SOMALI STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN MINNESOTA

A Report on the Largest East African Community in Minnesota

Minnesota
Education Equity
Partnership

AUGSBURG
UNIVERSITY.

Minnesota Education Equity Partnership

The Minnesota Education Equity Partnership (MnEEP) uses a race equity lens to transform educational institutions, organizations, and leaders to ensure that students of color and American Indian students achieve full academic and leadership success.

We envision a just society in which an equitable educational ecosystem ensures all students achieve their full potential. Achieving this vision would mean that race is no longer a predictor of educational success. MnEEP utilizes research, policy development, and community empowerment models to build strong networks of communities of color, American Indian communities and education leaders for systems, structural and cultural shifts in education.

MnEEP focuses on five big, bold goals:

Big Bold Goal 1:
Minnesota school systems are culturally responsive in their policies and approaches to education.
Big Bold Goal 2:
Minnesota school climates foster positive student engagement to eliminate discipline gaps by race and support students of color and American Indian students for academic and leadership success.
Big Bold Goal 3:
Minnesota educators reflect student demographics.
Big Bold Goal 4:
Minnesota schools utilize heritage and home language to support academic excellence for English Language Learners and the multilingualism of all students.
Big Bold Goal 5:
Minnesota institutions of higher education will support student achievement by providing greater access and equity to students of color and American Indian students, with a focus on financial aid.

AUGSBURG UNIVERSITY ®

Augsburg University has maintained a strong academic reputation defined by excellence in the liberal arts and professional studies since 1869. A safe and welcoming campus in the heart of Minneapolis, Augsburg offers undergraduate and graduate degrees to more than 3,500 diverse students. In the Augsburg University Education Department, we believe in preparing knowledgeable, responsive teachers committed to educating all learners in a diverse and changing world. Developing a greater understanding of your vocation as an educator is as important as developing the knowledge, skills, and practice of a teacher. Augsburg offers a variety of programs to help future educators make a difference in the lives and learning of P-12 students.

Among the distinctive features of Augsburg's Education Department is a commitment to educating teachers to lead our state's increasingly diverse classrooms. The East African Student to Teacher (EAST) program, funded by the Collaborative Urban Educator program, seeks to increase the number of licensed educators of East African descent in the state. Augsburg's Diversity Pipeline Initiative, a partnership between Augsburg, Minneapolis Community and Technical College, Minneapolis Public Schools, and Saint Paul Public Schools, is developing an infrastructure to help foster smooth transitions into teaching.

SOMALI STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN MINNESOTA

A Report on the Largest East African Diaspora Community in Minnesota

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

Foreword

Rep. Carlos Mariani Rosa, Executive Director of Minnesota Education Equity Partnership:

As the Executive Director of a people-of-color led organization that addresses education inequity, I know that the "Othering" of our newest immigrant neighbors impedes education excellence in Minnesota. Yet, most of our schools were multilingual to accommodate different backgrounds in the 19th century. Some schools today are returning to that approach and are remaking themselves as places of "Belonging". We at MnEEP hope this report inspires conversation and action to expand "communities of belonging" in Minnesota.

As a member of the state legislature, I authored the MN Learning English for Academic Proficiency and Success (LEAPS) Act that established comprehensive support and accountability for Emerging Multilingual Learners. Minnesota stands to benefit from growing our pool of multilingual students to build the talented, highly-skilled workforce Minnesota needs to compete in a global economy.

Our Somali brothers and sisters come to the United States with a hopeful idea of the American Dream. However, their reality on arrival is often disheartening. As a community, we can work together to support education excellence through cultural understanding and welcoming. I hope this report can lead to stronger recognition of student and parent power in academic success. Cross-cultural dynamics matter in our work and connecting diverse communities together is key.

Rep. Ilhan Omar, Assistant Minority Leader of Minnesota State Legislature:

In the past 10 years, the student population of our schools has grown increasingly diverse, but our schools need to do a better job preparing Somali students to succeed and our teachers must have the support they need to make this happen.

Minnesota's diversity should be its greatest asset, but the neglect of Somali students has stifled our progress towards equity and prosperity. I want our children to attend inclusive schools where diversity is respected and acknowledged as a sign of strength. Somali students have something amazing to offer, and every student deserves a nurturing learning environment.

I am in my second legislative session as the first Somali-American State Representative in the country. In that time, I succeeded in securing collaborative urban educator funding from the Minnesota State Legislature to support Augsburg University's East African Student to Teacher program. I represent all Minnesotans in my district, and I want to see students judged not by their skin color or religion but by their contributions to our community.

Dr. Audrey Lensmire, Associate Professor of Education at Augsburg University and EAST Program Director:

Democracy thrives when its practices include valuing a wide range of ideas and perspectives. Public schools can instill a love of democracy when they include diverse people, ideas, and perspectives. Diversity is what makes for high quality schools and a rich democracy.

A diverse teacher workforce is crucial to the success of our diverse preK-12 school-age students. Teachers need to know what to teach, but perhaps more important is their ability to teach the children in front of them. Teachers must understand and value the linguistic, cultural, ethnic, religious, and racial backgrounds and identities of their students and families. My work as the Director of EAST since 2013 has fortified my belief that children of East African descent have a right to have multiple teachers across their educational experiences who look like them.

Much work remains to be done to uphold the promise of public education in a democracy. The educational success of our diverse multilingual students must be our highest priority. Much of the sobering information contained in this report ought to be used as a tool for change in your classroom, your school, or your district. The data is clear. The time is now.

This report aims to describe the multilingual Somali diaspora community in Minnesota and to invite readers to consider innovative practices and policy implementation. We hope to:

- Illustrate positive and negative examples of how Minnesota educators and systems work with Somali students and families to build an educational foundation.
- Recommend promising practices and policy ideas to build on current successes and strengthen academic achievement for all Somali students.
- Guide educators, administrators, advocates, and other stakeholders across our state to better support Somali students and their families.

INTRODUCTION

While most left for the Memorial Day weekend in 2017, a group of about 20 Somali parents got together with the Minneapolis Public Schools superintendent, Ed Graff, and four School Board members to discuss issues specific to their community. Many families talked about the experiences of their special needs students or their children's English language development. Attendees also discussed the need for Somali family engagement and school staff that reflect student demographics. Somali families want to be language and culture, which may impede that engagement.

The central focus of this report is the children and youth of Somali descent who live and go to school in Minnesota. It is important to understand the background of why their families are here, recognize they are born here or elsewhere, and later examine the school experiences they have.

In this report, we present experiences in educating Somali students: public and charter schools, English language development, the lack of Somali teachers, and family engagement. Unfortunately, Somali student achievement in Minnesota, like other English Learners (EL), has been consistently lower than white, native English-speaking peers' academic achievement.[1]

Share Without a High School Diploma/GED, Ages 25-64
Source: MN State Demographic Center. 2016
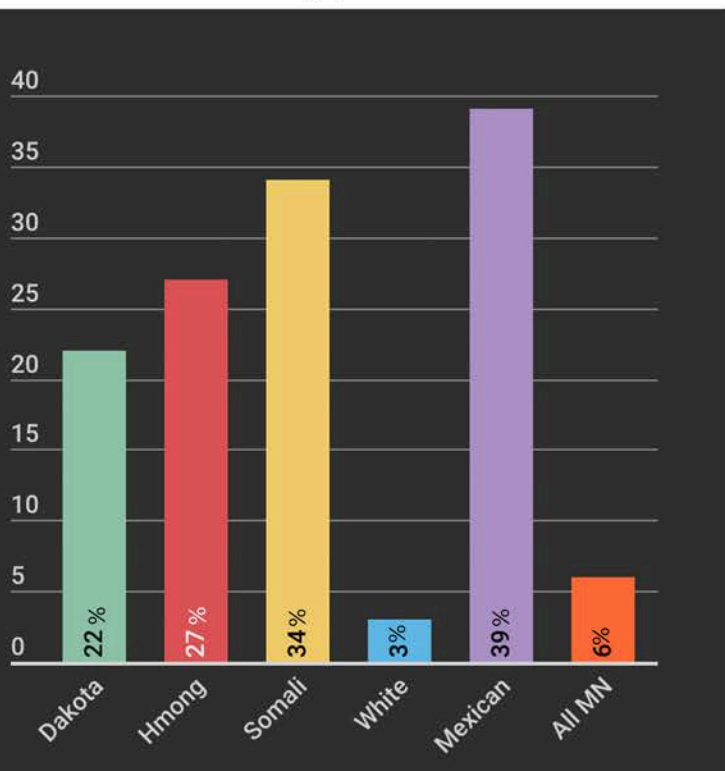
We therefore present recommendations to strengthen Somali student achievement: curriculum and instruction through literacy and native language development, diversifying the teacher workforce, and teachers and families working together. We drew extensively from research, interviews with different people from the diaspora community, and observations.

This report shows how Minnesota educators and systems work with Somali students and families to build a strong educational foundation, and shares promising practices and policy ideas to build on current successes and increase academic achievement for all students. This report should equip teachers, schools, and policymakers with what they ought to consider when creating and implementing equitable policies and practices.

For any diaspora, it is important to retain cultural and historical threads and identity but change and adapt in innumerable ways across places and generations[2]. This report serves as an advocacy tool for the Somali community, Minnesota educators, policymakers, and you, the reader, to strengthen academic achievement for one of the fastest growing EL communities in Minnesota.

IMMIGRANT EDUCATION IN MINNESOTA

Somalis in Minnesota

It is impossible to capture the diversity within the communities that identify as Somali in Minnesota. The community has been in in the state for almost two decades, with the constant arrival of newcomers. They are international as much as local, they are multilingual as well as monolingual, they represent a wide spectrum of income and educational levels, and are seeking and winning political and other leadership positions both in Minnesota and in the Horn of Africa.

Somali Refugee Arrivals to MN, 2007-2016
Source: MN Department of Human Services
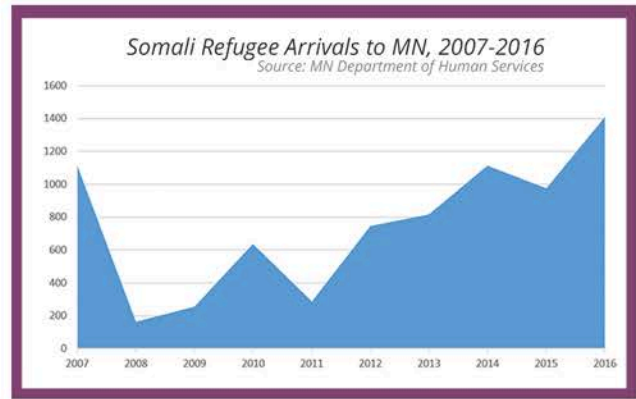
Not all Somalis you meet are refugees. Before the 1990s, a few immigrants in Minnesota came because of economic potential like other immigrants. But, much of the Somali population in Minnesota the past 20 years arrived as refugees because of the ongoing civil war in Somalia[3]. In 1991, clan-based armed opposition groups overthrew the Siad Barre government and have been competing for power ever since[4]. Many Somali refugees were routed to refugee camps in neighboring countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda and Sudan[5], and eventually resettled in that country or went to another country. Just in 2016, almost half of the 2,000 refugees who arrived to Minnesota came from Somalia[6].

REFUGEE JOURNEY

01. War, disasters, persecution and poverty can make is necessary fror people to leave their homes. They may decide to leave slowly, after a long period of their situation getting worse. They could also make the decision suddenly. When events change quickly, there's no time to plan, pack, or even sometimes keep families together.

02. Families are at great risk. They may be attacked or lack food, water, and shelter. They may get lost or not know where they're going and the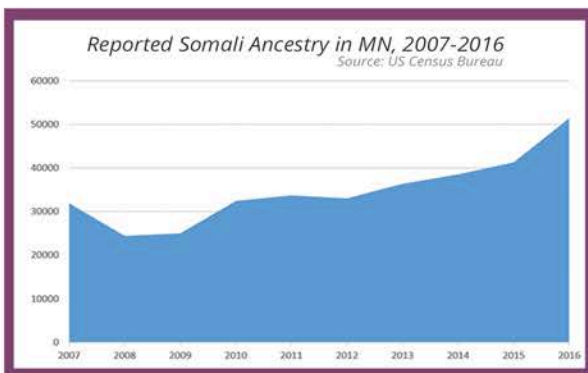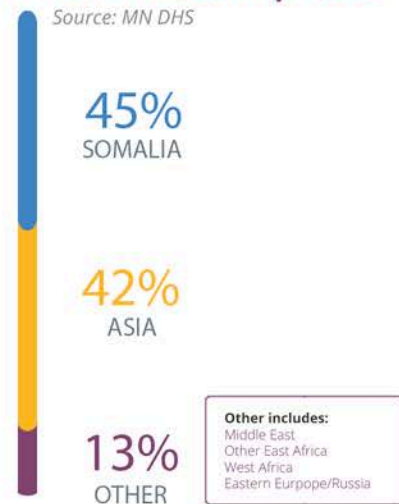y can travel for days, weeks, or even months. People may get turned back from the border or reach terrain that is too dificult to cross.

03. Most people seeking refuge go to another part of their own country, especially if they can't get to the border to escape. They are called Internally Displaced People (IDPs). Unlike refugees, IDPs lack protection under international law. Some people cross the border into another country, and a refugee camp may grow where aid can be delivered. Other refugees also try to get there to receive help. In the new country, refugees may be treated like prisoners and prevented from leaving the camp or moving about freely.

04. When it is safe, or if conditions improve, many displaced return home. If their home is not safe or if someone else has taken their land, many pursue self-sufficiency and local integration in countries of asylum.

REFUGEE ARRIVALS IN MINNESOTA, 2016
Source: MN DHS

45% SOMALIA

42% ASIA

13% OTHER

Other includes:
Middle East
Other East Africa
West Africa
Eastern Eurpope/Russia

Reported Somali Ancestry in MN, 2007-2016
Source: US Census Bureau

Resettlement to Minnesota was attractive because of its high employment rate and extensive charity services[7]. In addition to recently arrived Somalis, many also come to Minnesota from other US states in which they were initially resettled. Now, many of the first resettled refugees have young families, adding to the Somali population. Those migrating to Minnesota from other states, and younger generations, may have more familiarity with American culture and systems, which adds diversity within their experience.

As a result, most of the children and youth in today's schools were born in the US. All Somalis here in Minnesota have unique and complex histories of their time in the state.

The positive influence of the Somali community is apparent in Minnesota. For example in 2016, Ilhan Omar was elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives, the first Somali-American legislator in the US[8]. The Somali community has opened hundreds of businesses across the state[9], charter schools[10], non-profit organizations, mosques and other religious, cultural, and educational centers[11].
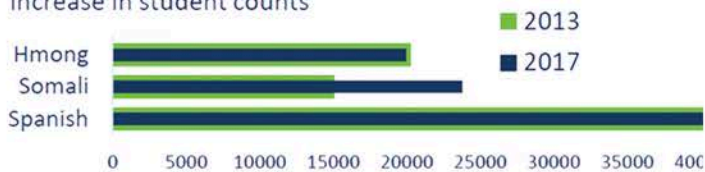
East Africans in Minnesota

Many East African diaspora communities--such as Somali, Kenyan, Eritrean, Ethiopian (Amhara and Oromo), Sudanese, and Djiboutian--have come to call Minnesota home[12]. And, Minnesota continues to have the largest Somali population in the United States[13]. Although a significant East African population lives in the Twin Cities, Greater Minnesota also has large and growing population concentrations[14]. Because 88% of East African languages reported on the Minnesota Language Survey--administered by the MN Department of Education--are Somali[15], we will mostly refer to the Somali culture and population in this report. Additionally, Somali is now the third most spoken language in Minnesota, behind English and Spanish[16].

Minnesota's Top 3 Languages Other than English

Most primary home languages have seen an increase in student counts

	2013	2017
Hmong		
Somali		
Spanish		

0   5000   10000   15000   20000   25000   30000   35000   400

Source: Minnesota Department of Education, Data Reports and Analytics

Additionally, as a result of the work that came out of this project, the Somali focus does not overshadow the need for further research and work with other East African communities. The reality is that Somalis are a significant part of the greater East African community, but it does not mean that others are not strong in their advocacy.

Data Limitations

We note that some data in this report has limitations and we defer to the Somali experience as a result of the MN Department of Education's Language Survey data. Education data to identify Somali students is unavailable at the state level because the MN Department of Education currently uses only the federal race categories[17]. Anyone of African descent would only elect the "Black and African Americans" category. Also, the Minnesota Language Survey has limitations because not all families indicate whether their children speak their native language.

There is "country of origin for foreign born citizens" data available, which states there are 25,668 in Minnesota as of 2016[18], but it is difficult to use since their US-born descendants would not be included in that count. Another workaround is to select "Black" and "English Learner" in education data, however it omits Somali students who are not identified as EL. Therefore, student data at the state level on test scores or graduation rates is unavailable.

Disaggregating academic data to the ethnic level will allow schools to better understand unique "Black and African American" student needs. The data will be available in the 2018-2019 school year as a result of the All Kids Count Act[19]. By having clearer and more accurate data on student backgrounds, schools can become communities of belonging and better support for their needs.

Spotlighting Somali Communities in Minnesota

We looked at data and consulted our partners for insights on students' and families' experiences with Minnesota schools and teachers. Because there are more schools, teachers, and families out there than our time and space in this report could accommodate, we hope to share stories from the following schools and communities.

Family: Nimo Abdullah came to Minnesota in 2009 with five children. She wanted to get a good education for herself and her children. She did not know much about how school worked in the US when she arrived, but she learned quickly with the help of her Somali network in Minnesota. She was proactive by learning how to communicate and how the systems worked such as parent portal, conferences, and speaking to the administration. She placed her children in Head Start and later the Minneapolis Public Schools system. Her children went through EL services and some exited after achieving a proficient score on the ACCESS. Her oldest student struggles with his EL status as a high school student and refuses classes.
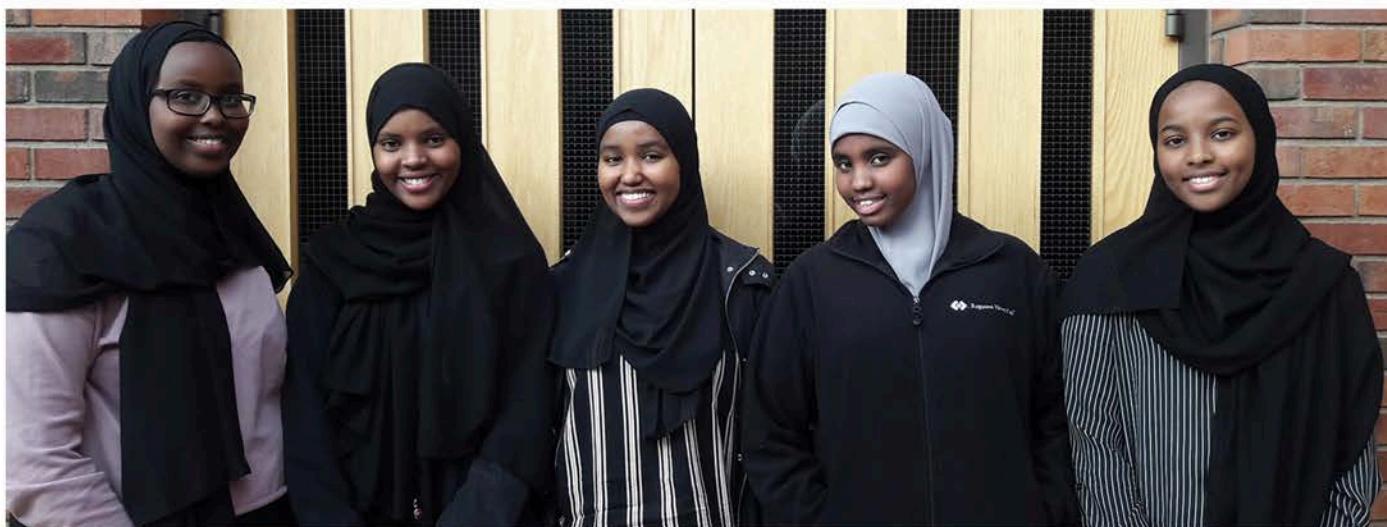
Students: Anisa, Hanan, Hafsa, Anisa A, and Suldano are seniors at Ubah Medical Academy and were all born in Minnesota. Anisa, Hanan, Hafsa, and Anisa A were born in Minnesota. Suldano was born in Nairobi and came when she was two, but moved to Somalia for a few years and came back. Hanan's parents are from Ethiopia and wanted a better life so they followed an uncle who was living in the US. Anisa A moved to Syria for a few years when she was young and eventually moved back. All the girls but one went to charter schools from K-12. Hafsa's parents chose a charter school after attending traditional public schools because they did not feel well supported or integrated. All the students but one attended at least four schools due to various reasons such as moving, the school shutting down, or feeling uncomfortable at the school. Anisa A attended just two, which were an elementary (K-8) and high school due to their high reputation in the community.

Teacher: Mariam Adam is from Somalia. She grew up there, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. Her family resettled in Ohio where her father and uncle were teachers. She studied and worked in business management for ten years, but taught English as a Second Language in the Middle East. She wanted to get an MBA, but found a program in Linguistics and Literacy to be more interesting as a result of her previous teaching experience. She became a licensed teacher in Ohio and later moved to Minnesota. She has been an EL teacher in the New-to-country Accelerated Bilingual Academic Development program for five years at Anne Sullivan Elementary in the Minneapolis Public Schools district.

Charter School: Ubah Medical Academy opened for the 2004-2005 school year with about 90 students. As a public charter high school, Ubah is open to all students, but the program is inclusively designed to meet the unique needs of international students and their families. Ubah is part of a K-12 International Educational System with approximately 400 students, the majority of whom are East African immigrants. In 2017, 99% of students are black (East African) and 35% are EL. 84% of students graduated in four years in 2017.

Public Schools: Discovery Community Elementary School is part of the St. Cloud Public Schools district, and one of its newest schools. Discovery serves students in preschool and grades K-5. In 2017, 54% of Discovery students are black--almost all Somali--and 47% are EL. Discovery uses the co-teaching model where an EL teacher collaborates with the grade teacher to teach a lesson. The Somali population has grown significantly in St. Cloud, which is an opportunity for the district to modify its curricular practices.

North Junior High serves students in grades 6-8 who live on the north and west sides of St. Cloud Public Schools. North is also host to the middle level Chinese Immersion program. In 2017, 40% of students are black but it is unclear how many are Somali, and 29% are EL.

North has an English Academy program for SLIFE: intensive English courses and support in content areas. However a decline in enrollment and funding has led to reduce the number of cohorts and reach of the program. North also uses the co-teaching model and includes a lab where the EL teacher further explains and practices the language of math or reading separately with ELs.
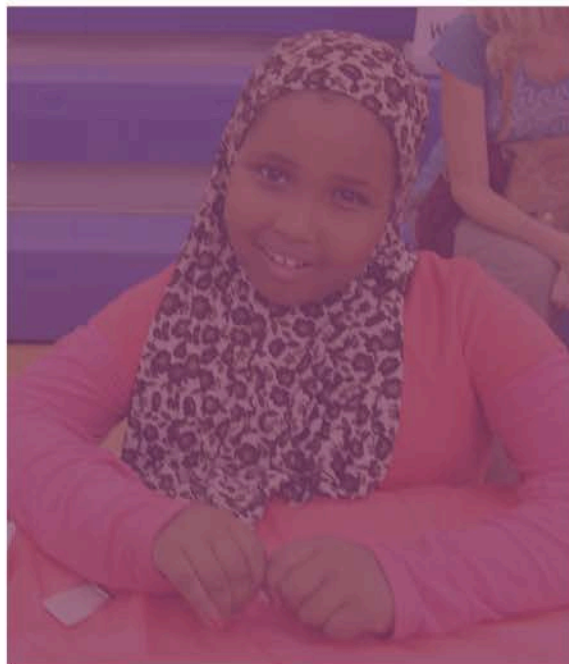
8.4%

According to MDE, 8.4% of Minnesota's K-12 public school students were identified as ELs in the 2016-2017 school year.

Emerging Multilingual Learners

The MN Department of Education (MDE) uses the state law which defines English Learners as students who speak another language at home and are not proficient in the English language,[20] benefit from English language development services. According to MDE, 8.4% of Minnesota's K-12 public school students were identified as ELs in the 2016-2017 school year[21].

Typical titles for students learning the English language in US schools include "English Language Learner" (ELL), or "English Learner" (EL). Some even use the term "Dual Language Learner" (DLL) when describing children from birth to age eight who are learning both languages at once[22].

Long Term English Learners

Long Term English Learners (LTELs) are ELs--typically in middle and high school--who have been in English language development services for more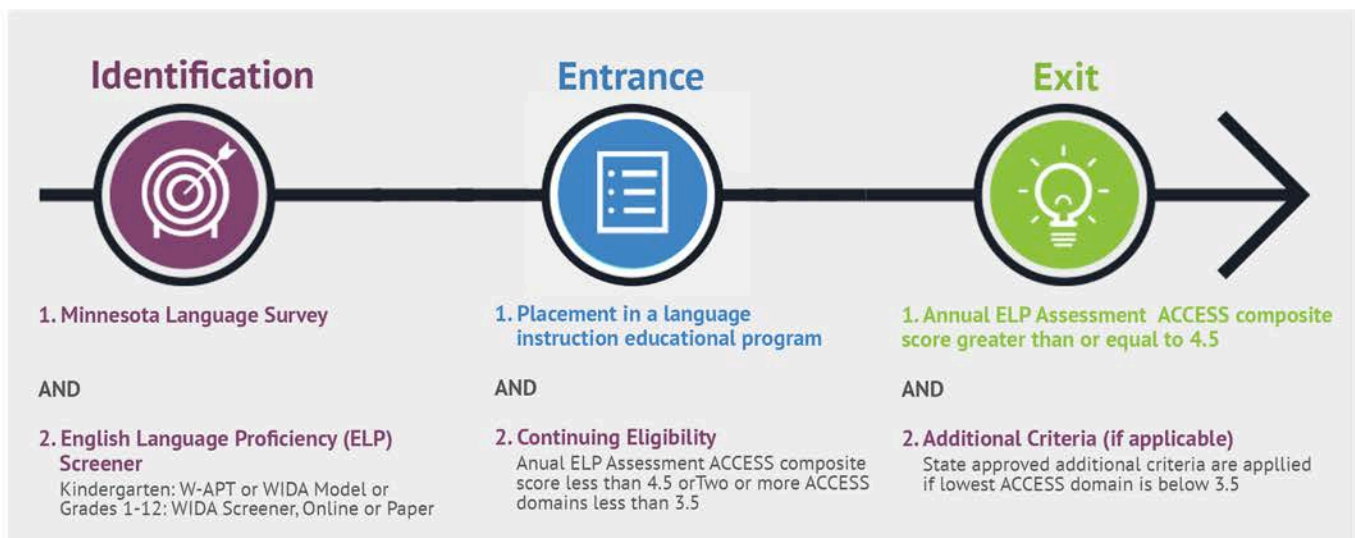 than five years and have not achieved proficiency[23]. Between one quarter and one half of all ELs first enrolled in elementary grades become LTELs.[24] Inconsistent EL programming and curriculum have contributed to LTELs' attitude toward school and their ability to academically succeed[25]. Furthermore, general education teachers often do not recognize who LTELs are, leaving a gap in extended support[26]. EMLs are often functionally multilingual, appearing multilingual at a surface level of conversation but may have difficulty developing abstractions and higher order thinking skills[27]. Integrating academic language development in orality is just as important as multilingual literacy.

As a result of the lack of English language proficiency, LTELs also have low academic performance. Students then become disengaged, passive, and invisible at school, however still say they want to go to college[28]. Although LTELs have dreams of attending college, the lack of support in their academic performance often leads to dropping out. Because of low academic performance and the need for additional EL courses, LTELs often lack access to electives and the full curriculum that would prepare them for college.

Although Minnesota experienced multilingual classrooms in its early days, language policies have focused on "English only" practices since the early 20th century[29], with little regard for the linguistic assets of Dakota and Ojibwe peoples and what immigrants and refugees have brought to the United States. Students who have a background in another language learn better when they have the opportunity to learn it alongside English.[30] Much research shows the importance of building a foundation in a native language when teaching English.

We refer to students with multiple languages in their background as Emerging Multilingual Learners (EML). EMLs with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) may not be literate in their native language typically as a result of conflict or migration. Parents and caregivers of EMLs face issues when enrolling their students in public schools. Often, attention to sustaining or building multilingualism are limited or nonexistent because Minnesota does not have a dual language or immersion school in their language. Some charter schools offer Somali and Arabic[31]. Beginning in 2018, there are statewide entry and exit procedures for EL services. Sometimes, families may refuse services because of a variety of reasons.

Identification

1. Minnesota Language Survey

AND

2. English Language Proficiency (ELP) Screener
Kindergarten: W-APT or WIDA Model or Grades 1-12: WIDA Screener, Online or Paper

Entrance

1. Placement in a language instruction educational program

AND

2. Continuing Eligibility
Anual ELP Assessment ACCESS composite score less than 4.5 orTwo or more ACCESS domains less than 3.5

Exit

1. Annual ELP Assessment ACCESS composite score greater than or equal to 4.5

AND

2. Additional Criteria (if applicable)
State approved additional criteria are appllied if lowest ACCESS domain is below 3.5

Other times, families find the services provided--English language development classes and/or support from an EL teacher--do not address their students' needs. It is imperative that families fully understand what services the school or district offers, how it will benefit their student, know their right to be notified, and refuse services with the recognition their student will take the annual ACCESS exam because they are still classified.

By virtue of students having another language in their family background and heritage, they may be learning languages in addition to English. This does not impede English learning. On the contrary, having other languages help English language development. Minnesota passed significant legislation to support multiple language development as it relates to English learning in schools. The federal education law, Elementary and Secondary Education Act, was recently reauthorized and elevates English language development in school accountability. These state and federal laws recognize the importance of language development in academic achievement.

MN Learning English for Academic Proficiency and Success Act

In 2014, the Minnesota Legislature passed a comprehensive bill that boosted attention to EMLs: the Minnesota Learning English for Academic Proficiency and Success (LEAPS) Act. State Representative Carlos Mariani Rosa and State Senator Patricia Torres-Ray authored the bill, and relied on collaborative research with communities directly affected by Minnesota language policies and practices.

This is unique for legislation since bills are typically researched and written by advocacy and lobby organizations. The lived experience of impacted communities is present in the language, and it treats language as a right and resource, rather than a problem.[32]

The LEAPS Act provides direction to teacher preparation programs, district and school leadership, teachers, and parents by including various areas:

(1) Guidance for English Learner programs: develop academic English proficiency alongside grade-level content knowledge, and multilingual skills development.
(2) Within multilingual skills development, not only will students' native language(s) be nurtured as an asset rather than a deficit, the linguistic skills of all Minnesota students will be affirmed and expanded.
(3) Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) are now recognized and schools are directed to differentiate their services to this population.[33]

The LEAPS Act focuses on academic language education. Academic English is above and beyond social English: it strengthens success in school. Academic English is the language of math, science, social studies, and English language arts.[34] In an interview with Senator Torres-Ray, she explained her research uncovered a general belief that while some parents believed EL support was adequate or even a lot and that an EL is likely to receive three times the revenue in a district, ELs were not necessarily receiving three times the service.[35] Representative Mariani cited a lack of teacher preparation and training, accountability for schools, and clear and consistent guidelines from the state when it comes to EMLs.[36]

As a result of three years of research, school visits, and national and local conversations about the reality of EML support, the MN LEAPS Act was proposed and became law. According to its authors, the law is meant to be inspiring and not over-prescriptive or punitive.

All teachers now required to know how to teach English Learners[37]

(1) All teacher candidates are required to receive training in English language development and content instruction for English learners. Pre-service teachers learn about language development and teacher preparation program curriculum must embed how to support ELs.
(2) All current teachers must gain additional professional development in English language development and content instruction for English learners. The requirement is also part of teacher relicensure.[38]

More funding and will needed to provide required services across the State

Although funding has increased since the passage of the LEAPS Act in 2014,[39] some districts require more support due to rising and diverse EL and SLIFE populations. While funding eligibility has increased to provide EL services to students for up to seven years, the graduation age cap of 21 may not accommodate SLIFE students who need more time to navigate the education system and learn English if they arrive after age 14.[40] One point of exploration and collaboration with high schools is Adult Basic Education, where students can gain vocational skills and be in a more flexible educational setting.

Minnesota's Federal EL Education Funding 2010 to 2017
Source: MN Department of Education, 2017
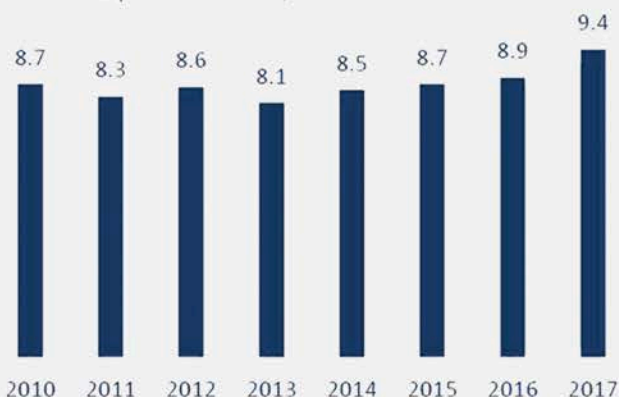
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
8.7	8.3	8.6	8.1	8.5	8.7	8.9	9.4

The implementation of the LEAPS Act has been slower and more complex than anticipated according to teachers, district administrators, and MDE. For example, the parameters of relicensure are vague and only require a short reflection. The lack of standards or clear requirements limit comprehensive teacher preparation and professional development.
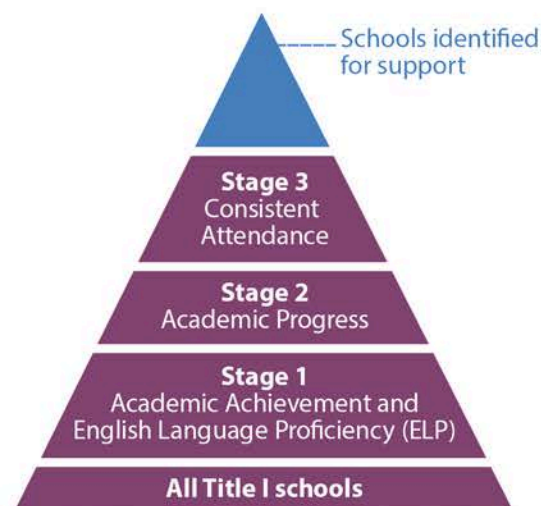
The implementation of the LEAPS Act has been slower and more complex than anticipated according to teachers, district administrators, and MDE.

For example, the parameters of relicensure are vague and only require a short reflection. The lack of standards or clear requirements limit comprehensive teacher preparation and professional development. Teacher preparation programs recognize the law is not specific on what qualifies as training in language development and EL support for all teachers.[41] Standards and rules for teacher preparation are set by the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB, formerly Board of Teaching) and dictate aspects of the curriculum in teacher preparation programs.[42] The former Board of Teaching has not yet set standards and rules for teacher preparation programs to train in language development. Assessment of teacher candidates in edTPA-- a performance-based, subject-specific assessment and support system used by more than 600 teacher preparation programs--include the "English as an Additional Language" performance task. Or, language in the standards for effective practice could be used.

Federal Accountability

The Every Student Succeeds Act is the most recent reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act which was created in 1965 to better serve historically disadvantaged students by providing targeted education funding to US states.

ESSA requires states to now include progress toward English language proficiency as an indicator in their school accountability systems. Such an indicator used to be separate from school accountability, so this inclusion elevates English language instruction. The new requirement creates an increased need to use standardized measurements for ELs and is an opportunity to ensure that Minnesota's education system adequately considers the academic success of this growing student population. Taken together, the state and federal laws of LEAPS and ESSA establish stronger supports and accountability for schools to strengthen language development, whether English or the native language of students. However, Somali students struggle to have, or work much harder for, stronger academic achievement in Minnesota.

_ _ _ _ _ Schools identified for support

Stage 3
Consistent Attendance

Stage 2
Academic Progress

Stage 1
Academic Achievement and English Language Proficiency (ELP)

All Title I schools

SOMALI EXPERIENCE IN MINNESOTA SCHOOLS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT
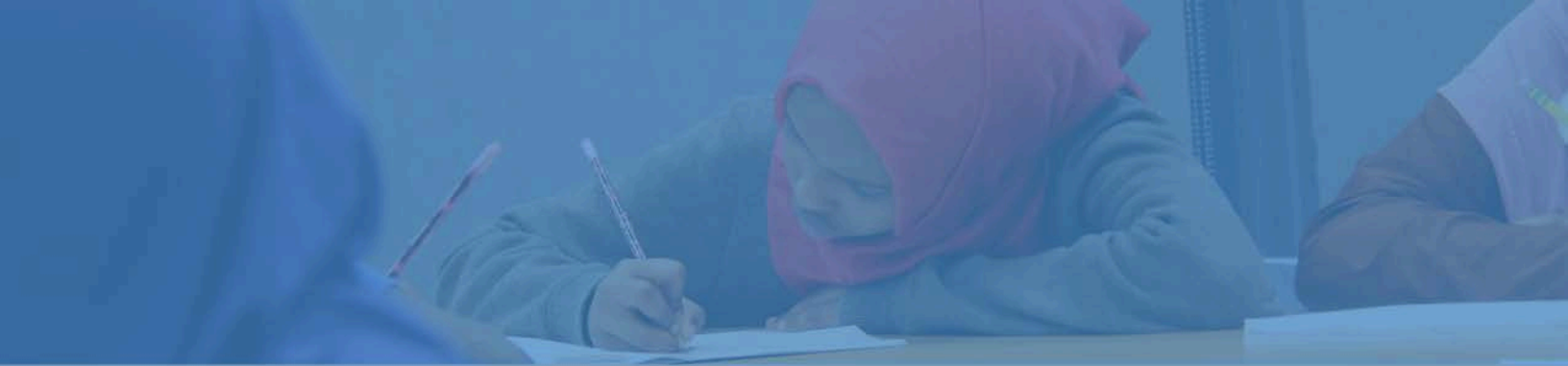
Experiences in American Schools:
Public and Charter

Many families talk about coming to America so their children may have a good education and better future. Parents may enroll their children in the neighborhood school, assuming their students will be cared for and well-educated. However, the reality of education inequality in the US sets in and families react differently. Some engage fiercely, demanding more communication from the school and more support for their child. Others leverage their power of choice and move to a school that promotes cultural sensitivity.

Traditional Public Schools

The experiences of Somali students and families in traditional public schools varies. Like other communities of color, the staff and curriculum of schools may not be culturally relevant. Some families engage with teachers and school staff regularly to ensure their children are seen and supported. Other families have not found much change and ultimately decide to find a more comfortable setting for their students.

Many Somalis have a primary identity through Islam.[43] Prayer, food, and gender practices have been part of the Somali experience, brought into traditional public schools. As a result, students may be bullied for their dress or religious practices. Students may also feel invisible because, according to one student, "nobody paid attention to me and I could not comprehend so many things that were happening." [44]

Share Without a High School Diploma/GED, Ages 25-64
Source: MN State Demographic Center. 2016
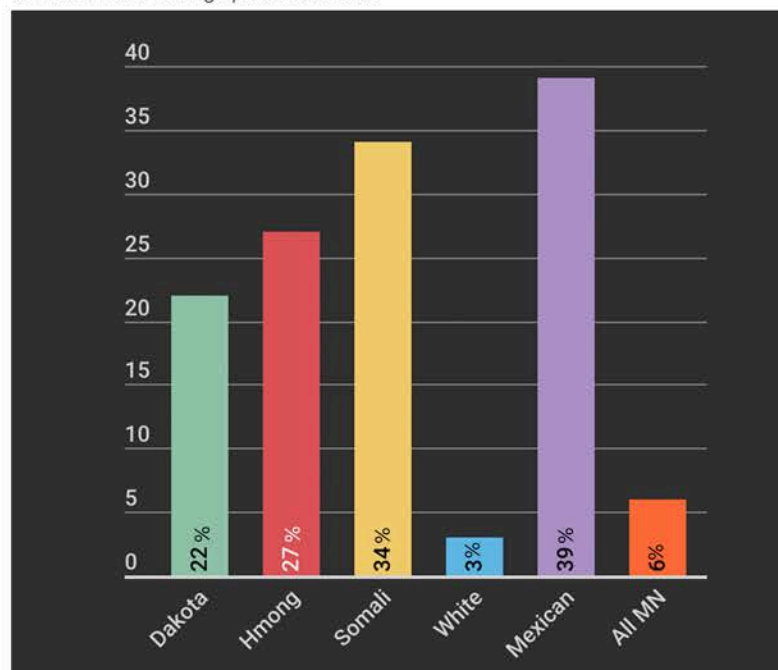
Students also say that teachers do not have time to provide extra help or get to know them.[45] SLIFE students often feel teachers impose the same expectations of them as native-English speaking students, which is unfair and unequal.[46]

Some families are concerned with public districts because there are not many Somali staff, bilingual opportunities and accommodations, or cultural competency.[47] One student reflected that she was asked to represent the entire community and was constantly asked where she was from even though she was born in the US.[48] Furthermore, some multicultural curriculum or "Diversity Days/Celebrations" perpetuate stereotypes, magnify differences, and trivialize the immigrant experience.[49]

Parents also feel that traditional public districts are too big and therefore their voice is not heard and their language is not understood.[50] Families indicate that teachers are not available to meet and explain their children's progress, or parents are unfamiliar with the system and therefore cannot participate. Parents voice concern about the hyper-awareness of their children's behavior and higher rates of discipline as a result.[51]

Somali families appreciate how traditional public schools have more educational resources such as college preparation support, prestige, and diversity.[52] Families appreciate the academic rigor that public schools provide and stay at public schools despite all the difficulties. When asked whether they would move to a charter school because the environment would be more comfortable, parents who choose public schools say charter schools are not preparing students well.[53] A public school family liaison says that the purpose of school in the US for newcomers is to prepare students to integrate with American culture and fully participate in society in addition to a quality education.[54]

Yet, not all students are achieving despite the opportunity. For example, around half of Somali students in Minneapolis Public Schools are enrolled in advanced classes, but only 6% get a 21 or higher on the ACT, the national average score.[55]

Public school budget shortfalls, as with any institution, are a result of a mismatch in expenditures and income.[56] Creativity with limited resources and prioritizing student needs is essential. Families leaving public schools send a clear message that the school and district are not meeting their needs, so the school and district should make stronger efforts in curriculum and climate to sincerely win back their enrollment.

Charter Schools

The nation's first publicly funded, privately run charter school started in Minnesota, when it opened its doors in 1992.[57] Its founders, all veteran public school teachers, had tried but failed to create new programs for struggling students in their own schools. The original idea was to create innovative locations for outcomes-based education that could inspire change in traditional public schools. Today, families and teachers see charter schools as an opportunity to provide more relevant and innovative education.

One out Three Somali families choose Charter

One in three Somali families chooses to send their children to public charter schools.[58] Families indicate they choose charter schools over traditional public schools because there is no need to adapt or forego cultural practices, there are higher expectations and language connections, and there is a smaller and stronger community within the building.[59]

Families are sometimes put off by the American culture children begin to pick up in public schools, and look for an environment that preserves their social dynamic while still providing an American education.[60] Some charter schools are more culturally relevant by employing elders, structuring the schedule to accommodate prayer, and allowing students to know more about their culture.[61]

Why Families of Color Choose Charter Schools

Since at least 25% of Minnesota charter schools are ethnocentric, families find they have appealing environments and are accommodating.[62] One factor contributing to racial homogeneity in schools in Minnesota is the influence of charter schools.

Racially homogeneous charter schools validated by communities of color may reflect their self-determination choices. They seek culturally responsive educational opportunities and ownership over the education of their students when the public school system promotes a predominantly Eurocentric curriculum and culture.[63]

However, charter schools are not necessarily doing better than public schools when examining academic achievement.[64] But, some Somali parents lean toward cultural retention and comfort over academic achievement.[65] Despite the idea a culturally relevant charter school is more engaging, Somali students attending charter schools say they the curriculum is the same as a public school. They say they have to learn Somali culture on their own outside the few language courses where it is taught.[66] Cultural relevance, to most families, is seen through the classmates and staff and not what is necessarily taught in the curriculum.[67]

Additionally, some students explain how their charter school feels protective or restrictive as a result of school practices and expectations.[68] Students sometimes do not feel prepared to interact with people outside their school community.[69] Yet, other students find their charter school to exhibit role models who look like them and serves as a buffer to US culture through promoting positive socialization and self-confidence.[70]

For Somali students in their senior year, they describe the fear of leaving the comfortable environment of their charter school for a diverse college campus. But, when asked whether they would change their educational experience to incorporate diversity earlier, they still prefer their charter school environment. A few students said that a year in a diverse school would have been helpful, but no more than that.[71] When asked whether they feel academically prepared for college, they say no because there have been limited opportunities and preparation.

While they recognize public schools offer more, they still lean on preferring a comfortable environment. These sentiments are similar to their parents' views. Supporting families in how to evaluate options and balance the values of culture and education quality may lead to stronger choices.[72] Families of color seek culturally responsive education opportunities and appreciate schools that honor home cultures, which leads to choosing charter schools.[73] Yet, quality education and cultural relevance are not mutually exclusive and one should not be sacrificed for the other.

Curriculum and Instruction:
Relevancy
The curriculum, practices, and school environment must reflect the student body and experience for students to feel powerful in owning their education, especially for SLIFE.

The growing reality, especially for public schools, is a student population whose needs are not met. Schools and districts need to recognize the way western education privileges certain kinds of learning and knowing over others.[74] Furthermore, culturally relevant pedagogy is central to the success of people of color.[75] Because of increasing diversity overall, schools ought to recognize the different needs of their students and families.

When teachers and schools transform the way they educate students with different literacy backgrounds, they address root causes of low achievement. Shifting from limiting--traditional curriculum with assumptions about literacy and interest--to unlimiting--integrated, interesting, culturally responsive and relevant--allows for more access to academic content learning.[76] For example, ethnic studies provides insights into students' own heritage, uses critical pedagogy to understand power, and promotes unity and cross-cultural understanding for everyone.[77] The history of the Somali civil war, and other conflicts and cultural stories are important to student identity development. An unlimiting curriculum is still standards-based but students are stronger agents in education.

Such a curriculum allows students to develop agency in their learning and participate in dynamic education historically reserved for the privileged few.[78] Teachers and schools ought to approach educating students of color with cultural humility: letting go of assumptions and perceptions that may lead to implicit, or unconscious bias. Elevating student backgrounds leads to greater mutual respect and stronger academic achievement.

Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education

A particular difference between immigrants and refugees is the reason they come to a new country. For Somali refugees, they have been pushed out of their country which is experiencing ongoing political conflicts.[79] As a result for those 12 years old and older, students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) have added nuance in their US education experience. Previous trauma undermines the sense of security and desire to form lasting relationships, threatening general mental health.[80] Despite the negative effects of limited formal schooling, students typically arrive at school with strong oral language skills and a passionate desire to learn.

In some districts, newcomer programs and environments support accelerated student growth upon arrival. At Anne Sullivan Elementary in Minneapolis, recently arrived students in 3rd to 5th grade are in one or two classrooms and have a focus on classroom interactions and content and language development.[81] Other schools, such as Wellstone International[82] and LEAP[83] high schools, devote their entire buildings to supporting SLIFE. The St. Cloud public school district is much different than Minneapolis or St. Paul Public Schools since its influx of EMLs has grown over 1,000% in the past 15 years,[84] but programs such as English Academy for middle and high school support SLIFE or pair a newcomer with a bilingual student.[85]

Community practices to support SLIFE include:

(1) Address student acculturation to the US school system
(2) Attend to their socio-emotional needs (poverty, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), family separation or reunification, etc.)
(3) Provide focused initial literacy instruction appropriate for adolescents
(4) Provide focused academic skill instruction to bridge gaps in knowledge
(5) Provide integration of content and language instruction[86]

Curriculum Reflecting Student Backgrounds

Schools are places where cultural norms and values are created and reproduced.[87] Many parts of a student's education can be valued and celebrated beyond "Diversity Days." Within the curriculum, students are more likely to understand a text if they have a high interest in it and is culturally relevant.[88]

Proceeding in a more culturally responsive and relevant way would be a true departure in how immigrant education occurs in the US because it requires understanding different ways of being in the world.[89] Culturally and linguistically responsive programs must be evaluated and adapted to be relevant to the local student population. Since some Somali youth and families navigate new systems, they commonly attempt to retain their Somali identity. The most symbolic aspect of Somali identity is speaking the language and acting "Somali."[90] Even if youth have little to no reference or first-hand experience of Somalia, they may develop a community through new practices and self-representation.

Teachers and administrators should familiarize themselves with the Somali experience through professional development and engagement with the community. Recognizing the importance of religion, history of conflict, and Somali language nuances can aide in providing supports to new families.[91] While it is important for faculty and staff to become more aware of their approach to education, the true implementation of an unlimiting curriculum is seen in the classroom and around the building. Schoolwork, class discussion, and presentations that accurately represent students' background not only validates the student but also develops ownership in education.
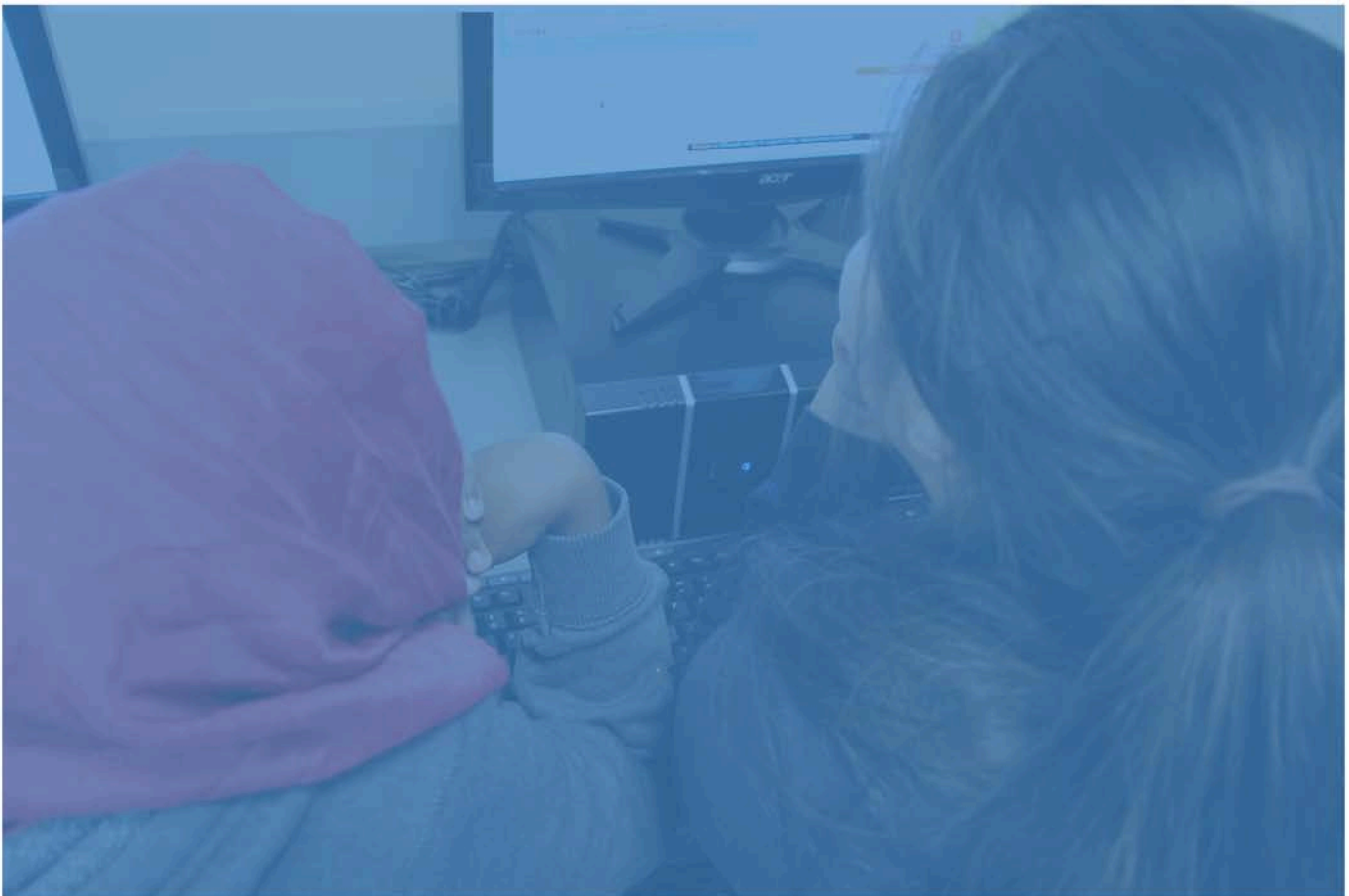
English Language Development:
How Schools Teach

The lack of English language proficiency is a significant reason for EML academic failure.[92] As the population of ELs rises significantly in some districts, preparing for and training on English language development can be a struggle. EL services come in various models such as pull-out classes taught by an EL teacher, push-in support by an EL teacher, or co-teaching between the EL teacher and the content teacher.

English language development is designed to support students whose first language is not English. The purpose of the program is to provide students with language to fully access academic work. While many families agree that recently arrived students would benefit from English language development services, families whose children were born in the US and speak fluent English question its value. Although the research says it takes five to seven years to reach academic English language proficiency,[93] some families do not see their children progressing in or exiting EL services. Also, some families know very little to nothing about EL services and heard negative experiences from other families, so they choose to refuse EL services enrollment but may not know their student will still take the annual ACCESS exam.[94] Some parents want to be included in the decision to place their child in services, instead of learning about the decision and class schedule later.[95]

EL Enrollment in St. Paul, Minneapolis, and St. Cloud Public Schools: 1997, 2016

Source: MN Department of Education

	St. Paul	Minneapolis	St. Cloud
1997	9222	7534	219
2016	12654	7959	2238
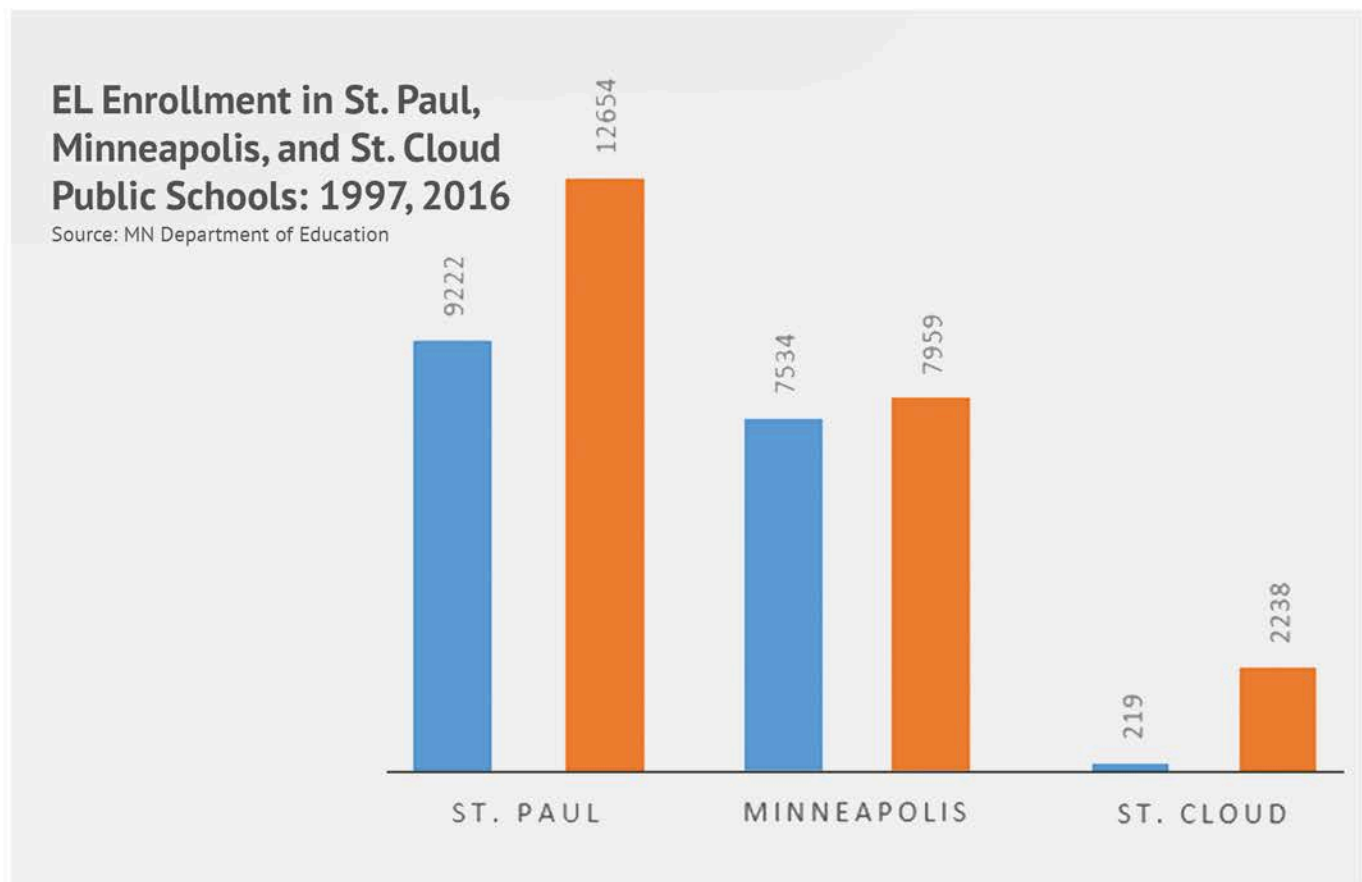
Program Models

Although entry and exit criteria for English language development programs has recently been standardized through the Every Student Succeeds Act, program models vary widely throughout the state.

Different models in Minnesota include: [96, 97]

   (1) **Mainstreaming:** ELs are placed in general education courses with little to no support.
   (2) **Pull-Out:** Students spend part of the class in a mainstream classroom, but are pulled out for a portion of each day to receive instruction in English language.
   (3) **EL Class Period:** Students receive EL instruction during a regular class period and usually receive course credit.
   (4) **Push-In:** The EL teacher may work with students individually at their seats or as a group someplace in the classroom.
   (5) **Co-Teaching:** t\The EL teacher and content teacher work as a team to plan and deliver instruction to all students in the class, the classroom teacher as the content expert, and the EL teacher as the expert on effective strategies for ELs. It requires that all teachers are trained in language development and receive extra planning time.
   (6) **Sheltered English or Content-Based:** Teachers use English as the medium for providing content area instruction, adapting their language to the proficiency level of the students.

Student Experience

Depending on the school or district's service model, students have a variety of experiences in English language development programs. For example, older students feel a stigma when going to the "EL Classroom", or are excluded from opportunities to learn challenging material.[98] They may not be considered for Talented and Gifted or AP/IB courses. Yet, some students who exited EL services reflect that their early EL classes were helpful and they learned about the US.[99] Some teachers may find co-teaching difficult, either because it is cumbersome on top of other responsibilities or because content instruction in English is not appropriate for lower level students.[100]

Students learning English have more confidence in communicating with other ELs in school. As a result, the lack of interaction with highly proficient, or native, speakers[101] may not challenge their language level and may affect whether they exit EL services. Students may still find that teachers speak fast and use terms with which they are unfamiliar.

Old Paradigm of English Language Development

When EL programs only focus on achieving English language proficiency, it quickly shows students that their native language is no longer valued or relevant in their schooling.[102] The lack of print literacy in either language come from long-held assumptions in language instruction:

   (1) Instruction should be carried out exclusively in the target language without recourse to students' first language.
   (2) Translation between first and second language has no place in the teaching of language or literacy.
   (3) Within immersion and bilingual programs, the two languages should be kept rigidly separate.[103]

Curriculum and Instruction:
Multiple Literacies
Integrate literacy and native language development at any age to establish a linguistic foundation for English learning and strengthen identity.

Print Literacy

A major characteristic of SLIFE is the reality of acquiring a second language with limited formal education. Literacy research has concluded that reading and writing in a student's native language(s), helps learners become literate in a second language.[104] For example, those who cannot read or write in their native language often needed seven to ten years to become literate in English.[105] To foster native language literacy development, administrators should look at the research on language acquisition and teachers must familiarize themselves with the student experience.[106] It is important to integrate literacy development regardless of how old a student is when they arrive and into what grade they are placed.

Many reasons illustrate the difficulty for some recently arrived adolescents to succeed in learning English. Because of a focus on a student's formal education background, other assets such as prior language learning are unnoticed.[107] Plus, the western education setting is the comparison of same-age peers who have received the same amount of education,[108] therefore it is difficult for a SLIFE student to integrate into a US classroom at grade level. Educators may have a difficult time with SLIFE and English learning because many educators may practice with the assumption of literacy and approach pedagogy from a monolingual, dominant culture.[109]

One way to prepare and develop teachers to support SLIFE and ELs more broadly is to add an endorsement to licensure or credits in language acquisition courses for currently licensed content/classroom teachers in teacher licensure programs. This is a concrete way the LEAPS Act provision of "all teachers supporting ELs" can be realized. As a result of endorsements and courses, classroom teachers will have the strategies to better support ELs. It is also important to recognize that EL teachers are still experts in this field. In some districts today, and eventually in all districts in the future, there is an EL in every classroom and all teachers integrating language and content is very much needed.

> **Conditions needed for SLIFE to participate in literacy activities:**
> (1) Opportunities to contribute own knowledge and skills
> (2) Support from teachers and peers, not marginalization due to difference
> (3) Students should believe the activity does not threaten cultural and linguistic status

Using Languages as a Resource

Considering the research that bilingualism has positive effects on test scores and executive function,[110] and recognizing the refugee background of many students, native language development is crucial to integrating students into Minnesota schools and teaching literacy. It is important to have language retention and acquisition so that students feel connected to both the home and new community.[111] The LEAPS Act also calls for native language development.

Language instruction through two-way immersion in elementary and developmental bilingual education in middle/high school should be considered and used to combat long-held assumptions of language instruction.[112] Students who participate in two way immersion and developmental bilingual education score at or above average reading scores of native English speakers.[113] Bilingual staff and curriculum, and connections to community-based organizations, can begin to establish these programs. Minnesota enjoys over 70 immersion programs,[114] however none support the language development of the third most spoken language in the state, Somali.

Beyond bilingual and immersion program models, a variety of pedagogies include translation and the creation of dual language multimedia books and projects. Translation promotes the acquisition of English, biliteracy development, and identities of competence.[115] The creation of bilingual books or projects and the sharing of this work with a wide audience through the Internet strongly reinforces students' sense of self and fuels sustained engagement with literacy.[116] Overall, open language policies including multilingual pedagogies that support native language use and development foster stronger academic achievement.

Some students think it is important to be able to read Somali even if the only rationale is that it is part of developing an identity.[117] However, some diaspora youth are much more likely to invest in English print literacy because they perceive it will be more useful for living in the US and participating in the workforce.[118] Some families agree by saying English language development is the road to success in the US for their children. While this is the reality, it is due to monolingual policies and practices.

One aspect of Somali language development is its linguistic history. The written form has only existed since 1972 and draws from one dialect.[119] Therefore, it is imperative to include more academic oral language in all instructional phases to establish a foundation. Because oral traditions are more highly valued in Somali society,[120] written Somali may require agreement due to different dialects and vocabulary.[121]

Teachers and school leaders have a responsibility to promote native language development and its value to both students and families. Although the written Somali language may not be used widely and often competes with English,[122] community-based organizations and schools can develop and apply real-life resources and purposes for literacy and language development.

53

Bilingual and multilingual seals and certificates is one part of the LEAPS Act that has gained ground. The MN Department of Education has developed native language assessments for schools and districts to use so that students who perform at a certain level can receive recognition and even course credits. Since 2015, 53 students have received some type of seal or certificate for the Somali language.[123]

Conflicting community views on learning Somali include:[124]

(1) Opportunities to contribute own knowledge and skills
(2) Support from teachers and peers, not marginalization due to difference
(3) Students should believe the activity does not threaten cultural and linguistic status

Academic Support, Too

Literacy and language development is not the only tool for Somali student achievement. Content support is necessary for academic achievement. One benefit for EMLs is for content teachers to modify their areas and assignments to meet EML needs.[125] Mainstreaming SLIFE students denies access to accommodations that facilitate both English and content learning, resulting in frustration for both teachers and students.[126]

Many Somali families ask about tutoring services and opportunities for their children who may not need additional language support.[127] While equity in supporting language and literacy development for SLIFE and EMLs is important, there also needs to be equality in providing academic tutoring for all students who need the support. This may be done within the traditional school if it offers tutoring services, but it may also be done in collaboration with community-based organizations. Bilingual, print literate elders may be able to offer language, literacy, and academic support.

Somali Staff and Teachers: A Short History

For both public and charter schools, the biggest barrier or challenge is a majority white staff, or one that does not reflect its students.[128] When Somali students first entered public schools in the early to mid-1990s, districts hired many Somali staff to accommodate changing student demographics. Because of teacher seniority focused policies, Somali educators were often among those let go.

In the early 2000s, there were education budget cuts and layoffs at many school districts across the state.[129] Somali teachers, paraprofessionals, and Education Assistants (EAs) were many of the recently hired and because of teacher seniority focused policies, were often among those let go.[130] Many charter schools started to open at that time and absorbed most of them.[131] Then, the No Child Left Behind Act included a requirement that paraprofessionals and bilingual educators complete at least two years of postsecondary education,[132] which further limited the pool of Somali educators.

Beyond the classroom, Somalis have not been hired in the roles that would be culturally and linguistically relevant to Somali populations in education spaces. Or, they are in roles that do not carry much authority, such as Education Assistants. Students and families may see a Somali receptionist, translator, or Education Assistant, but may not have as many opportunities to see teachers and administraters who look like them. Some districts recognize the mismatch and are trying to actively recruit current unlicensed staff and former students to pursue a teaching degree. Other districts attempt to strategically place the representative staff they do have to support appropriately.[133]

Somali educators at both traditional public and charter schools have been in the field a long time and have a few credits, but have not completed their license due to difficult licensure exams.[134] Or, they may have credentials from another state, but Minnesota laws delayed their transition to teaching here.[135] And many Somali teachers express difficulty in getting support.[136]

With a new teacher licensure structure beginning July 2018, school administrations will still need to practice equity to avoid keeping Somali teachers as Tiers 1 and 2, which have the fewest requirements.[137] Higher tiers require more experience and education, including licensure exams. Such requirements produced the current educator workforce in Minnesota, so some critics of the new system argue it will not dramatically change who is a teacher in the state. Yet, having the ability to become a licensed teacher, even at Tier 1, allows more opportunity to reach higher tiers.

Some families do not necessarily advocate strongly for teachers that reflect their background. For example, a mother mentions that Somali teachers would be better for newcomers, but other students need to learn English from a native speaker.[138] Or, students say Somali teachers expect almost too much from them or put extra pressure while white teachers do not.[139] It is unclear whether these reflections are a result of the lack of representative teachers and more experience with predominantly white teachers which sets the standard for a teacher in their experience.

Educators Reflect Students: Diversify Teacher Workforce

Students are more engaged when they see a teacher who looks likthem and understands their experience, so barriers must be addressed that prevent more Somalis from pursuing the career.

Minnesota's teaching workforce is over 96% white while its student population is over 30% children of color and growing.[140] Considering this, a homogeneous teaching corps is a consistent barrier to providing equitable education.[141] Another barrier is the unconscious bias teachers may have: stereotypes, positive or negative, influence decisions and behaviors without the individual consciously acting on the stereotype or being aware

QUICK GLANCE AT MINNESOTA CLASSROOMS

30% STUDENTS OF COLOR & AMERICAN INDIAN

4% TEACHERS OF COLOR & AMERICAN INDIAN TEACHERS

Source: MN Department of Education, 2017

that they are doing so.[142] Such behaviors create self-fulfilling prophecies, which in turn validate teachers' images and experiences. If the unconscious bias is not negative, the opposite mentality toward students of color is that they need to be saved.[143]

Addressing Unconscious Bias

One way to address unconscious bias is to have continual professional development for teachers to practice awareness and empathy for students, and to recognize their unconscious biases. This is important considering Minnesota's teacher demographics. Teachers must complicate the assumptions they have of Somali youth since imposed identities do harm.[144] Teachers who educate themselves about the culture of their students of color can develop bonds and make a noteworthy difference with them. In addition to strong professional development of white teachers, diversifying the teaching corps creates relationships among staff and students.

In Minneapolis Public Schools, a program between the public school district and Augsburg University provided a short course on teaching Somali students and engaging with their families. The Augsburg EAST Teaching Fellow spent three days with MPS faculty and staff to learn about Somali history and language, student academics, and working with families. The course also included two experiential days in the Somali community, culminating with personal reflection or action to change teaching practices.

Fostering Somali Teachers

Another component needed to increase the success rates for students of color is a representative teaching population that is both effective and diverse.[145] The need for bilingual teachers continues to rise, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, as enrollment of EMLs increases.[146] However, the 2016 four-year graduation rate for Black students--as noted earlier, Somali is not disaggregated yet--is 65%, and 63% for ELs.[147] Low graduation rates for students of color means a small pool from which to recruit teachers. But, even when people of color graduate, enter college, major in education, and try to complete their credentials, they often cite licensing exams as a barrier to becoming a teacher.[148]

A Minnesota Education Equity Partnership policy brief on Teachers of Color looks at recruitment, induction, and retention of teachers of color and American Indian teachers.[149] Since Somali students are now the second largest EL community, supplying more teachers reflective of their demographic is necessary for student success. Collaboration is critical to ensuring representative teachers have valuable professional opportunities that support students.

Community practices[150] for increasing teachers of color include:

- Engage students early
- Provide college support and financial assistance
- Have mentors and cohorts
- Offer leadership opportunities
- Shift culture within schools
- Make teaching financially viable

Share with a Bachelor's or Higher Degree, Ages 25-64
Source: MN State Demographic Center, 2016

Dakota	9%
Hmong	21%
Somali	11%
Mexican	12%
African-American	17%
White	37%
All Minnesotans, 25-64	35%
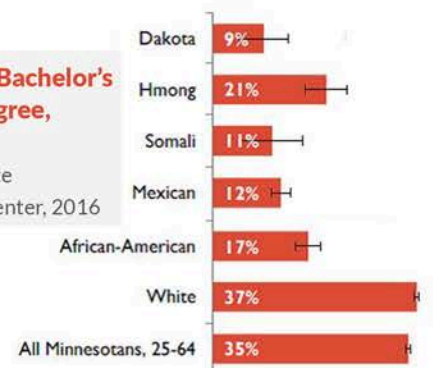
Family Engagement:
How, Why, and When Families Engage

Newcomer families have high expectations of the American experience and education as a result of what they see in the media.[151] Yet, the disappointing reality may lead to disengagement. Families see that their children are not receiving the support they need, or their children are disciplined more often than other students. Plus, parents who grew up outside the US may not understand what children are experiencing in school today,[152] making it difficult to sympathize or support. As a result of misunderstandings with school staff, families encounter problems.[153]

Some Somali families believe that the school should have the full responsibility of educating their children.[154] Therefore, engagement on their part may be a different cultural experience and expectation. Some Somali families tend to view teachers and principals as responsible for taking care of the students' issues and problems.[155] Often, families are unable to help with homework due to gaps in their own education, they are unfamiliar with the system, and/or do not speak English.[156]

However this view shifts depending on how long the family has been in the US and their experience with US schools. Some Somali families in the St. Paul district say that if families stand by their students, both will succeed.[157] A mother whose five children attend Minneapolis Public Schools recognizes the need to be actively engaged, otherwise the school may forget about her students' needs and struggles.[158]

Share That Does Not Speak English Well or At All, Ages 5+
Source: MN State Demographic Center, 2016

Group	%
Hmong	19%
Korean	4%
Lao	21%
Vietnamese	24%
Ethiopian	15%
Liberian	3%
Somali	18%
Mexican	19%
Russian	22%
White	<1%
All Minnesotans, 5+	2%

Share of Households Without a Vehicle
Source: MN State Demographic Center, 2016

Group	%
Ojibwe	18%
Asian Indian	10%
Hmong	8%
Korean	8%
Vietnamese	12%
African-American	31%
Somali	27%
Mexican	11%
White	6%
All Minnesota Households	7%

One form of engagement that teachers, schools and districts, and the MN Department of Education employ is document translation. However, as stated earlier with SLIFE needs, the existence of Somali text in public places is based on the assumption of a highly print literate society.[159] While it may appear to promote multilingualism and engagement, the document may not reach intended audiences. Translating documents may have worked for other immigrant group arrivals, but the practice does not take into account that the new community may not use print documents to obtain information and engage with the institution.[160] Language access goes beyond document translation.

Another form of engagement has been through Somali Parent Advisory Councils or Committees. At Minneapolis and St. Paul Public Schools, a family liaison facilitates a meeting for families to learn more about the district and voice their concerns directly to district staff.[161] Families have a chance to better understand policies and procedures at different levels, and represent other families who cannot advocate for themselves. MPS also has an academic success family liaison, focused on how families can support their children's academics. Depending on the charter school, there are monthly meetings with the administration. Districts also have family nights that include curricular activities and resources for families to use at home and better understand the system overall.[162]

Beyond district or school structures for family engagement, some families struggle with being in communication with the teacher. Families who speak English well and understand the system try to engage by calling the teacher or school when something happens like a bad grade or discipline. However, they are often met with an unclear answer or no response at all.[163] Families who cannot navigate the system despite familiarity with it and speak English are concerned for those in the community who have less familiarity and English language skills.
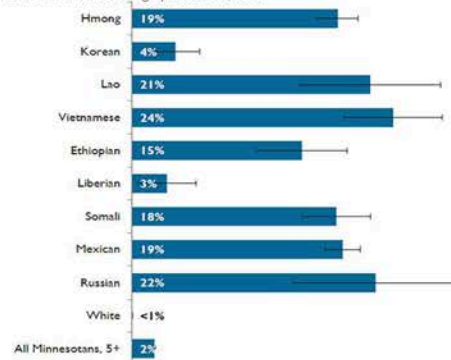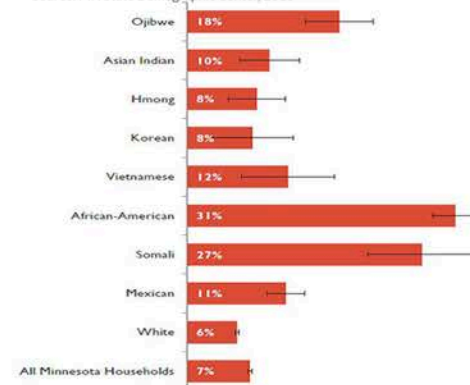
Furthermore, Somali families may work multiple and/or demanding jobs[164] and have difficulty making time for teacher conferences or other school events. Because of the employment demands of the refugee resettlement program and the struggle of poverty, parents may not have time for their own education or professional development, much less engagement with the school. Often other adults or older siblings will engage in the children's academic achievement. Another adult may attend conferences, or the older sibling picks up the student at school and helps with homework. Families want their schools to know that they have good children who want to be in school and learn,[165] but the unwelcoming or disengaging environment, and economic demands, have not allowed their students to flourish.

A Strong Education Team:
Teachers and Families Together
Families are interested and willing to engage in their children's education and teachers can develop a strong team with families.

There is a common misconception that parents with limited formal schooling have little to offer in their children's education.[166] Schools can show families how to embrace involvement by reaching out and helping families feel welcome and comfortable. Plus, schools and teachers can recognize that, for Somali families, education is an endeavor in which many adults participate.[167] Similar to student engagement, family engagement must also be culturally relevant and responsive.

Educating for Advocacy
As a result of drawing on home country experience and the difficulty of integrating to a new society, teachers and administrators could better explain what they expect of family engagement and their children's education. Families have said they do not understand why their child is not doing well and whether someone is advocating for them.[168] Somali families have a positive image of education and try to help and monitor their children's work.[169] Capitalizing on their interest and effort will assist in relationship building. Families and communities should be included to lend expertise and advice to educators and schools.[170]

Informing families about the US education system, its services, and rights and responsibilities is critical to engagement. Although some districts have Somali Parent Advisory Councils or Committees, they could be expanded, strengthened, and more respected to ensure strong education and advocacy. Engagement beyond parent-teacher conferences is crucial: well designed and organized parent-trainings and groups results in more recognition of their power.[171] Such trainings and meetings must also involve a native language element, either conducted entirely in Somali, for example, or involve a interpreter.

Welcoming and Collaborating
The way a school feels to a family is also critical for relationship building. Families appreciate when schools promote welcoming environments centered on community, and families are informed by school personnel.[172] Signs, leadership messages, and school culture practices all help the school present itself as a place where all can learn and are welcome.

If teachers, parents, and students do not collaborate to promote the cognitive, academic, and cultural benefits of bilingual and culturally relevant education, it is likely that the English-only practices and program models will continue to dominate, which perpetuates the detrimental outcomes of some Somali students.

CONCLUSION

The United States has endured countless waves of immigration and the settlement of new communities. Each immigrant group is unique and all bring new problems and opportunities to local communities. Life in a culturally pluralistic society requires fundamental changes in educational philosophies, processes, and practice.[173]

In many areas around Minnesota, the Somali population has risen significantly. Somali parents dream of better opportunities for themselves and, more importantly, their children when arriving to the US. Somali students have the same goals as their classmates: to make a difference in their community and have fun. The Somali community wants to be seen as another contributing group, trying to live the American dream. All of this hope in education results in a reality of wasted time in programs and classes that do not address their unique needs.[174]

Somali students often feel unprepared for academic demands, or they do not often feel ready for college or a career. They also often feel invisible, or hyper-visible at school. Somali families often feel unheard or disregarded in engagement opportunities with the school or district. Students and families do not often see themselves reflected in the school building or curriculum. The following recommendations come from research, interviews, and observations in the community. Strengthening Somali student achievement requires a variety of modifications in curriculum and instruction, family engagement, and the teacher workforce.

Recommendations to Strengthen Somali Student Achievement:

(1) Culturally Responsive and Relevant: The curriculum, practices, and school environment must reflect the student body and experience for students to feel powerful in owning their education, especially for SLIFE
(2) Multiple Literacies Approach: Integrate literacy and native language development at any age to establish a linguistic foundation for English learning and strengthen identity.
(3) Teachers and Parents Together: Families are interested and willing to engage in their children's education and teachers can develop a strong team with families.
(4) Diversify Teacher Workforce: Students are more engaged when they see a teacher who looks like them and understands their experience, so barriers must be addressed that prevent more Somalis from pursuing the career.

It will take cooperation from Somali community, students, parents, educators, researchers, and policymakers to make multilingual and culturally relevant programs an option for students. Despite the time, effort, and financial commitments this will require, the potential gains are significant and students need to be part of the overall education community in the effort to have equity in Minnesota schools.

On a warm autumn day in Minneapolis, five East African senior girls from a predominantly East African charter school tour a local University. They say it is their first college visit, so they take in the different buildings and ask about campus life. One student says she is interested in volleyball or basketball when the tour guide asks who would join sports teams. Another student asks about living in the dormitory and having a car. After the tour, the girls chat about this new chapter in their lives. They say they are excited to meet different people and get to know them despite the fears they have about leaving their comfortable school environment. Their stories, and many more, are why Somali student achievement matters for Minnesota.

Learn More and Get Involved

African Development Center - http://adcminnesota.org/
Championing African immigrants and refugees, helping them overcome barriers to financial security and success.

Council on American-Islamic Relations - Minnesota (CAIR-MN) - https://www.cairmn.com/
Actively engaging with the media to ensure that a fair and accurate portrayal of Islam and Muslims is presented to the American public.

Confederation of Somali Community - http://csc-mn.org/
Helping Somali youth and families overcome the social and economic obstacles that impede growth while maintaining our cultural heritage.

Insuroon- http://www.isuroon.org/
Building Somali women and girls social connectedness and self-sufficiency so that they can lead healthier, more productive lives in Minnesota and globally.

Ka Joog - http://www.kajoog.org/
Creating a safe environment for our youth in our society. We want to motivate our youth to take part in the civil aspects in our community and to pursue a higher education.

Shanta Link - sandol@shantalink.org
Addressing the greatest needs and challenges facing youth in the Somali community through education, financial assistance, mentorship opportunities, and grassroots-level engagement on cultural issues.

Somali Action Alliance - http://www.somaliactionalliance.org/
A multi-issue organization that engages the voices of everyone in the Somali community.

Somali American Parent Association - http://www.mnsapa.org/
Promoting the empowerment of Somali youth, parents, and African communities in Minnesota through a holistic approach to services that include education, community engagement, and advocacy.

The Somali Museum of Minnesota - http://www.somalimuseum.org/
Using its collection as a tool for education: making it possible for young Somalis who have grown up in the United States to connect with their culture, as well as Minnesotans of other ethnic heritage to encounter Somali art and traditional culture for the first time.

Ummah Project - ummahcenter215@gmail.com
Hoping to build an interfaith "Ummah Center" in the Twin Cities that embodies these ideals by providing educational, legal, health and recreational services, especially for immigrant and underprivileged populations.

Voices of East African Women - http://veaw.org/
Promoting individualized safety planning based on our belief that women are the experts in their own lives, through promising and best practices in education intervention and prevention.

West Bank Athletic Club - http://www.westbankac.org/
Providing the youth of Cedar Riverside and the Twin Cities area with quality year-round programming for players aged 5 to 18.

ENDNOTES

[1] Johnson, A. (2017). Minnesota Multilingual Equity Network: English learner-Every Student Succeeds Act Initiative. St. Paul, MN: Coalition of Asian American Leaders & Minnesota Education Equity Partnership. Retrieved from https://mneep.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/ESSA-PolicyPaper-Final-Web.pdf

[2] Bigelow, M. H. (2010). Mogadishu on the Mississippi: Language, racialized identity, and education in a new land (Vol. 60). John Wiley & Sons.

[3] Minnesota Historical Society. (2010). Somali: Becoming Minnesotan. Retrieved from http://education.mnhs.org/immigration/communities/somali

[4] Central Intelligence Agency (2011). Somalia. The World Factbook. Retrieved from https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html

[5] Anderson, M. (2014, August 20). "Ethiopia hosts largest number of refugees in Africa." The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/aug/20/ethiopia-largest-number-refugees-africa

[6] Office of Refugee Resettlement. (2016). FY 2015 Served Populations by State and Country of Origin (refugees only). Retrieved from https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/resource/fy-2015-refugees-by-state-and-country-of-origin-all-served-populations

[7] Minnesota Historical Society. (2010). Somali: Becoming Minnesotan. Retrieved from http://education.mnhs.org/immigration/communities/somali

[8] Xaykaothao, D. (2016, November 10). Somali refugee makes history in U.S. election. National Public Radio. Retrieved from http://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2016/11/10/501468031/somali-refugee-makes-history-in-u-s-election

[9] Roble, A., & Rutledge, D. (2008). The Somali diaspora: A journey away. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

[10] Boarini, C. (2012, February 14). Somalis in schools: One in three chooses charters in Twin Cities. Twin Cities Daily Planet. Retrieved from https://www.tcdailyplanet.net/somalis-schools-one-three-chooses-charters-twin-cities/

[11] Salatomatic. (2017). The most comprehensive guide to mosques and Islamic schools. Retrieved from https://www.salatomatic.com/reg/United-States/Minnesota/76XEQv92KI

[12] United States Census Bureau / American FactFinder. (2017). Country of Birth for the Foreign Born Population 2011 – 2015 American Community Survey. U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey Office, 2015. Retrieved from http://factfinder2.census.gov.

[13] Ibid.

[14] MN Education Equity Partnership. (2016). 2016 State of Students of Color and American Indian Students Report. Retrieved from https://mneep.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/SOSOCAI-Report-2016.pdf

[15] MN Department of Education (2017). 2016-2017 Primary Home Language Totals. Retrieved from http://w20.education.state.mn.us/MDEAnalytics/DataTopic.jsp?TOPICID=2

[16] Ibid.

[17] NOTE: Federal standards contain six minimum categories for race: Hispanic or Latino, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and White.

[18] MN Compass. (2017). Population Trends: Foreign born population by country of birth. Retrieved from http://www.mncompass.org/immigration/population-trends#1-5584-g

[19] Tigue, K. (2016, August 5). Why a new education data law is so important to Minnesota's Asian and Pacific Islander community. MinnPost. Retrieved from https://www.minnpost.com/community-sketchbook/2016/08/why-new-education-data-law-so-important-minnesotas-asian-and-pacific-is

[20] Minn. Stat. § 124D.59: Definition of English Learner. Retrieved from https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=124d.59

[21] Minnesota Department of Education. (2017). English Learner Education in Minnesota: 2016-2017. Retrieved from http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/dse/el/

[22] Espinosa, L. (2013). Early Education for Dual Language Learners: Promoting School Readiness and Early School Success. Migration Policy Institute. Retrieved from https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/early-education-dual-language-learners-promoting-school-readiness-and-early-school-success

[23] Olsen, L. (2014). Meeting the Unique Needs of Long Term English Learners: A Guide for Educators. National Education Association. Retrieved from https://www.nea.org/assets/docs/15420_LongTermEngLangLearner_final_web_3-24-14.pdf

[24] Ibid.

[25] Menken, K. & Kleyn, T. (2009). The Difficult Road for Long Term English Learners. Educational Leadership Vol. 66 (7).

[26] Ibid.

[27] Kusuma-Powell, O. (2004). Multi-lingual, but not Making it in International Schools. Journal of Research in International Education, Vol. 3 (2).

[28] Olsen, L. (2014). Meeting the Unique Needs of Long Term English Learners: A Guide for Educators. National Education Association. Retrieved from https://www.nea.org/assets/docs/15420_LongTermEngLangLearner_final_web_3-24-14.pdf

[29] Tarone, E. (2016). Minnesota's Multilingualism and English Learner Education: A Historical Perspective. MinneTESOL Journal. Retrieved from http://minnetesoljournal.org/fall-2016/minnesotas-multilingualism-and-english-learner-education-a-historical-perspective

[30] Bigelow, M. H. (2010). Mogadishu on the Mississippi: Language, racialized identity, and education in a new land (Vol. 60). John Wiley & Sons.

[31] Interviews with administration at Ubah Medical Academy, Hopkins, Minnesota, October 16, 2017, and St. Cloud Public Schools, Minnesota. November 3, 2017.

[32] Ruiz, R. (1984). Orientations in language planning. NABE Journal 8 (2), 15-34.

[33] MN Learning English for Academic Proficiency and Success Act: Final Description. Retrieved from http://mneep.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/LEAPS-Act-final-description.pdf

[34] Colorin Colorado (2017). What is the Difference between Social and Academic English? Retrieved from http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/what-difference-between-social-and-academic-english

[35] MN State Senator Patricia Torres Ray, interview by Aara Johnson, Dogwood Coffee, Minnesota, July 13, 2016.

[36] Mariani, C. (2014, March 21). Press/News Release: Major Education Policy Bill Clears Crucial Deadline. Retrieved from http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/members/pressrelease.asp?pressid=8364&party=1&memid=10399

[37] MN State Senator Patricia Torres Ray, interview by Aara Johnson, Dogwood Coffee, Minnesota, July 13, 2016.

[38] MN § 122A.18, Subd. 4(b). English Learner Definition. Retrieved from https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=122a.18

39 Minnesota Department of Education. (2017). English Learner Education in Minnesota: 2016-2017. Retrieved from http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/dse/el/

40 Magan, C. (2016, February 12). Minnesota's Dual Language Immersion Programs Serve Growing Student Needs. St. Paul Pioneer Press. Retrieved from http://www.twincities.com/2016/02/12/minnesotas-dual-language-immersion-esl-ell-growing-need/

41 Caroline Maguire, Assistant Professor, Augsburg College, interview by Aara Johnson, Augsburg College, Minnesota, March, 2017.

42 MN Board of Teaching. (2017). Standards and Rules. Retrieved from https://mn.gov/board-of-teaching/board-operations/stds-rules/

43 Basford, L. (2010). From Mainstream to East African Charter: Cultural and Religious Experiences of Somali Youth in U.S. Schools. Journal of School Choice (4).

44 Bigelow, M. H. (2010). Mogadishu on the Mississippi: Language, racialized identity, and education in a new land (Vol. 60). John Wiley & Sons.

45 Keynan, A. M. (2011). Improving Somali immigrant education in the midwest by listening to their voices. School of Education Student Capstone Theses and Dissertations..

46 Ibid.

47 Boarini, C. (2012, February 14). Somalis in Schools: One in Three Chooses Charters in Twin Cities. Twin Cities Daily Planet. Retrieved from https://www.tcdailyplanet.net/somalis-schools-one-three-chooses-charters-twin-cities/

48 Five East African female 12th graders, interview by Aara Johnson, Augsburg University, Minnesota, October 19, 2017.

49 Basford, L. (2010). From Mainstream to East African Charter: Cultural and Religious Experiences of Somali Youth in U.S. Schools. Journal of School Choice (4).

50 Boarini, C. (2012, February 21). Baby Steps: Minneapolis Public Schools Work to Bring Back Somali Students. Twin Cities Daily Planet. Retrieved from https://www.tcdailyplanet.net/baby-steps-minneapolis-public-schools-work-bring-back-somali-students/

51 Augsburg EAST Policy Fellow meeting with St. Paul Public Schools Somali Parent Advisory Committee. April 21, 2017.

52 Somali mother of five, interview by Aara Johnson, Franklin Library, Minnesota, October 20, 2017.

53 Ibid.

54 Ahmed Keynan, interview by Aara Johnson, Minneapolis Public Schools Davis Center, Minnesota, October 11, 2017.

55 Observation of Minneapolis Public Schools Somali Parent Advisory Council Meeting. April 28, 2017.

56 Raghavendran, B. (2017, October 14). Minneapolis Public Schools Forecasts a $33 Billion Deficit. Star Tribune. Retrieved from http://www.startribune.com/minneapolis-public-schools-forecasts-33m-deficit/450135903/

57 Sanchez, C. (2012, August 31). From a Single Charter School, A Movement Grows. National Public Radio. Retrieved from https://www.npr.org/2012/09/02/160409742/from-a-single-charter-school-a-movement-grows

58 Boarini, C. (2012, February 14). Somalis in Schools: One in Three Chooses Charters in Twin Cities. Twin Cities Daily Planet. Retrieved from https://www.tcdailyplanet.net/somalis-schools-one-three-chooses-charters-twin-cities/

59 Ibid.

60 Rimer, S. (2009, January 9). Immigrants See Charter Schools as a Haven. New York Times. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/10/education/10charter.html

61 Basford, L. (2010). From Mainstream to East African Charter: Cultural and Religious Experiences of Somali Youth in U.S. Schools. Journal of School Choice (4).

62 Fox, R. A., et al. (2012). The Line Between Cultural Education and Religious Education: Do Ethnocentric Niche Charter Schools Have a Prayer? Review of Research in Education, Vol. 36: Education, Democracy, and the Public Good.

63 MN Education Equity Partnership. (2016). 2016 State of Students of Color and American Indian Students Report. Retrieved from https://mneep.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/SOSOCAI-Report-2016.pdf

64 Hussein, Farhan (2012) Charter Schools: Choice of Somali-American Parents? Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies: Vol. 11. Retrieved from http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/bildhaan/vol11/iss1/16

65 Ibid.

66 Five East African female 12th graders, interview by Aara Johnson, Augsburg University, Minnesota, October 19, 2017.

67 Basford, L. (2010). From Mainstream to East African Charter: Cultural and Religious Experiences of Somali Youth in U.S. Schools. Journal of School Choice (4).

68 Ibid.

69 Five East African female 12th graders, interview by Aara Johnson, Augsburg University, Minnesota, October 19, 2017.

70 Basford, L. (2010). From Mainstream to East African Charter: Cultural and Religious Experiences of Somali Youth in U.S. Schools. Journal of School Choice (4).

71 Five East African female 12th graders, interview by Aara Johnson, Augsburg University, Minnesota, October 19, 2017.

72 Hussein, Farhan (2012) Charter Schools: Choice of Somali-American Parents? Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies: Vol. 11. Retrieved from http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/bildhaan/vol11/iss1/16

73 MN Education Equity Partnership. (2016). 2016 State of Students of Color and American Indian Students Report. Retrieved from https://mneep.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/SOSOCAI-Report-2016.pdf

74 Bigelow, M. H. (2010). Mogadishu on the Mississippi: Language, racialized identity, and education in a new land (Vol. 60). John Wiley & Sons.

75 Ladson-Billings, G. (Summer 1995). But That's Just Good Teaching! The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. Theory in Practice, Vol 34 (3). Retrieved from http://equity.spps.org/uploads/but_that_s_just_ladson-billings_pdf.

76 Ibid.

77 MN Education Equity Partnership. (2017). The Need for Ethnic Studies Curricula in Minnesota Schools, 2nd Edition. Retrieved from https://mneep.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Ethnic-Studies_AUGUSTe2.2017.pdf

78 Keys Adair, J., et al. (2017). How the Word Gap Argument Negatively Impacts Young Children of Latinx Immigrants' Conceptualizations of Learning. Harvard Educational Review: Fall 2017, Vol. 87 (3).

79 Heger Boyle, E. & Ali, A. (2009). Culture, Structure, and the Refugee Experience in Somali Immigrant Family Transformation. International Migration. Vol. 48 (1).

80 Ibid.

81 Mariam Adam, interview by Aara Johnson, Minneapolis Public Schools Anne Sullivan Elementary, Minnesota. October 28, 2017.

[82] http://wellstone.mpls.k12.mn.us/

[83] https://www.spps.org/leap

[84] Mitchell, C. (2016, March 23). How one Minnesota school district handles a rising immigrant population. PBS News Hour. Retrieved from https://www.pbs.org/newshour/education/how-one-minnesota-school-district-handles-a-rising-immigrant-population

[85] Interviews with administration and EL teacher at St. Cloud Public Schools, Minnesota. November 3, 2017.

[86] WIDA Consortium. (2015). WIDA Focus on SLIFE: Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education. Retrieved from https://www.wida.us/professionaldev/educatorresources/focus.aspx

[87] Bigelow, M. H. (2010). Mogadishu on the Mississippi: Language, racialized identity, and education in a new land (Vol. 60). John Wiley & Sons.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Bigelow, M. H. (2010). Mogadishu on the Mississippi: Language, racialized identity, and education in a new land (Vol. 60). John Wiley & Sons.

[91] Mariam Adam, interview by Aara Johnson, Minneapolis Public Schools Anne Sullivan Elementary, Minnesota. October 28, 2017.

[92] Crawford, J. (1999). Bilingual Education: History, Politics, Theory, and Practice. Bilingual Educational Services.

[93] Hakuta, K., et al. (2000). How Long Does it Take English Learners to Attain Proficiency? The University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute. Retrieved from http://www.colorincolorado.org/research/how-long-does-it-take-english-language-learners-attain-proficiency

[94] MN Multilingual Equity Network meeting with St. Paul PACs (Somali, Hmong, Karen, Latino) in collaboration with St. Paul Public Schools family engagement officers. October 7, 2016. Meeting with Faribault families in collaboration with Faribault Area Schools. January 9, 2017. Meeting with Minneapolis families (Somali, Hmong, and Latino) in collaboration with Minneapolis Public Schools Multilingualism department. January 20, 2017.

[95] Somali mother of five, interview by Aara Johnson, Franklin Library, Minnesota, October 20, 2017.

[96] Rennie, J. (1993). ESL and Bilingual Program Models. ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics.

[97] Penn State College of Education. (2017). What are common program models for ESL education? Retrieved from https://ed.psu.edu/pds/elementary/intern-resources/esl-handbook/common-models

[98] Keynan, A. M. (2011). Improving Somali immigrant education in the midwest by listening to their voices. School of Education Student Capstone Theses and Dissertations.

[99] Five East African female 12th graders, interview by Aara Johnson, Augsburg University, Minnesota, October 19, 2017.

[100] Amy Johnson, interview by Aara Johnson, St. Cloud Public Schools Discovery Elementary, Minnesota, November 3, 2017.

[101] Bigelow, M. H. (2010). Mogadishu on the Mississippi: Language, racialized identity, and education in a new land (Vol. 60). John Wiley & Sons.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Cummins, J. (2007). Rethinking monolingual instructional strategies in multilingual classrooms. Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 10.

[104] Bigelow, M. & Tarone, E. (2004). The Role of Literacy Level in Second Language Acquisition: Doesn't Who We Study Determine What We Know? TESOL Quarterly, Vol 38 (4). Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/3588285

[105] Ibid.

[106] Kruizenga, T. M. (2010). Teaching Somali Children: What Perceived Challenges Do Somali Students Face in the Public School System? International Journal of Education, Vol 1 (1).

[107] Bigelow, M. H. (2010). Mogadishu on the Mississippi: Language, racialized identity, and education in a new land (Vol. 60). John Wiley & Sons.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Ibid.

[110] Ibid.

[111] Ibid.

[112] Farrell, A. (2012). Somali immigrants and English language education in the United States. Retrieved directly from author.

[113] Thomas, W., & Collier, V. (1997). School effectiveness for language minority students. National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education Resource Collection Series, 9.

[114] MN Advocates for Immersion Network. (2017). Master List of MN Immersion Programs. Retrieved from http://www.mnimmersion.org/Resources/Documents/Statewide%20ImmersionTableFormatFeb2015.pdf

[115] Cummins, J. (2007). Rethinking monolingual instructional strategies in multilingual classrooms. Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 10.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Bigelow, M. H. (2010). Mogadishu on the Mississippi: Language, racialized identity, and education in a new land (Vol. 60). John Wiley & Sons.

[118] Ibid.

[119] New York University: Steinhardt. (2012). Somalia: Language and Culture. NYU Steinhardt. Retrieved from http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/media/users/xr1/Language_n_Cultural_Awareness/SomaliaLanguageCultureUpdate.pdf

[120] Bigelow, M. H. (2010). Mogadishu on the Mississippi: Language, racialized identity, and education in a new land (Vol. 60). John Wiley & Sons.

[121] Augsburg EAST Policy Fellow meeting with St. Paul Public Schools Somali Parent Advisory Committee. April 21, 2017.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Ursula Lentz, interview by Aara Johnson, Minnesota Department of Education. March 7, 2018.

[124] Keynan, A. M. (2011). Improving Somali immigrant education in the midwest by listening to their voices. School of Education Student Capstone Theses and Dissertations.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Ibid.

[127] MN Multilingual Equity Network meeting with St. Paul PACs (Somali, Hmong, Karen, Latino) in collaboration with St. Paul Public Schools family engagement officers. October 7, 2016. Meeting with Faribault families in collaboration with Faribault Area Schools. January 9, 2017. Meeting with Minneapolis families (Somali, Hmong, and Latino) in collaboration with Minneapolis Public Schools Multilingualism department. January 20, 2017.

[128] Interviews with administration at Ubah Medical Academy, Hopkins, Minnesota, October 16, 2017, and St. Cloud Public Schools, Minnesota. November 3, 2017.

[129] Boarini, C. (2012, February 21). Baby Steps: Minneapolis Public Schools Work to Bring Back Somali Students. Twin Cities Daily Planet. Retrieved from https://www.tcdailyplanet.net/baby-steps-minneapolis-public-schools-work-bring-back-somali-students/

[130] The 74 Million. (2017). LIFO 101: How 'Last In First Out' Affects School Districts. Retrieved from https://www.the74million.org/article/lifo-101-how-last-in-first-out-affects-school-districts/

[131] Boarini, C. (2012, February 21). Baby Steps: Minneapolis Public Schools Work to Bring Back Somali Students. Twin Cities Daily Planet. Retrieved from https://www.tcdailyplanet.net/baby-steps-minneapolis-public-schools-work-bring-back-somali-students/

[132] Ibid.

[133] Mariam Adam, interview by Aara Johnson, Minneapolis Public Schools Anne Sullivan Elementary, Minnesota. October 28, 2017.

[134] Ibid.

[135] Ibid.

[136] Observation of Minneapolis Public Schools Somali Parent Advisory Council Meeting. April 28, 2017.

[137] Wastvedt, S. (2017, June 14). New rules will make teacher requirements more flexible. Minnesota Public Radio News. Retrieved from https://www.mprnews.org/story/2017/06/14/new-rules-to-make-teacher-requirements-more-flexible

[138] Somali mother of five, interview by Aara Johnson, Franklin Library, Minnesota, October 20, 2017.

[139] Five East African female 12th graders, interview by Aara Johnson, Augsburg University, Minnesota, October 19, 2017.

[140] MN Department of Education. (2017). 2017 Report of Teacher Supply and Demand in Minnesota Public Schools. Retrieved from http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/about/rule/leg/rpt/rep17/

[141] MN Education Equity Partnership. (2016). 2016 State of Students of Color and American Indian Students Report. Retrieved from https://mneep.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/SOSOCAI-Report-2016.pdf

[142] Gershenson, S. & Dee, T. S. (2017). The Insidiousness of Unconscious Bias in Schools. The Brookings Institution. Retrieved from https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2017/03/20/the-insidiousness-of-unconscious-bias-in-schools/

[143] MN Education Equity Partnership. (2016). 2016 State of Students of Color and American Indian Students Report. Retrieved from https://mneep.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/SOSOCAI-Report-2016.pdf

[144] Bigelow, M. H. (2010). Mogadishu on the Mississippi: Language, racialized identity, and education in a new land (Vol. 60). John Wiley & Sons.

[145] Ahmad, F. & Boser, U., (May 2014). America's Leaky Pipeline for Teachers of Color Getting More Teachers of Color into the Classroom, Center for American Progress. Retrieved from https://www.americanprogress.org/

[146] United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2010). Teachers -- Kindergarten, elementary, middle, and secondary. Occupational outlook handbook, 2010-11 edition. Retrieved from: http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos318.htm

[147] MN Department of Education. (2017). Minnesota Report Card: Graduation Rates. Retrieved from http://rc.education.state.mn.us/

[148] MN Education Equity Partnership. (2016). 2016 State of Students of Color and American Indian Students Report. Retrieved from https://mneep.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/SOSOCAI-Report-2016.pdf

[149] MN Education Equity Partnership. (2015). Minnesota Teachers of Color: Modernizing Our Teacher Workforce. Retrieved from http://mneep.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Teachers-of-Color-policy-brief_Final-11.2015.pdf

[150] Ibid.

[151] Boarini, C. (2012, February 21). Baby Steps: Minneapolis Public Schools Work to Bring Back Somali Students. Twin Cities Daily Planet. Retrieved from https://www.tcdailyplanet.net/baby-steps-minneapolis-public-schools-work-bring-back-somali-students/.

[152] Bennett Jones, O. (2017, April 1). Under Scrutiny: America's Somali Community. BBC World Services. Retrieved from http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04xtq18

[153] MN Multilingual Equity Network meeting with St. Paul PACs (Somali, Hmong, Karen, Latino) in collaboration with St. Paul Public Schools family engagement officers. October 7, 2016. Meeting with Faribault families in collaboration with Faribault Area Schools. January 9, 2017. Meeting with Minneapolis families (Somali, Hmong, and Latino) in collaboration with Minneapolis Public Schools Multilingualism department. January 20, 2017.

[154] Ibid.

[155] Farid, M., & McMahan, D. (2004). Accommodating and educating Somali students in Minnesota schools: A handbook for teachers and administrators. Hamline University Press.

[156] Keynan, A. M. (2011). Improving Somali immigrant education in the midwest by listening to their voices. School of Education Student Capstone Theses and Dissertations.

[157] Augsburg EAST Policy Fellow meeting with St. Paul Public Schools Somali Parent Advisory Committee. April 21, 2017.

[158] Somali mother of five, interview by Aara Johnson, Franklin Library, Minnesota, October 20, 2017.

[159] Bigelow, M. H. (2010). Mogadishu on the Mississippi: Language, racialized identity, and education in a new land (Vol. 60). John Wiley & Sons.

[160] Ibid.

[161] Boarini, C. (2012, February 21). Baby Steps: Minneapolis Public Schools Work to Bring Back Somali Students. Twin Cities Daily Planet. Retrieved from https://www.tcdailyplanet.net/baby-steps-minneapolis-public-schools-work-bring-back-somali-students/

[162] Interview with St. Cloud Public Schools, Minnesota. November 3, 2017.

[163] Somali mother of five, interview by Aara Johnson, Franklin Library, Minnesota, October 20, 2017.

[164] Fernandez Campbell, A. (2016, October 24). America's Real Refugee Problem. The Atlantic. Retrieved from https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/10/the-challenge-of-integrating-americas-refugees/505031/

[165] Bigelow, M. H. (2010). Mogadishu on the Mississippi: Language, racialized identity, and education in a new land (Vol. 60). John Wiley & Sons.

[166] Ibid.

[167] Ibid.

[168] MN Multilingual Equity Network meeting with St. Paul PACs (Somali, Hmong, Karen, Latino) in collaboration with St. Paul Public Schools family engagement officers. October 7, 2016. Meeting with Faribault families in collaboration with Faribault Area Schools. January 9, 2017. Meeting with Minneapolis families (Somali, Hmong, and Latino) in collaboration with Minneapolis Public Schools Multilingualism department. January 20, 2017.

[169] Kruizenga, T. M. (2010). Teaching Somali Children: What Perceived Challenges Do Somali Students Face in the Public School System? International Journal of Education, Vol 1 (1).

[170] Bigelow, M. H. (2010). Mogadishu on the Mississippi: Language, racialized identity, and education in a new land (Vol. 60). John Wiley & Sons.

[171] Keynan, A. M. (2011). Improving Somali immigrant education in the midwest by listening to their voices. School of Education Student Capstone Theses and Dissertations.

[172] Kruizenga, T. M. (2010). Teaching Somali Children: What Perceived Challenges Do Somali Students Face in the Public School System? International Journal of Education, Vol 1 (1).

[173] Grant, C. (1977). Multicultural education: Commitments, Issues, and Applications. ASCD Multicultural Education Commission.

[174] Bigelow, M. H. (2010). Mogadishu on the Mississippi: Language, racialized identity, and education in a new land (Vol. 60). John Wiley & Sons.

AUGSBURG UNIVERSITY®

Minnesota Education Equity Partnership

For more information, visit:

http://www.augsburg.edu/education/east
http://www.mneep.org/bbg/big-bold-goal-4