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Effective Curriculum for English Learner Success: **Introduction**



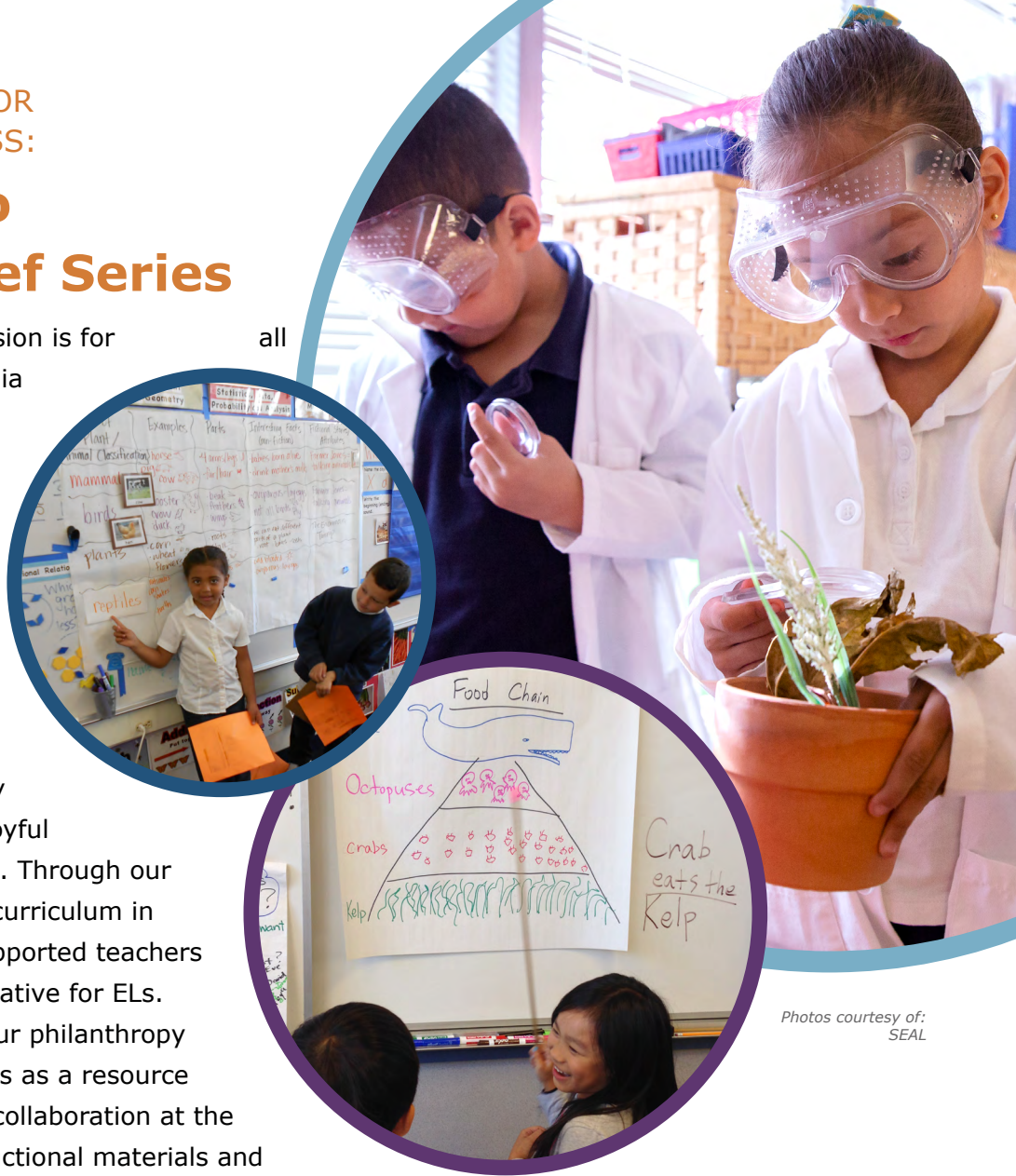
**EL Curriculum
Brief Series**

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Introduction to Curriculum Brief Series

At Sobrato Philanthropies, our vision is for all English Learners (ELs) in California to engage, learn, and thrive. Since 2008, we have engaged educators serving EL students to strengthen the teaching and learning happening in classrooms across the state. Today, we also partner with parents, students, advocates, researchers, and policymakers to ensure schools have what they need to provide a rigorous and joyful education to ELs and all students. Through our work, we have seen that strong curriculum in the hands of well-trained and supported teachers has the potential to be transformative for ELs. We offer this series of briefs to our philanthropy colleagues and other stakeholders as a resource to spark continued learning and collaboration at the intersection of high-quality instructional materials and educational equity for ELs.



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Curriculum and instruction are at the very heart of schooling, shaping both what and how students are taught. Curriculum is centrally about what is taught in schools and students cannot learn what they are not taught. Instruction is what teachers do with curriculum to engage students in learning the materials. For ELs, teachers must adapt both curriculum and instruction to help students learn a new language, and simultaneously master the same academic skills and content as their English-speaking peers. Efforts to create schools that reject persistent historic patterns of failing to meet the needs of ELs require curriculum that embeds strong language development, culturally and linguistically responsive content, and scaffolding approaches that ensure meaningful access to the full standards-based curriculum. Philanthropy has an important role to play in supporting the development, adoption, and effective use of such curriculum. This series of briefs, “Effective Curriculum for English Learner Success,” grapples with several aspects of curriculum and materials that are key to philanthropic investment in educational equity reform for ELs.

Each brief focuses on different aspects of what it means to address the “curriculum” portion of creating EL responsive and effective schools. The first brief sets out definitions, rationale, and overall indicators of effective EL curriculum. The second brief explores the relationship between curriculum materials and the teachers who deliver the curriculum – with implications for the kind of investments in curriculum and professional learning to make a difference in strengthening education for ELs. The third brief speaks to the diversity within the EL population that has implications for what curriculum needs to address, and the diversity of settings and contexts in which EL education takes place that call for specific curriculum. The fourth brief summarizes the implications for philanthropy and the relationship between curriculum and the broader systems of EL education that must be addressed in tandem with curriculum and materials in order to ensure that ELs receive the schooling they need. An appendix includes descriptions of Bright Spots that illustrate various levers and approaches towards strengthening EL curriculum as well as a Glossary of Terms used throughout the briefs.

Together, these briefs are written to inform philanthropy and education leaders more broadly about issues of curriculum, considerations for funding curriculum, and opportunities to leverage curriculum to impact the movement for strong EL education in California and around the country.

This series of briefs was conceived and authored by Laurie Olsen, Ph.D. We are grateful for review and input provided by Alesha Moreno-Ramirez (Director, Multilingual Support Division, California Department of Education), Crystal Gonzales (Executive Director, English Learners Success Forum), and Nicole Knight (Executive Director, English Language Learner and Multilingual Achievement, Oakland Unified School District).

LIST OF BRIEFS

Brief 1. The Access and Equity Imperative of English Learner Responsive Curriculum: Definitions and Considerations

Brief 2. English Learner Responsive Curriculum and Teaching: The Right Materials in the Right Hands

Brief 3. Curriculum for the Diversity of English Learner Needs and Contexts

Brief 4. Building a System of Effective English Learner Responsive Curriculum: Implications for Philanthropy

Appendix: Bright Spots and Glossary of Terms

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