



Impact Story: Capacity Building for Multilingualism

Hawai'i is the northernmost island group in Polynesia and the 50th state of the United States. Hawai'i is made up of 137 islands, 8 of which are inhabited (Hawai'i, Maui, Kaho'olawe, Lāna'i, Moloka'i, O'ahu, Kaua'i, and Ni'ihau). The total population of Hawai'i is approximately 1,415,000 and the it's official language is 'Ōlelo Hawai'i (Hawaiian), although the majority of the population speaks English primarily. Hawai'i's public school system is unified under a single school district and divided into 15 "Complex Areas". In total, the Hawai'i Department of Education (HIDOE) is comprised of 167 elementary schools, 38 middle schools, 33 high schools, 17 multilevel schools, and 36 charter schools.

Region 19 Comprehensive Center (R19CC) partnered with the Hawai'i Department of Education (HIDOE) to address a key problem laid out by their 2017-2021 Strategic Plan: the large achievement gap between high-needs students, including English Learners (ELs), and their peers. This disparity was predicted to widen due to HIDOE's newly adopted state standards assessment system. Through a comprehensive capacity building plan—which included consultation, feedback, resource sharing, research, and facilitation of meetings and events — R19CC helped the HIDOE's World Language Program roll-out of the Multilingualism for Equitable Education policy initiative, which begins to tackle this issue through enhanced services for ELs and the larger pool of Hawai'i's multilingual learners.

The World Languages program, under HIDOE's Office of Curriculum and Instructional Design (OCID), focuses on teaching a range of languages that represent the cultures and communities of Hawai'i. This includes the indigenous language, 'Ōlelo Hawai'i (Hawaiian), as well as languages that are "spoken, written, and signed" (HIDOE OCID, 2022). The program's vision is that students show competence in at least two languages, with one of them being English or Hawaiian. This model of multilingual education is based on research which shows that learning a second language helps students to improve in other subjects as well as develop their intellectual, social, and emotional abilities (HIDOE, World Languages Learning Design).

R19CC worked with the World Languages program to build the HIDOE's capacity and strengthen the supports for multilingual programs and their learners. The technical assistance provided by R19CC resulted in a successful symposium, improved policies and aligned standards, an evidence-based program guide, and stronger state-level collaboration around multilingual education.

R19CC Technical Assistance Highlights and Impacts

In Year 1 (2019-2020SY), R19CC helped the World Languages program plan, prepare for, and host the "**Multilingualism and Arts Symposium.**" They provided guidance on format and design of the symposium, found subject-matter experts, and reviewed materials. The symposium was a chance to introduce the Multilingualism for Equitable Education policy to teachers, principals, and complex area staff across the state and build a common understanding of its purpose and goals. Also, the symposium was an opportunity for educators to learn about what other states are doing to help multilingual learners and explore opportunities that might be locally relevant to students in Hawai'i and their school communities. A HIDOE stakeholder explained that because "*the policy is so big—there are Hawaiian language learners, English learners, ASL learners, etc.*", the symposium was "*really about finding a space to allow our educators to learn 'the how'*".

R19CC also provided the Hawai'i State Board of Education with content knowledge, exemplars, and feedback to help them form a **Seal of Biliteracy**. This seal will be awarded to graduating students who demonstrate a high proficiency in both of the state's two official languages (English and Hawaiian), OR either of the state's two official languages and at least one additional language, including American Sign Language. R19CC also consulted with the Board on how to update the official eligibility criteria for SY2022-23. Over 700 seals have since been awarded.

After the Multilingualism for Equitable Education Policy was created and approved by the Board, R19CC offered expert feedback to the World Languages Program and reviewed documents that came out of their SY2021-2022 work with the HIDOE's Multilingualism Advisory Committee. This coaching **helped them to revise the Multilingualism for Equitable Education policy framework, guidance documents, and funding plan for new K-12 language pathways.**

Highlights of R19CC's Technical Assistance to Support HIDOE's Capacity Building for Multilingualism Project

- **Language Symposium:** R19CC assisted in planning and preparing; provided content area experts; and reviewed materials.
- **Seal of Biliteracy:** R19CC helped the state Board establish a Seal of Biliteracy and update student eligibility criteria.
- **Policy Development and Review:** R19CC provided expert feedback and document review.
- **Standards Alignment:** R19CC offered resources and compiled research; facilitated feedback and outside review by ACTFL.
- **Resource Guide:** R19CC compiled examples and evidence-best practices; helped organize and facilitate statewide feedback sessions.

Throughout Years 2 and 3 of the CC program (2020-2021/2021-2022), R19CC guided the HIDOE Standards Review Group through discussions on evidence-based practices in language instruction. Additionally, R19CC put together research on second language learning for the HIDOE to use in **aligning the Hawai'i World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages to the national standards**. Once the standards document was created, R19CC offered support through identifying teachers and community members for feedback and providing an outside review of the standards through the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). The standards document was later revised and approved in October 2022 by the Hawai'i State Board of Education.

Additionally, beginning in Year 2, R19CC contributed resource guide examples and evidence-based practices on progress monitoring and evaluation to **help a teacher leader group develop the Designing K-12 Language Learning Pathway resource guide and then align it to the revised Hawai'i World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages**. This work led to **state-level coalition building for the HIDOE**. With support from R19CC, they were able to get helpful input on the resource guide from the Office of Hawaiian Education, Deaf Education, English Learner, Special Education, American Sign Language, and other internal programs. R19CC helped to organize state-wide feedback sessions with these programs. The CC's contribution included *"providing valuable input on how to approach working with the other programs at the state level to create the resource guide and on how to approach collecting feedback from the Multilingualism Policy Advisory Committee about the draft resource guide"* (HIDOE Education Specialist).

"As a result of the CC's technical assistance, we were able to collect feedback from ACTFL to finalize the draft World Languages standards document that is aligned to the national standards".

- HIDOE Education Specialist

Valued-Added Impacts

Through these engagements, HIDOE TA recipients **learned how to create proficiency targets, align state language education standards to national ones, and align standards to implementation and other supporting documents**. While it is still too early to assess how schools are using multilingualism practices, the HIDOE has noticed how **some schools are making changes to how they approach language instruction** using the resources that have been shared so far. For example, a HIDOE stakeholder reported **that two schools began offering world languages at the**

elementary level, which they thought was “*exciting*”. They connected this new development to the “*culmination of all the multilingual initiatives*” as well as the adoption of the World Language Standards. “*I think it's all these things that have been happening within our system that encourages more teachers and schools to think about ‘How can we incorporate languages?’*”. **Another school has started piloting a dual language program**, which was designed using the standards and materials developed by the HIDOE’s multilingualism initiative. This program was described as meeting “*the multilingual policies criteria provided for dual language programs, which is...one of the program models that the resource guide talks about*” (HIDOE Stakeholder).

Approaches for Sustainable Change

The HIDOE has voiced again and again how central the relationship with the R19CC team has been to the progress they have made on the Multilingualism for Equitable Education initiative. R19CC has been most described as a **thought partner and trusted collaborator whose intimate, working knowledge of the HIDOE has made a great impact**. “*...having... another person who is familiar with our system to ... talk through how to best approach...specific things because it's one thing to talk with others, but it's really important that whoever you talk to also understands the way our system works*” (HIDOE Key Stakeholder).

“I am so thankful for the continued support from the CC to help our department to grow multilingualism. It has been wonderful seeing the growth of the project - from support for the statewide convening (Multilingualism Symposia) to policies and practices that promote multilingualism.”

- HIDOE Key Stakeholder

The HIDOE also shared that **R19CC’s continued flexibility and accessibility** has helped keep the work of the multilingual education project alive and moving forward. These attributes were especially important because of all the project delays and changes to project plans the HIDOE has had to make in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. “*R19CC has been a constant in terms of technical assistance access so that our key multilingualism work can continue with as little disruption as possible*” (HIDOE Education Specialist). Likewise, the HIDOE shared their appreciation for how R19CC connected them to subject matter experts who provided coaching and feedback. This was a “*highlight*” of R19CC assistance that helped the HIDOE to not only obtain important resources but also build the knowledge and experience of staff to identify and apply evidence-based practices (EBPs).

Next Steps

Now in Year 4 (SY2022-2023), the multilingualism project is fully up and running. R19CC continues to provide capacity building technical assistance to the HIDOE as they rollout the new World-Readiness Standards for Language Learning to complex area schools. A part of this rollout includes restarting the annual multilingualism summit that was postponed in Years 2 and 3 due to COVID-19. Additionally, R19CC continues to support the World Languages Program team as they develop professional learning modules and materials to train teachers on the language standards.

The HIDOE has made a lot of progress in reorganizing their language learning program to best support the success of Hawai’i’s diverse student communities. Essentially, the HIDOE has brought all instruction for non-English Language Learners under the single roof of “multilingualism” education from the earlier model that dealt with English Language Learner instruction and foreign languages separately. Multilingualism is the most relevant and responsive paradigm for language education in Hawai’i today. R19CC looks forward to its ongoing collaboration with the HIDOE as they continue to grow the multilingual and multicultural opportunities for their students through this project.

To learn more about Hawaii Department of Education’s multilingualism and world language’s work, please see:

Hawai’i State Board of Education. (2016). *Policy 105-14: Multilingualism for Equitable Education*. Retrieved from: <https://boe.hawaii.gov/policies/Board%20Policies/Multilingualism%20for%20Equitable%20Education.pdf>

Hawai’i State Department of Education. (2022). Hawai’i World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages. Retrieved from: https://docs.google.com/document/d/12Eh4cuH_-EbgvvlUKq1F4tLOViduZinRtqYzj4BQwU/edit

Hawai’i State Department of Education. (2023). Learning Design - World Languages. Retrieved from: <https://learningdesign.hawaiipublicschools.org/standards-based-content/world-languages>

Hawai’i State Department of Education. (2023). Multilingualism. Retrieved from: <https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/TeachingAndLearning/StudentLearning/Multilingualism/Pages/default.aspx>

Hawai’i State Department of Education. (2023). World Languages. Retrieved from: <https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/TeachingAndLearning/StudentLearning/Multilingualism/Pages/WL.aspx>

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