices while navigating the classroom space help create an environment in which students feel safe to learn. They are able to take risks and not fear scolding. Students are also able to use their home language at school without punishment" (Saulsbury-Molina, 2019, p. 96).

The researcher provided examples of teachers managing situations in which students engaged in practices not accepted within a U.S. instructional context (e.g., differential treatment of classmates based on gender), aiming to identify cultural differences, and, rather than penalizing students, engaging in conversations with students about the expectations of the U.S. school context. These practices also included the involvement of and consultation with a counselor and newcomer liaison (Saulsbury-Molina, 2019). This type of response demonstrated teachers' understanding that students arrived with prior experiences and cultural and linguistic resources that are valuable, and then using their knowledge of students' backgrounds to bridge from these prior experiences to the participatory patterns and practices expected in U.S. schooling.

3.1.2 Research on SLIFE program efficacy

Research on effective program models for SLIFE is emerging but remains limited. To address this lack of information, Cohan and Honigsfeld (2017) studied three suburban districts' service delivery models and instructional practices aimed at serving SLIFE. The study determined that "with strong teacher involvement, district-wide planning, access to quality materials, and a keen understanding of the cultural and economic circumstances of SIFE, academic success is achievable" (p. 170). They identified several specific features of effective programs within these different areas, and these features are reviewed below, along with other studies of SLIFE programming.

Districtwide programming and support

A key finding of Cohan and Honigsfeld's (2017) study was that "[t]he SIFE service delivery was most successful when it was implemented district-wide with support from the teachers and administration. The strongest programs observed by the researchers brought SIFE to a central location which served as the 'hub' of learning" (p. 170). In Short & Boyson's (2012) survey of U.S. SLIFE programs, fifteen of the 63 programs (24%) also utilized a separate-site model with a central location specifically for SLIFE. Of these fifteen programs, six were half-day programs where SLIFE spent a portion of the day at the separate location and the remainder of the day at the home school. In these instances, the program provided busing between all school locales. While the additional resources and personnel this requires may explain why separate-site models are less common than program-within-a-school models, separate-sites may offer the benefits of unified support from all staff and teachers involved in delivering services for SLIFE.

Another key part of district support for programs is the provision of SLIFE-specific curricular resources, and these are still often limited. In Umansky et al.'s (2018) study of six school districts, the need for SLIFE-specific curricular resources was a theme reported by administrators, and these were one of many resource types targeted for internal development by districts.

Teacher qualifications and support

As with any educational program, the importance of the teachers who interact with SLIFE cannot be overstated, and Cohan & Honingsfeld (2017) note that highly qualified teachers are foundational to any program model. The researchers identify skills that SLIFE teachers need, including:

> Effective teachers of SIFEs recognize that they need to take a highly individualized approach to instruction. They need to establish baseline data to be able to build on students' prior knowledge and skills and then provide on-going formative assessments in order to monitor student progress both in the target language and in the content area. They continuously adjust the taught curriculum to make it age-appropriate and relevant to students' life experiences as well as to the demands of the mainstream content curriculum. They engage their students in personally meaningful, highly motivating, scaffolded and differentiated learning activities that contribute not only to students' progression of learning English and academic content, but ultimately, to their desire to stay in school, graduate, enter the workforce successfully, and leave poverty behind. (p. 173)

Hos & Kaplan-Wolff's (2016) ethnographic study focused on the actions of one teacher who maximized her instructional efficacy through embodying the role of a "negotiator" between her students' needs and the mandated curriculum. In this case, the focal teacher adapted prescribed curriculum to meet the needs of her students as they arose over the course of the program. When the teacher observed that her students tended to disengage during lessons designed with the prescribed course material, she assumed a more active role and centered her students in her decision-making processes as she adapted the curriculum to connect with both the programmatic requirements and her students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Short & Boyson (2012) identify "targeted professional development" that prepares teachers for working with newcomers as a key component of a successful program. Rather than present a list of personal and professional characteristics, they focus their description on coursework they believe to be important for educators who work with SLIFE. Here, the shared skills or qualifications that the authors identify across

63 newcomer programs include an ESL endorsement or certificates, fluency in an additional language, cross-cultural experiences, training in sheltered instruction methodologies for teaching content, and second language acquisition (SLA) coursework.

Training in the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model is a popular option for newcomer teachers and requires training or professional development to implement. Apart from external professional development, Short & Boyson (2012) also note that most of the newcomer programs in their survey held regular meetings for staff members where teams could collaboratively create curricula, adapt assessments, review student performance data, and discuss instructional strategies. Frequent opportunities to meet as a team may help ensure consistency and transparency as SLIFE transition between different classes and programs.

Teacher collaboration and planning time

Cohan and Honigsfeld's (2017) study also determined that time and physical space allocated for collaboration and planning allowed teachers to work collaborative in support of SLIFE. The need for different types of expertise (e.g., content area pedagogy, EL pedagogy) means that teachers may need to come together as a team to best support SLIFE in their classrooms. In addition, the diversity among SLIFE and the benefits of understanding each student's background, strengths, and needs means that time for teachers to plan and collaborate can help teachers best meet the needs of this group of students. Teacher collaboration is most effective when it is ongoing throughout all phases of the instructional cycle.

Collaborative involvement of administrators and staff

The support and involvement of administrators is another critical piece for SLIFE program success. In Cohan and Honigsfeld's (2017) study, they noted that active involvement and attention from administrators in programs was key to successful SLIFE service models.

Beyond administrators, other school and district staff can play an essential role in program success and can contribute meaningfully to program planning. Staff can include guidance counselors, school social workers, psychologists, nurses, and bus drivers (Cohan & Honigsfeld, 2017). The researchers found that a team-based approach, with regular meetings and collaborative decision-making, strengthened student success. Involving staff in a variety of roles can help meet SLIFE's varied needs and support them throughout all parts of their school day.

Individualized approaches

Programs that promote individualized approaches to teaching and learning seem to be more effective in meeting the needs of SLIFE. Cohan and Honigsfeld (2017) found that "[t]he most effective educational practices considered the students' abilities upon arriving in the United States. Programs with built-in English support—prior to placing students in classes with standardized testing—kept the SIFEs enrolled without unfair assessment/evaluation practices or pressure. Students were given recognition for attendance and participation without earning failing grades" (p. 170). They further emphasized "curricular adaptations and accommodations" (p. 172) as one of their major themes in the study. In another study involving interviews with state Title III administrators across 18 states, Umansky et al. (2018) found that one state created individualized learning plans for incoming SLIFE, a policy-level response to the diverse skills and abilities of these students upon arrival.

Individualization may happen across a number of different dimensions. Learning plans and instructional approaches may be individualized based on a student's home language, and literacy skills may also impact the development of tailored learning approaches. Individualized literacy plans were frequently mentioned in Short & Boyson's (2012) national survey. Programs described using small, guided reading groups and leveled readers to support students at all stages of literacy development. Computer-based learning programs (e.g., Rosetta Stone) were also listed as ways that programs offered differentiated instruction for SLIFE. Local SLIFE support teams that are assembled during the identification process in states like Virginia play a role in proposing individualized learning plans and assessing each student's progress towards their learning targets. These teams, commonly composed of EL and content teachers, administrators, and counselors are designed to consider the linguistic, academic, emotional, and social growth for each student. However, in districts with more SLIFE and/or fewer resources at their disposal, implementing these types of support teams pose a practical challenge.

Vocational programming

Programming aimed at preparing students for vocations is sometimes provided for newcomers and SLIFE, particularly at the high school level. In Umansky et al.'s (2018) study of six school districts (described above), one district implemented a career training program for newcomers in anticipation of a number of students aging out before being able to complete high school and receive their diploma.

Salerno and Kibler's (2015) case study reported on the experiences of students in a high school vocational program designed to help newcomers simultaneously learn vocational skills and develop English language skills through interaction with English-speaking peers. The students encountered challenges in reaching these goals, and they were sometimes disengaged or marginalized in the classroom, citing boredom, lack of a clear task, and difficulty with the language demands (Salerno & Kibler, 2015). The researchers rarely observed students interacting with English-speaking peers, and technical language associated with the vocations was not well scaffolded (Salerno & Kibler, 2015). Amidst these challenges, newcomer students still experienced some growth and success within the program (Salerno & Kibler, 2015). This study demonstrates the potential benefits of vocational programming for newcomers and SLIFE, while highlighting the need for attention and planning with regards to how newcomers and SLIFE are engaged in coursework. Further, the technical language demands of vocational courses are a substantial challenge and require further consideration when planning for and implementing this type of programming (Salerno & Kibler, 2015).

3.1.3 Programmatic case studies

The previous section provided an overview of programs for supporting SLIFE academically. The schools described here provide a case study of the type of programming that can support SLIFE in reaching their academic goals and demonstrate some of the themes described above in practice.

Full day separate site model

The New Citizen Center (NCC) located in Worcester, Massachusetts is a full day, newcomer program that operates on distinct campuses for students ages 8–11, 12–17, and 18–21 respectively. EL newcomers who fall within these age ranges, have an "emerging" English language proficiency, have experienced at least a three-year gap in formal education, and have low primary language literacy may attend school through the NCC. Publicly available information on how these students are identified within the district was not found, but likely draw on the MA SLIFE identification process described in the SLIFE Identification section of this report. The NCC program uses a sheltered English immersion (SEI) model

where students are provided with intensive instruction in English language and literacy development. Each day, SLIFE participate in three 45-minute periods of direct ESL instruction with a licensed ESL teacher. Coursework in numeracy and foundational science and social studies concepts is also provided. NCC staff meet with students' caretakers monthly at locations around the community like local churches, the YMCA, and youth centers. In addition, the NCC partners with a local dental hygiene clinic to provide free dental checkups to students, including transportation. This partnership is made possible through a Greater Worcester Community Foundation grant from the Fallon-OrNda Community Health Fund. Upon reaching an intermediate English proficiency level and demonstrating the academic skills necessary to transition to a mainstream program, students move to their local home schools.

Full day, within school model

The Salina Intermediate Newcomer Center in Dearborn, Michigan is a full-day, within-school newcomer program for middle school students. It serves students who are native Arabic speakers, who score between Level 4–5 in the English Language Proficiency Assessment in Michigan and who have not been in the U.S. for longer than 1.5 years. Though interruptions in schooling are not a prerequisite to participate in this program, the majority of students at this center have experienced interrupted formal education. The program combines an ESL design and sheltered content courses, which often include Arabic explanations or clarifications when necessary. The SIOP model is used in the content courses. The block schedules allow the instructional team to customize students' schedules through the addition of electives if they need additional support for developing certain skills. Salinas Intermediate Newcomer Center partners with the local Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services to provide holistic support for its learners and their families. In addition, administrator positions include a family "liaison" role, and family liaisons and office staff frequently host open houses, parent-teacher meetings, and coffee hours to strengthen the sense of community. Students may be enrolled in the program for no more than two years, with earlier departures possible upon receiving satisfactory test scores and teacher recommendations and achieving Level 12 or higher on the Direct Reading Assessment. Because this program is housed within the home school and because of the block schedule, SLIFE are already familiar with the building and common spaces like the gymnasium and cafeteria.

Whole-school model

The International High School at Lafayette is a four-year program that prepares students to meet New York state graduation requirements and receive a high school diploma. This program serves students who have been in the United States for less than four years and who have low English proficiency levels. Students may or may not have experienced interruption in formal education. Through a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) model, the program runs all the courses required for graduation in New York state. Interdisciplinary and collaborative work is prioritized in mixed–grade level cohorts that match students with similar linguistic and academic abilities. This school has several unique features that prepare its students for post-graduation success. Juniors (11th graders) are matched with local internship programs that take place during the afternoons during a 12-week semester. These internships connect students with the community while providing them with real world language practice and career-specific skills. Seniors (12th graders) are part of a special cohort that offers a different schedule that allows students to better prepare for the year-end New York Regents Exams.

International school approach

Bajaj and Suresh (2018) describe an international high school in California that aims to serve students holistically, written from the perspectives of a founding teacher and current administrator (Suresh) and

a researcher studying the school (Bajaj). This newcomer program draws on outside funding through grants and community partnerships to implement its robust program which emphasizes family and community connections, instruction that is responsive and relevant to students, trauma-informed approaches, and counseling. This school aims to serve students in a way that views them as whole individuals, situated in families and communities with particular cultural and linguistic backgrounds and having relevant experiences in their histories that impact their schooling (Bajaj & Suresh, 2018). They describe specific practices and discuss how their approach is impactful and successful for students and their families, as well as how they increase the feasibility of this approach to schooling through a robust network of community partnerships (Bajaj & Suresh, 2018).

3.2 SLIFE Instructional Practices

There are a wide range of recommendations for instructional practices for supporting SLIFE's language acquisition, literacy development, academic content attainment, meaningful school participation, and active engagement. These overlap with effective practices for ELs more generally but also include SLIFE-specific strategies. In a summary of the literature on SLIFE instruction, DeCapua and Marshall (2010) identify the following instructional practices as most effective based on research findings and expert recommendations:

> - *Grouping strategies*: small-group instruction, collaborative work, and differentiated instruction
> - *Strategy training*: development of cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies
> - *Supports for tasks and content*: scaffolding, sheltered content courses
> - *Curriculum design*: theme-based models, academically challenging material with language modifications; and
> - *Cultural orientations*: culturally relevant content or funds of knowledge and culturally responsive teaching. (pp. 50–51)

The authors claim that, in addition to these practices, a reconceptualization of SLIFE education that responds to SLIFE's specific strengths and needs is required. In response to this need, they developed the **Mutually Adaptive Learning Paradigm (MALP)** model, which aims to honor SLIFE's cultural backgrounds by incorporating features of learning paradigms familiar to SLIFE and using these to bridge to learning paradigms commonly found in U.S. schooling.

The MALP (which is described further in a 2011 case study at the end of this section) emphasizes the need to understand SLIFE on their own terms and to understand the cultural contexts from which students are coming, as well as their own individual strengths and needs. Learning about SLIFE and modifying instruction to respond to their strengths and needs is an ongoing process and necessary for helping this group of students, who come from many linguistic, cultural, and academic backgrounds, to succeed. Characteristics of effective SLIFE instruction are discussed below and need to be held in tension with ongoing responsiveness and attention to the individual SLIFE being served within a classroom, school, or district.

3.2.1 Differentiation

Differentiation in how and when content is introduced during educational sequences is an instructional approach recommended in the literature for students generally, and ELs specifically. For the SLIFE in Cohan and Honigsfeld's (2017) study, differentiated instructional materials was associated with both

academic language development and content learning. Differentiation benefits students in all classrooms but will be implemented in different ways depending on the instructional context. There may be more variation in SLIFE's needs at higher grade levels, due to the increased and broader academic expectations of U.S. students at those levels; this may mean one student is still learning basic literacy skills, while another has native language literacy and a number of years of academic experience. Differentiation will also look different at lower grade levels, where students may have just a few years of difference in terms of their experiences with literacy and schooling.

For SLIFE, instruction is commonly differentiated by English proficiency level and/or educational background. For example, the Intensive English Program of Dayton Learning Center (featured in Short & Boyson's 2012 survey) uses learning stations and technology-based support to offer differentiated instruction along these two dimensions. The Salina Intermediate Literacy Newcomer Center (featured above as a within-school model) further differentiates instruction by encouraging bilingual teachers to introduce content in both English and the student's home language. This is possible in this program because all students share Arabic as a home language. For programs that support SLIFE from many different linguistic backgrounds, it may be more challenging to provide linguistic differentiation.

3.2.2 Collaborative learning and group work

Collaboration has been cited as a learning condition that may be particularly beneficial for SLIFE (DeCapua & Marshall, 2010). For SLIFE whose home cultures are more collectivistic than individualistic, collaborative learning opportunities are capable of providing opportunities for connection that may feel more familiar or comfortable to this group of students. This familiarity and comfort may encourage students to take more risks in class and engage more deeply with the material, their peers, and their instructors. Whether collaborating as a whole class or in small groups, shared responsibility for accomplishing academic tasks may honor students' orientation towards interpersonal work. Collaborative tasks and small group work may also help teachers more effectively differentiate instruction according to students' linguistic or content-oriented needs.

3.2.3 Literacy development

Literacy skills are frequently prioritized in newcomer programs, as these are skills that learners will need in order to access their other content-area classes (Short & Boyson, 2012). How literacy skills are supported is dependent on both student-specific and program-specific factors. Building blocks of literacy include developing students' familiarity with phonics, building decoding skills, and strengthening their fluency. Secondary teachers may not be familiar with teaching these beginning stages of literacy, which is where teachers with backgrounds in ESL and/or language acquisition may be particularly useful (Salva & Matis, 2017). Growing the size of SLIFE's vocabulary is also an essential component of literacy development, as students will quickly find themselves in need of both general and specific words inside and outside of the classroom. Creating word walls or personalized picture dictionaries are examples of the type of activities that can support vocabulary development. Oral interactions can be leveraged to scaffold text-based tasks to build learners' literacy, like with picture walks or story-creation activities (DeCapua & Marshall, 2010).

A balanced literacy approach (the integration of both a focus on phonics and a focus on whole language) is also recommended for bridging the gap between SLIFE's oral language skills and literacy skills. This approach to literacy instruction is commended for elevating the strengths of the distinct instructional approaches it subsumes, including read/write alouds, shared reading/writing, guided reading/writing,

and independent reading/writing (Salva & Matis, 2017). Often literacy support may be needed in both the learner's home language and in English. While home language literacy support may be available in bilingual programs, or programs with linguistically homogenous SLIFE, it is likely beyond the capabilities of the newcomer programs that serve diverse SLIFE and must prioritize the skillsets necessary to succeed as quickly as possible in the U.S. academic system (Short & Boyson, 2012). Auslander (2019) provides a case study of serving SLIFE with developing literacy, which she defines as students with native language literacy at grade 3 or below. In her work with Bridges to Academic Success program in New York, this group is provided with specialized curriculum and coursework designed to build on their strengths and meet the unique needs of this population withing the larger group of SLIFE.

3.2.4 Bilingual support

The inclusion of students' home languages, whenever possible, is a key support for students in meeting the linguistic and content demands of instruction. This can be provided in many different ways, as mediated by program models, financial and curricular resources, and availability of instructional staff who speak students' languages. In Cohan and Honigsfeld's (2017) study, this support was provided by teaching assistants:

> Bilingual support classes with teaching assistants that spoke the native language and worked in small groups showed exceptional success. In fact, the teaching assistants often were found to be the best advocates for the students academically and socially. These relationships often extended to support in terms of balancing work and school. It was in this context that students were able to have extended discussions with turn-and-talk strategies which supported their content learning. (p.171)

Bilingual support may be more feasible in districts in which there are many SLIFE with the same home language. Districts with a lower incidence of SLIFE, or greater linguistic diversity among SLIFE, may encounter different and greater challenges in providing bilingual support. This can be done in creative ways, through use of peer assistance, bilingual dictionaries (if students have home language literacy), and/or metalinguistic strategies modeled in instruction.

3.2.5 Scaffolding

Scaffolding is another strategy commonly implemented in EL education to support students in meeting the linguistic and academic expectations of schooling. Scaffolding may include visuals (e.g., pictures, photos, realia, and video clips); graphic supports (e.g., graphic organizers and timelines); and the activation of prior knowledge in English or the students first language (Cohan & Honigsfeld, 2017; Gottlieb, 2006). These supports can help SLIFE meet academic demands, understand and meet the expectations of U.S. classrooms, and participate in the new culture of schooling. Given the drastic changes SLIFE likely experience in both their home and school lives as they enter U.S. schools, a gradual introduction to the types of learning, socialization, and academic topics they will be expected to navigate independently may help SLIFE feel less overwhelmed by their new surroundings. Within-school newcomer program models naturally build in SLIFE transitions to their home school through block schedules. SLIFE spend the majority of their day in English classes, but also participate in electives like gym or arts courses with their non-SLIFE peers. When SLIFE exit from the newcomer program and join the home school schedule fully, they may already have general familiarity with the school building and may even have friendships with their non-SLIFE peers from their elective courses. In this way, within-

school programs have the potential to scaffold SLIFE participation in a traditional school day with the broader student community.

3.2.6 Valuing students' funds of knowledge

All students enter the classroom with linguistic and cultural resources, personal skills and abilities, and "funds of knowledge." This is both a support to students and also a way of communicating to students that they are valued members of the classroom community. In the instructional contexts observed by Cohan and Honigsfeld (2017), "[s]tudents' funds of knowledge were valued (Moll et al., 1992). In these instances, SIFEs were recognized as contributors to the school community as documented by the artifacts" (p.171). Similarly, the teacher in Hos and Kaplan-Wolff's (2020) ethnographic study created activities that positioned students as contributors, including small group activities that allowed students to choose from a variety of tasks and collaborate with their peers, helping them to develop their social skills and promoting a student-centered learning environment. The teacher took time to learn about her students and their funds of knowledge and used this individualized knowledge to meet her students where they were and teach them effectively.

3.2.7 Assessment

While both researchers and practitioners alike call for a need to re-evaluate assessment practices for SLIFE rather than directly applying EL or non-EL assessment approaches when working with this group of students, there is limited information available on concrete, theoretically-driven and empirically-supported assessment practices for SLIFE. Generally, Cohan and Honigsfeld (2017) found "comprehensive and consistent assessment practices" to be a major theme in the SLIFE instructional contexts they studied (p. 172). Providing consistency in assessment practices, within a classroom as well as across classrooms within the same program, can help students learn expectations and be better able to demonstrate their knowledge once they understand how to interact with a task. Further, with SLIFE, the language of the assessment and unfamiliar cultural assessment practices can negatively impact the validity and reliability of assessment scores and the extent to which they capture SLIFE's development or achievement of different skills.

Assessments present an inherent challenge to SLIFE, who are often held accountable to meeting the same academic standards as their U.S.-born, English-speaking peers who have not experienced interruption in their education. The federal requirement for students to take state assessments still applies to SLIFE (though, as ELs, they are exempt their first year). Teachers and administrators monitor SLIFE progress through state, district, and local assessments, and performance on assessments may also inform decisions about graduation and/or post-graduation opportunities. Newcomer programs may use either commercially-based language tests or state-specific tests based on state standards to track learners' progress, or a combination of the two (Short & Boyson, 2012). Often, high-stakes tests on subject matter are not designed with ELs in mind, and therefore disadvantage students with developing English proficiency who may receive a low score not because they have yet to master the content, but because they misinterpreted the instructions, which were written in English. Students may also have difficulties performing well on these tests due to the test questions being written in English, resulting in an assessment of students' English reading skills in addition to their content knowledge. Informal measures that are designed, administered, and scored by SLIFE instructors by local school teams may provide more accurate reflections of learners' developing knowledge throughout the academic journey. At the International High School at Lafayette, described in more detail in the Case Study section above,

informal, alternative assessments are recognized and celebrated on par with more traditional measures of academic achievement. High school seniors must also present a portfolio of their work in addition to receiving passing scores on the New York state tests.

3.2.8 Routine and structure

In Hos and Kaplan-Wolff's (2020) ethnographic study, routines and classroom structures were key supports for newcomer students. In this classroom, these routines included greeting students at the door, students retrieving their notebooks and folders from plastic bins, copying the essential question for the day, listening to schoolwide announcements, followed by a "workshop model that included a pattern of a teacher-led bridge and mini-lessons" (p. 45), and "20-minute independent or collaborative activities in three rotations... an independent reading/writing center, a teacher-guided group, and the computer center, with six students in each rotation" (pp. 45-46). The overarching components of the balanced literacy approach (e.g., read alouds, shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading) also progress in predictable sequences that are thought to offer familiar structures to students as they tackle increasingly challenging texts (Salva & Matis, 2017). Routines like these can be helpful for SLIFE since they are still learning the expectations of U.S. schooling and the discourse of class activities; if they understand what is expected of them and how to interact with the course materials as work becomes more advanced, they may be better able to engage with the content and demonstrate their own knowledge and skills.

3.2.9 Instructional practice case study

This section has provided an overview of instructional practices for supporting SLIFE academically. The approach described here provides a case study of the type of instructional model that can support SLIFE in reaching their academic goals.

An intervention reported in DeCapua and Marshall (2010) implemented their Mutually Adaptive Learning Paradigm (MALP) in a single classroom over five months and found that "through the implementation of this instructional model, the teacher in this study was able to facilitate students' transition to the U.S. educational system" (p. 49). In the MALP, elements of a learning paradigm typically more familiar to SLIFE, and a learning paradigm common to U.S. educational contexts, are brought together to support SLIFE in their transition into U.S. schooling (DeCapua & Marshall, 2010; Marshall & DeCapua, 2009). In this model, cultural features more familiar to SLIFE are incorporated into instruction, including interconnectedness, immediate relevance, emphasis on oral production in addition to writing, shared responsibility, and pragmatic tasks (DeCapua & Marshall, 2010; Marshall & DeCapua, 2009). Implementation of the MALP in this study was followed by student progress in working with print, using the internet, and developing academic ways of thinking, and students appeared to be much more engaged in instruction (DeCapua & Marshall, 2010).

3.3 SLIFE Pathways to Graduation and Careers

It is widely documented that SLIFE experience more extreme dropout rates than their EL and non-EL counterparts (DeCapua & Marshall, 2010; Flores, 2022; Hos, 2016; Kanno & Cromley, 2013). Empirical research on this student group has identified the home country and last grade completed in the home country as major variables that impact a student's dropout rate (Fry, 2005; Potochnick, 2018). However, the exact percentages at the national and state levels are obscured by the same challenges that make it difficult to identify SLIFE when they enter the U.S. school system. There is little information available on how SLIFE perform on the common educational indicators (e.g., dropout rates, graduation rates, test

scores) that are often provided for different racial, gender, or socioeconomic groups (Flueckiger, 2020). Publications on SLIFE's academic trajectories continue to echo early estimations that SLIFE have a 70%+ dropout rate in comparison to their newcomer peers who did not experience any interruptions in their schooling prior to entry in U.S. schools and whose dropout rate is closer to 8% (Custodio & O'Laughlin, 2020 reporting on Fry, 2005).

Disaggregated graduation rates comparing ELs to non-EL students provide an incomplete, yet preliminary window into SLIFE retention issues. Given the unique strengths and needs of SLIFE in comparison to other ELs discussed in earlier sections, it is not surprising that these two groups likely differ in dropout/graduation rates. The difference between these two groups is most clearly defined in Flueckiger's (2020) case study on a SLIFE cohort at an urban high school in the greater Boston area, in which analysis revealed that the graduation rate for SLIFE was 15.5% below the graduation rate for their EL counterparts. The discrepancy between SLIFE and other EL graduation rates uncovered in this case study underscore the fact that statewide EL graduation rates cannot be taken as representative of SLIFE graduation rates. However, low EL graduation rates may motivate more detailed record keeping for SLIFE, who likely are encountering even more obstacles to graduation than their EL counterparts and whose respective graduation rates are likely even lower (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015).

In the 2018–2019 academic year, the mean four-year, public high school graduation rate across the U.S. was 68.4% for ELs and 86% for non-EL learners (U.S. Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition, 2020). More recently, at the state level, the high school graduation rate for ELs during the 2021–2022 school year ranged from 48.2% in Louisiana to a high of 86.1% in Florida. When comparing the graduation rates between non-ELs and ELs, the differences ranged from 2.10% in New Mexico to 35.80% in Louisiana. Publicly available high school data on EL graduation rates could not be found for six states (HI, MO, MT, ND, OK, WV).

Until more uniform and consistent approaches to identifying SLIFE are adopted, tracking the secondary experiences of these learners will remain difficult. The lack of statistical information about SLIFE performances and experiences at both state and national levels hinders educators, administrators, and researchers alike in their efforts to identify best practices, create supportive language policies, and develop pedagogical approaches that assist SLIFE in achieving their academic and career-oriented goals.

3.3.1 Strategies for supporting SLIFE graduation

SLIFE who arrive to the U.S. in their mid-to-late teenage years with no transcript and/or gaps in their education are often placed in ninth grade courses, which is the lowest grade they can be placed as adolescents. While not a legally mandated practice, this benchmark impacts older newcomer students (often ages 15–18) who would feel out of place in lower grade levels, even if those align more closely with their suspected academic levels. These students often struggle to complete the academic requirements needed to graduate before they "age out" of the window wherein students can attend public schools in their states (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DeCapua et al., 2009; Flueckiger, 2020). This challenge is particularly pronounced given that SLIFE are expected to achieve the same standards as their EL and non-EL peers who may not have experienced the same type of educational disruptions or linguistic barriers (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011). Reactions to the No Child Left Behind Act exemplify this difficulty, as Menken (2008) writes, "An immediate effect of NCLB testing policy is that ELLs are overwhelming failing the tests, labeled as deficient and low-performing, and barred from advancement" (p. 35). SLIFE face additional obstacles in meeting graduation requirements due to the eligibility of

certain courses as graduation credits. For example, mandated ESOL and/or SLIFE courses may be included as instructional time in a students' schedule but may not count as credits towards the total graduation credit requirement. Policies like these make it difficult for SLIFE to accrue the necessary number of credits to graduate within a standard (four-year) timeframe. Graduation challenges are further exacerbated across the country as state and local administrators have been found to interpret policies around "aging out" in different ways, which leads to variation in newcomer program structures (e.g., course sequences, course requirements) and priorities (e.g., local or state assessments), creating confusion for educators and students navigating the systems (Drake, 2017).

The New York Department of Education advocates for the use of after-school academic programming (e.g., math and social studies enrichment classes), tutoring, and community college partnerships to build opportunities for SLIFE to progress more quickly through their graduation requirements. Extracurricular or multicultural enrichment options are also encouraged to provide SLIFE with social/emotional support. Other options for extended learning time might include vacation institutes (held during holiday periods, three-day weekends, etc.), Saturday school, or summer schools. The High School of World Cultures in New York City is one program that has explored these strategies to better prepare its newcomers for college and career success. While SLIFE are not explicitly mentioned in their student demographics, their focus on recently arrived (within one year in the U.S.) and multilingual students is a strong indicator that there is a high percentage of SLIFE served at this school.

Summer enrichment programs have also been found to establish strong relationships between newcomer families and district educators that supported students' social and emotional health. Hosted by New English Public Schools, the Newcomer English Language Learners Summer Enrichment Academy is one such summer program that utilizes a curriculum that celebrates newcomer backgrounds, features rigorous coursework, and develops linguistic skills. Through an assets-based approach, this program supports students in grades 5–9. Featured in a recent program evaluation (López, Lee, & Tung, 2020), this curriculum was found to facilitate strong student-teacher relationships, increase student motivation, and foster student engagement during the summer months.

States, districts, and programs can also support SLIFE by offering bilingual content classes to SLIFE who have some degree of literacy in their native language (e.g., a Port of Entry program), providing a pre-ninth grade program to better prepare SLIFE for the high school curricula that begins in ninth grade (e.g., The Columbus Global Academy), optimizing class schedules with combined courses and expanding the timeframe for determining graduation success from four years (e.g., the International High School at Lafayette), and/or developing five or six-year course sequences to support learners working on a longer graduation timeframe (Short & Boyson, 2012). For example, St. Paul's Public Schools in Minnesota describes a six-year pathway for SLIFE that explicitly sequences EL coursework alongside required content area courses. However, this pathway does not include graduation requirements relating to non-content area courses like fine arts and health, nor does it address the common challenge that may disincentivize extended graduation timeframes: state accountability requirements.

Additional strategies that may be helpful for supporting SLIFE graduation can be found in WestEd's report on practices and programs to prevent EL dropout in Massachusetts (Lacireno-Paquet & Chu, 2021).

3.3.2 Alternative pathways to graduation

Even less is known about the design and efficacy of alternative paths to graduation such as virtual or hybrid academic programs, vocational schools, or partnerships with community colleges and/or local businesses that can support SLIFE in meeting their academic and career goals while still addressing their linguistic and socio-emotional needs. Information on pathways did not surface on state webpages, indicating that any alternative approaches are likely locally developed and implemented on a more case-by-case basis under the radar of policy makers and higher-level administrators. However, researchers have advocated for the more systematic creation, implementation, and evaluation of alternative pathways. Drake (2017) describes both the need and lack of knowledge around this area, explaining, "Entering the school system with less than 7 years to meet graduation requirements and proficiencies, under-schooled adolescent immigrants experience both internal urgency and external pressure to learn quickly enough to earn a diploma in the allotted time, so teachers must also accelerate subject matter and there is little research on how to effectively do this" (p. 339).

With strict graduation requirements and larger contextual factors that have been shown to impede ELs' graduation success, researchers have encouraged the development of alternative pathways that can serve the academic and career-oriented needs of SLIFE. One such pathway is a route towards a GED; however, at present, many night classes or GED diplomacy courses are not designed with ELs in mind (Olivares-Orellana, 2020) and thus are not equipped to support SLIFE who may enroll independently. Newcomer programs that offer GED classes intended for ELs can also help SLIFE have more options if they are not able to meet graduation credit requirements.

As states, districts, and programs continue to explore alternative pathways, they should be cognizant of how alternative education is perceived in larger educational and professional contexts and the type of opportunities they afford students in comparison to a high school graduate so as not to limit SLIFE's potential (Flores, 2022). Frameworks that center around what students know and can do, such as competency-frameworks used in the Boston Day and Evening Academy, may help to navigate this challenge, as they can be implemented in both alternative and more traditional school settings to track learner growth based on concrete skills and abilities rather than abstract constructs like grades.

4. Supporting SLIFE Socio-Emotional Needs

4.1 SLIFE Educational Programs and Practices

This section reviews research on effective programming and instructional practices for serving SLIFE and supporting their socio-emotional needs. To foster a sense of belonging and inclusivity, any SLIFE programming should consider students' diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, recognize the cultural adjustments SLIFE experience as they transition to the U.S. school system, and celebrate SLIFE as knowledgeable, valued members of the school community with important skills and perspectives to contribute (Mendez and Barko-Alva, 2022).

As discussed in the section on SLIFE needs above, these students often enter U.S. schools with significant socio-emotional needs due to having endured difficult circumstances and trauma in their home countries and/or during their transitions into the U.S. Some of these needs may be addressed through regular SEL initiatives that schools already integrate into instruction and others may be better suited to individual, clinical care provided by clinical therapists within or beyond the school. A comprehensive review of those needs is beyond the scope of this literature review, just as it often

extends beyond the capabilities of school districts, who may instead collaborate with local mental health service providers to connect SLIFE with the mental health support they require when their socio-emotional needs are not adequately addressed in school. However, it is the school-based approaches that are the topic of the section below, followed by attention to instructional practices and family and community connections.

4.1.1 Characteristics of effective school communities

Programs and practices that serve SLIFE's socioemotional needs at the school level do so in a variety of ways. Some key features that may contribute to successfully serving SLIFE's socioemotional needs are discussed below.

School environment

A welcoming school environment that honors students' backgrounds and cultures can be a good place to start in supporting students' socioemotional health, although much more is needed. A welcoming environment, though, can affirm students in their cultural and linguistic heritage while they are placed into a new environment that differs from what they have experienced previously, and which may involve culture shock (DeCapua et al., 2020). For secondary SLIFE, separate newcomer programs can provide a safe, welcoming space designed specifically for these students (DeCapua et al., 2020). At the elementary level, and in secondary programs in which students are mainstreamed for all or part of the day, it is even more important that providing a welcoming environment is done in a whole-school way. For example, in the six districts studied by Umansky et al. (2018), a variety of strategies were used to make students feel welcome in the school community, such as taking pictures and making videos that introduce students to the school, accompanying students on the bus to and from school, and/or providing students with peer mentors to help them adjust to their new surroundings. At the school described by Bajaj & Suresh (2018), relationships between students and school staff were key supports to creating a welcoming environment:

> Within the school, adults strive to make students feel safe, welcome, and trusted in big and small ways. Advisors check-in with their students daily about their grades and weekly about their lives in community circles. The Wellness Center is open throughout the day for drop-in visits by students who need help with social service applications, health appointments, or who just need a snack or a socio-emotional breather. The intentional focus on building safe spaces and trusting relationships with adults is evident in the strong community at the school. (p. 94)

Saulsbury-Molina's (2019) study provides both a schoolwide example of a parade held on United Nations Day which invites students to share about their cultural backgrounds and come together as a community to celebrate their diversity, as well as an individual example of a teacher who opens her classroom to Muslim students at lunchtime during Ramadan so that they don't have to sit in the lunchroom with students who are eating while they are fasting (p. 60).

Instructional staff

Many teachers provide socioemotional support for SLIFE within their classrooms. Qualified staff who have the experience and training to be able to recognize the particular socioemotional needs of SLIFE, and to knowledgably support these needs, are the foundation of a high-quality SLIFE program. In Cohan and Honigsfeld's (2017) study, bilingual teaching assistants supported students academically and socially

and helped them balance work and school commitments. In Saulsbury-Molina's (2019) case study, teachers played a critical role in students' socioemotional health:

> Because students spend the bulk of their time with classroom teachers, both the observational and interview data indicate that much of the socio-emotional support provided to students comes from the teachers. Even though they lack formal training in trauma or counseling, the teachers demonstrate awareness of their students' backgrounds and compassion for the students. (p. 64)

Training and professional development for teachers around the experiences of refugees, cross-cultural awareness, and trauma could help further equip teachers of SLIFE to serve these students and address their socioemotional needs.

Counseling staff

As discussed above in the section on academic success, Cohan and Honigsfeld (2017) noted the importance of engaging a wide range of school and district staff in supporting SLIFE. The staff they mention include counselors and psychologists, who are uniquely qualified to address students' mental health and socioemotional needs.

In Saulsbury-Molina's (2019) ethnographic case study of a newcomer program, socioemotional support was being partially addressed through provision of a school counselor and newcomer liaison, who provided counseling to individual students and also worked with small groups of students on language development. However, there was a clear indication that efforts were insufficient to meet the needs of the students in the program, due to the ratio of staff to students, and counselors being assigned to multiple schools and therefore not available every day (Saulsbury-Molina, 2019).

Hos' (2020) ethnographic case study similarly saw school counseling as a key way to address the stress, isolation, and trauma that SLIFE encountered in their migration and acculturation journeys. However, Hos notes that too many students were assigned to each counselor for counselors to be able to sufficiently support each student. In Saucedo's (2019) study of the experiences of newcomers' teachers, a theme was the need not only for *more* counseling, but for *tailored* counseling, including counseling in students' native languages, given the unique experiences, transitions, and traumas of many SLIFE and other newcomers.

Provision of counselors for meeting with SLIFE can be a great support for these students. It appears common, though, for the number of counselors a school or district is able to hire to be insufficient to fully meet their needs. For districts with low numbers of SLIFE this may be a challenge due to a lack of specialized funding for staff who are trained to serve these students. High-incidence districts may be better able to justify funds to hire more counselors, but hiring a sufficient number of counselors with appropriate training and the ability to conduct counseling sessions in students' first languages can remain a significant challenge. Community partnerships, discussed further below, can be one way to provide more counseling support for SLIFE.

Newcomer support staff

A few studies noted the creation of positions to specifically support newcomer students or groups of newcomers such as refugees or SLIFE. In Umansky et al.'s (2018) study, "[d]istricts... created new positions or adapted existing positions to support [newcomers], including positions such as refugee

liaisons, community liaisons, and newcomer graduation specialists" (p. iv). Four of the six districts studied provided supports with the help of outreach coordinators or other personnel specializing in school-community partnerships (Umansky et al., 2018). Some of the support provided by these staff included helping students find appropriate methods of transportation to and from school, introducing them to school and classroom routines, and helping to connect them and their families with additional resources and services beyond what is provided at school (Umansky et al., 2018). This type of support can also be provided by other staff within a school or district and become part of the practices of a school community in recognition of the primacy of socioemotional health for these students. The newcomer program in Saulsbury-Molina's (2019) study similarly had a newcomer liaison who provided direct support to students and a nonprofit coordinator who cultivated community partnerships in support of all students, especially newcomers and refugees.

Schoolwide initiatives

Programmatic socioemotional support for SLIFE in some cases occurs within the context of school- or district-wide initiatives that support all students, but which may be particularly helpful or necessary for SLIFE. For example, in Saulsbury-Molina's (2019) case study:

> when considering the affective needs of students, the coalition did recommend a school-wide initiative to support the socio-emotional health of all students. This suggestion needs approval at different levels within the district since it impacts more than just the newcomer program and will necessitate greater resources than currently exist. (p. 116)

The approvals and structure for these types of initiatives may be more complex but may also gain support as they are more broadly applicable and useful for all students. Staff in Saulsbury-Molina's (2019) study also indicated these initiatives could support SLIFE after they have left the newcomer program, since they would be able to continue to receive services once they enter a different program or mainstream classes. For example, students could continue to meet with their counselor after exiting the newcomer program. Activities like setting classroom norms or a social contract which can be done collaboratively within a newcomer class could also be expanded to take place on a schoolwide level. The experience of co-constructing school culture is thought to make the community more welcoming and inclusive for all students, both SLIFE and non-SLIFE (Salva & Matis, 2017). The design of schoolwide socioemotional initiatives should be approached carefully, however, considering the diverse socioemotional needs of students at the school and taking steps to understand students' cultural contexts in order to promote cultural responsiveness and sensitivity.

Community partnerships

When schools or districts encounter difficulties in meeting the socio-emotional needs of SLIFE due to the number of students needing support, or due to specific types of expertise needed for addressing students' needs, community partnerships can sometimes provide support for schools and students. These community-based organizations may also have the cultural and linguistic knowledge to more effectively serve students who are part of their cultural communities or who share some cultural practices or linguistic backgrounds. These organizations can in some cases serve as cultural brokers between schools and families and bridge the linguistic and cultural divides. In Saulsbury-Molina's (2019) study, nonprofit partnerships were one of a few key resources in place for supporting students' socioemotional needs. A nonprofit coordinator was placed on the elementary school campus where the newcomer program is hosted; she had been placed at this location due to the needs of the refugee

students, although her work supported all students at the school and a range of services, including "before school and afterschool tutoring, mentoring, counseling, helping families find food-bank locations, supplying families with toiletries, giving students clothing, and providing school supplies" (Saulsbury-Molina, 2019, p. 39).

Umansky et al.'s (2018) study of six school districts found reliance on community partnerships to be a strategy in all districts, providing a wide range of supports to students and families, including mental health services, as well as providing for basic needs, which can of course, in turn, provide support for the socioemotional health of students and their families.

> To varying degrees, all districts collaborated with community partners to offer wraparound services to [newcomer] students and families (including services that went beyond addressing [newcomers]' educational needs, addressing needs related to housing, food and nutrition, clothing, physical and mental health, supplementary education, adult language learning, and/or translation). In most cases, these services were coordinated by district- or school-based personnel who served as school-community brokers. These services tended to be most extensive for refugee students and families, as resettlement agencies and related organizations were often involved in ensuring that families were supported in all aspects of their transition, especially in the early phases. In three districts, community-wide support networks were in place to facilitate communication between school districts and other organizations serving [newcomers], especially refugees. (Umansky et al., 2018, p. 30)

Four of the districts in their study had refugee-specific community partnerships as well, including partnerships with resettlement agencies and faith-based organizations that provided targeted support for refugees in need of housing, medical services, and help enrolling children in school (Umansky et al., 2018).

Community partnerships were also a core strategy of the school described by Bajaj and Suresh (2018). One such partnership allowed the school to provide counselors who speak a range of languages, and thus offer home-language counseling support to students that is culturally responsive (Bajaj & Suresh, 2018). Another partnership with a community soccer organization showed positive impacts for students at the school:

> Through their afterschool program and strong adult-student relationships, students build cross-cultural friendships, learn how to communicate in English and engage with each other and with adults about difficult topics, and find a safe place in a sport that they have often grown up loving. Coaches are very intentional in their conversations with students and in their circles during practice about building up students' socio-emotional skills and trust in each other. (Bajaj & Suresh, 2018, p. 95)

Community partnerships can take many forms and can be a way to provide positive relationships for SLIFE with adult counselors and mentors.

4.2 Instructional Practices for Supporting Socio-Emotional Needs

Instructional practices for SLIFE need to address students' socioemotional health in addition to academics due to the hardships and traumas experienced by many of these students. Teachers and other instructional staff can support students socioemotionally through the way instruction is planned

and implemented. Some of the practices that can contribute to SLIFE's socioemotional health are discussed below.

4.2.1 Assets-based instruction

While SLIFE may have not had the same opportunities to learn as their non-SLIFE counterparts, that does not mean they cannot learn or have learning difficulties. Grounded in this reality, an assets-based instruction communicates to students that what they bring to the classroom is valuable, and, ultimately, that they are valuable. A number of studies on SLIFE and newcomer students emphasize the importance of this type of approach for newcomers and SLIFE (e.g., Bajaj & Suresh, 2018; Hos, 2020).

López, Lee, and Tung's (2020) evaluation of a New England district's summer program for ELs, many of whom were newcomers, emphasized the assets-based approach of the program and how this contributed to the program's success in not only teaching students English, but communicating the value of students' backgrounds, families, and communities, leading to stronger relationships between teachers and students as well as ongoing community partnerships.

As previously mentioned, DeCapua and Marshall's (2011) Mutually Adaptive Learning Paradigm, or MALP, considers the assets students bring and builds instruction on those assets: "In MALP-driven instruction, the teacher acknowledges and uses what the SLIFE bring with them but also provides pathways to new and different aspects of learning that their students will need in order to achieve academic success" (p.40). The MALP bridges students' assets with the educational goals of U.S. schooling and affirms the value of students' backgrounds.

Within this type of instructional approach, educators and students focus on what they can do, rather than what they cannot do (Moll et al., 1992). This involves setting attainable goals and integrating the appropriate scaffolding so that students can make progress towards meeting these goals. In determining goals, SLIFE educators using an assets-based approach may need to prioritize certain competencies and skill sets over others, depending on the academic, linguistic, and social-emotional background of each student and/or the program resources available. Because of the diversity within SLIFE, successful implementation of an assets-based approach requires careful individualization of learning plans and differentiated instruction, both featured instructional techniques described above.

The first step of introducing an assets-based approach into a newcomer program is to make sure that all stakeholders (teachers, administrators, community members, and the students themselves) are made explicitly aware of the strengths SLIFE bring to school and the positive impact those strengths will have on the school community and the academic experiences of all students (Salva & Matis, 2017). The next challenge is reinforcing students' beliefs in the value and potential of their strengths through providing examples of other SLIFE who may have experienced similar challenges and persevered. Through centering student experiences and perspectives, an assets-based approach positions SLIFE as legitimate participants in their new U.S. school community, which in turn may increase their motivation and engagement in coursework, all of which should be similarly framed in terms of how students can leverage what they already know to tackle new concepts and skills.

4.2.2 Trauma-informed instruction

Trauma-informed approaches to instruction provide support on multiple levels for SLIFE who have experienced trauma, just as they do for non-SLIFE students affected by trauma. These approaches to instruction "require administrative buy-in and support, trauma-sensitive classroom practices, positive

and restorative responses to behavior, policy and procedure changes, teacher and staff professional development, and strong cross-system collaboration among school staff and mental health professionals" (Thomas, Crosby, & Vanderhaar, 2019, p. 423). A recent review of trauma-based instruction summarizes these approaches as largely addressing three categories: "(a) building knowledge—understanding the nature and impact of trauma; (b) shifting perspectives and building emotionally healthy school cultures; and (c) self-care for educators" (Thomas, Crosby, & Vanderhaar, 2019, p. 426).

Part of a trauma-informed instructional approach is being able to recognize the signs of trauma. DeCapua and Marshall (2020) recommend that teachers watch students for signs of trauma and may want to refer students for counseling in some cases:

> If teachers find SLIFE exhibiting any or a combination of these symptoms of possible cultural dissonance that do not subside or that appear extreme, it is important that they try to talk with the students, and, if appropriate, refer them to counseling/guidance services. Some common symptoms that can be indicators of trauma are:
>
> - depression, extreme tiredness, or fatigue
> - sleep disturbances
> - self-destructive behaviors
> - physical symptoms such as constant headaches or illnesses not attributable to viral or bacterial infections (e.g., severe indigestion, headaches)
> - strong agitation, frustration, and/or unexplained outbursts of anger
> - significant increase in appetite and consequent weight gain
> - withdrawal from group activities
>
> (pp. 25-26)

It is essential to note that signs of trauma are diverse in terms of their presentation, and some might be unexpected manifestations of trauma for those without training or those without experience in diagnosing and treating trauma in students from various backgrounds and cultures. The ways trauma manifests and the extent to which children are willing to talk about their feelings and experiences can differ based on students' cultural backgrounds. Equipping teachers to identify potential signs of trauma and to support students within the classroom can help teachers do this work effectively.

Districts in Umansky et al.'s (2018) study provided professional development for teachers on refugees and trauma-informed instruction, and training on trauma-informed instruction was identified as a need in Saulsbury-Molina's (2019) study of a newcomer program. The school described by Bajaj & Suresh (2018) also emphasized trauma-informed education as a core part of its approach. In this school, teachers meet weekly determine what academic and social interventions are needed for students who are struggling in the classroom (Bajaj & Suresh, 2018) and in some cases referred students to a student services team which included school counselors.

4.2.3 Relevancy

Instruction that covers topics relevant to SLIFE's experiences can support them not only academically but also socio-emotionally. Students' perceptions that their experiences and backgrounds are

understood and valued within the classroom can support their socioemotional health and engagement in classroom instruction. DeCapua and Marshall (2011) emphasize the importance of relevancy for SLIFE:

> For SLIFE, to a much greater extent than most students, material must be seen as in some way immediately relevant for them to engage. Relevance in this sense indicates some type of immediate benefit for the students that they can derive from the lesson beyond simply saying that the material will be on a forthcoming test or may appear as an item on a required standardized assessment. (p.38)

For example, DeCapua and Marshall (2020) give the example of having students bring in family pictures for a lesson on genetics or including a survey of personal eating habits as part of a lesson on nutrition. Teachers can also draw on students' areas of knowledge that they bring from their home lives and countries (e.g., agriculture, animal husbandry, construction, care-taking) and incorporate these into instruction in culturally responsive ways (DeCapua & Marshall, 2020).

4.2.4 Effective intercultural communication

Communication between SLIFE and their teachers is intercultural at its core, involving not only differences of language, oral interaction norms, and cultural background, but differences regarding the expectations of the schooling context as well. One way for teachers to think about this communication is through DeCapua and Marshall's Intercultural Communication Framework (ICF) (DeCapua & Marshall, 2020; Marshall & DeCapua, 2013; DeCapua, Smathers, & Tang, 2009). This framework is built on three principles: "(1) establish and maintain ongoing, two-way communication; (2) identify priorities in all the cultures; and (3) make associations between the familiar and unfamiliar" (DeCapua & Marshall, 2020, p. 31). The first principle is manifested through teachers and other staff listening to students and their families, learning about their personal stories and cultures, and providing them with key information about the school context. The second principle starts by acknowledging that priorities are cultural, identifying school priorities and students'/families' priorities, and aiming to accommodate the highest priorities of all stakeholders. For example, school staff should not assume that SLIFE will know that attendance is a priority and may need to make this clear. Conversely, some SLIFE may believe that they should have freedom of movement within the classroom, and teachers could make allowances for less restriction within the classroom. The third principle means that teachers acknowledge the experiences and knowledge SLIFE bring to the classroom and make new learning expectations accessible to students by drawing on concepts and ideas familiar to their students (DeCapua & Marshall, 2020). This type of approach is foundational to helping SLIFE feel seen and supported within an instructional context, and can support students' socioemotional needs, as well as academic needs, within the classroom.

A framework like the ICF can help educators in navigating difficult conversations as part of supporting SLIFE in the classroom. Saulsbury-Molina (2019) stated that the teachers in the newcomer program she studied "will continue to make spaces in their classrooms for difficult conversations in order to support the socio-emotional health of students" (p. 111). The teachers were an important part of the socioemotional support for students and needed to navigate conversations about difficult topics and traumatic experiences. The teacher in Hos' (2020) ethnographic case study similarly provided a safe, welcoming environment and socioemotional support to her students during the course of instruction, which contributed to students' abilities to participate and succeed in the classroom environment.

4.2.5 Developing caring relationships with students

Relationships are essential to effectively meeting SLIFE's socio-emotional needs. DeCapua and Marshall (2011) emphasize the impact of caring for SLIFE students and emphasize this is not just beneficia for them as individuals but may be the expectation of some SLIFE students who believe that the role of a teacher should primarily be relational rather than academic. They state, "In many collectivistic cultures, the teacher is viewed as a part of the students' extended group or network" (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011, p. 38). Studies of the experiences of Latino newcomer students further demonstrate this, as students believed teachers should care about them and the importance of these relationships to the students (Valenzuela, 1999; De Jesús & Antrop-González, 2006). When teachers are able to communicate care to their students, it can provide a foundational step in constructing a trauma-informed, culturally responsive classroom.

4.3 Family and Community Connections

There are a wide range of ways in which schools and districts are partnering with community organizations and connecting with SLIFE families and communities. These practices can contribute to a sense of interconnectedness and belonging within a school community, honor SLIFE backgrounds and cultures, provide critical support to refugee and newcomer families, and help to build an inclusive, supportive educational experience for SLIFE. Community building is a key ingredient of inclusive education, defined as "providing each student with an authentic sense of belonging to a school classroom community where difference is expected and valued" (Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011, p. 649).

The importance of family and community connections in newcomer programs is well established. Creating connections to students' families and home learning cultures has been recognized as a characteristic of a successful newcomer program for at least a decade (Short & Boyson, 2012). Conversely, when there is lack of connection between school staff and SLIFE families, this can negatively impact everyone involved. Ruiz-de-Velasco and Fix (2000) identified the origin of inconsistent or weak relationships between school staff and immigrant guardians in their study as being the cultural differences in how each party perceived the role and responsibilities of the other. Teachers reported frustrations with parents' lack of involvement, while parents reported language barriers as large obstacles to communication with school staff and participation in events (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000). Parents also reported a sense of intimidation and a lack of familiarity with when and how to interact with teachers or administrators due to their own experiences with interrupted schooling and cultural differences around parental involvement (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000). Ruiz-de-Velasco and Fix's study highlights the need for and importance of intercultural communication and understanding. In recent years, many schools and districts have been identifying ways to support mutual understanding, build cross-cultural community, and draw on community resources to build relationships and support families, and below are a few examples from the literature of ways in which this is being done.

4.3.1 Learning about and honoring students' communities

One way to get to know students and their communities is to visit them and learn directly from them about who they are—their cultures, languages, and experiences. A teacher in Hos and Kaplan-Wolff's (2020) ethnographic study conducted home visits before and during the school year to get to know students' cultures and families and to make sure they were reflected in the curriculum, teaching practices, and learning materials. Teachers at the school studied by Bajaj and Suresh (2018) conducted Community Walks, in which they learn about students' communities together.

Learning about students' home communities can also be done as part of school events. The school district in Saulsbury-Molina (2019) invited refugee-background parents to present about their home countries and cultures at school assemblies. These connections with students' families and communities, whether through large- or small-scale interactions or individual- or team-based efforts, can help members of the school community learn about one another and build mutual respect and understanding. This can also contribute to students' socioemotional health and wellbeing, as this knowledge can be put into practice by teachers within their classrooms.

There are a number of ways to honor students' cultural communities within the school environment. Signs can be posted in different languages. Students' home countries can be highlighted in school visual displays and at events. These must be done only through learning and relationships with members of these communities (e.g., students, families, community members) to ensure they are done in culturally sensitive and appropriate ways. Creative ways to honor students' home cultures may be appropriate for some contexts as well, for example, growing fruits and vegetables from students' home countries in a school garden (Bajaj & Suresh, 2018).

4.3.2 Partnerships to support students and families

Community partnerships can also provide directly for students' and families' needs. Opportunities for partnerships may include:

Translation services

A basic, but critical, need for many recently arrived immigrant families is translation services. The school district in Saulsbury-Molina (2019) paid for third-party, phone-based translation service that helped facilitate communication between teachers and parents:

> This third-party service allows the teachers to communicate with parents in any language and does not depend on print literacy in English. Teachers are able to authentically engage with parents using available resources and address a common barrier to the education of refugee-background populations. The lead teacher expressed that sometimes teachers also use this resource when they are meeting face-to-face with parents if a translator from the local charity is not available. This service proved to be much better than when teachers attempted to use online text-based translators or sent notes home with students. (p. 61)

Information about school policy and practice

Families also need information about the educational context in which their children are situated and the policies and practices in place at various levels of school governance (e.g., local, state, and federal). Different modes of communication may need to be engaged depending on families' abilities with English as well as their first-language literacy skills. One state in Umansky et al.'s (2018,) study created "a video for parents to inform them of resources and rights at the state level" as part of their intake process for newcomers (p. vi). Another strategy is to invite legal agencies to present at the school (Bajaj & Suresh, 2018).

Parent courses

Refugee parents may benefit from classes on a range of topics, including English language and literacy, job skills, cultural orientation, and navigating aspects of the U.S. legal system. For some families, modifications to how information is provided will be needed due to limited first-language literacy skills.

The school described by Bajaj & Suresh (2018) conducted classes for parents as part of its community-oriented approach.

Career guidance

Community members and local organizations are excellent resources for students and parents to learn about a variety of career paths and what it takes to achieve particular goals. For example, community members and neighbors can share information about career paths at school (Bajaj & Suresh, 2018).

Provision for basic needs

Refugee families often come to the U.S. with significant socioeconomic needs. School-community partnerships can help to identify and meet these needs. For example, food insecurity could be addressed through a school partnership with a mobile food bank (Bajaj & Suresh, 2018).

4.3.3 Instructional connections

Community and family connections can also play a significant role in supporting students within the classroom, and this can be done in a variety of ways. A teacher in Hos and Kaplann-Wolff's (2020) study incorporated personalized writing assignments in which students shared about their home experiences so that teachers could tailor future instruction accordingly and make connections between students' coursework and home life. Another way to create connections is encouraging and supporting families in reading at home with their children in order to create a communal learning environment (Miles & Sweetland, 2001).

Purinton's (2021) study of a summer newcomer program includes a curriculum map created to support teachers and offers a number of ideas for enhancing home-school-community connections. Some examples of school assignments for students include creating, discussing, and displaying family trees; working with family members to identify activities that can be done in their community; and asking family members about their favorite foods in their home country and the U.S. and sharing a drawing of these with a peer or the class (Purinton, 2021). The curriculum map also includes ideas for inviting community members into the instructional context, for example, having a bilingual district employee discuss bilingual services and supports available to students and families; having a representative from a local health clinic share about health services available and related careers; and having a bilingual restaurant owner or other local business owner discuss their career (Purinton, 2021).

4.3.4 Community partnership case study

This section has provided an overview of ways in which community partnerships can support the wellbeing of SLIFE and their families. The partnership described here provides a case study of the type of partnership that can increase SLIFE's sense of community within and beyond the school.

López, Lee, and Tung (2020) describe a newcomer summer enrichment program that partnered with local non-profit, community-based organizations to offer afternoon activities like drama, dance, and taekwondo classes to supplement the academic programming students received in the morning. The newcomer summer enrichment academy also partnered with the International Center, which supported refugee and immigrant groups in the greater community with resettlement, education, and career advancement programming. This partnership helped the newcomer summer academy connect with families, because the International Center was able to serve in an intermediary role to connect parents/guardians with the teachers.

> The Academy recognized the importance of partnering with their local newcomer community organization and closely collaborated with them to recruit families to participate in the program— this was particularly helpful for families that were recent arrivals and the Center was able to serve as a bridge between families and the district" (López, Lee, & Tung, 2020, p. 96)

Some of the newcomer students were also involved with the International Center's programming before, after, or in addition to the summer Academy, so the connection between the summer program and the Center helped create a sense of community and consistency for these students. It also helped Academy teachers learn more about their students so they could provide more individualized instruction during their classes. "Through the support of their community organizations, the Academy's staff members learned to be more aware of their students' cultures and experiences and tried to provide lessons that are culturally appropriate" (López et al., 2020, p. 94).

5. Conclusion

As noted in the introduction, the purpose of this literature review is to support a larger research project about SLIFE in Massachusetts. By looking at both macro-level issues of policy and identification as well as considering the available research on the day-to-day academic, social, and emotional needs of SLIFE, we sought to report existing information on who SLIFE are and what various types of supports, services, and resources have been recommended when working with SLIFE in U.S. schools. We hope this report will serve as a resource for educators, programs, and districts looking to further develop the ways in which they welcome SLIFE into their classrooms.

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