

# Multilingual Learner Education Report to School Committee

June 13, 2022

# Overview of presentation

MLE Transitions

Team introductions

“Behind the numbers”: student and family experiences

357

Newcomers enrolled in SPS during School Year 2021-2022

216

student from Brazil

75

students from Central America

49

are considered unaccompanied youth

103

are considered SLIFE

# Multilingual Learner Education Team Highlights

Erika Da Silva - Newcomer enrollment

Maureen Hughes - Unidos program development

Paulina Mitropoulis - SEI expansion

Emily Blitz - SHS Newcomer programming and supports

# Educational Experiences of Central American Unaccompanied Youth

## Martha Franco, Ph.D.

### Youth Participant Demographics

Name	Country of Origin	Age at Interview	Age of Arrival	Gender	Time in ORR Shelter
Kendra	El Salvador	19	15	Female	NA
Cesar	El Salvador	19	15	Male	2 months
Jessica	El Salvador	19	17	Female	2.5 months
Kevin	Honduras	22	16	Male	3 months
Mauricio	El Salvador	19	15	Male	2 months
Mayra	El Salvador	19	17	Female	2 months
Nelson	El Salvador	19	17	Male	2 months

# Education as Opportunity

“In El Salvador I would not be able to reach my goals because over there I had to stop going to school and there is not a lot of support over there. Here there is a lot of motivation from the teachers. And over there the economic situation, there is not much opportunity.”

-Jessica, El Salvador, 19 years old

“School, here [in Somerville] gives us a lot of resources and helps you a lot...Psychological support was not available in El Salvador and here that has helped me so much.”

-Mauricio, El Salvador, 19 years old

“The first time I came here into the school there was this Salvadoran guy that showed me around. He spoke Spanish and English, and I immediately looked up to him because I was like 'I want to do that! I want to be able to speak English and Spanish and be able to translate.' That became for me the thing to look up to.”

-Kevin, Honduras, 22 years old

# Education as Challenge

“I get stressed (grieved) that I will stop going to school one day. If I stop going to school well then everything stops, that’s why I have to continue my education so that my immigration case goes well.”  
-Jessica

“I don’t know Miss, sometimes it’s hard. I work a lot. I have to work. But I know I have to go to school. I try to do it all but it’s hard.”  
-Mauricio



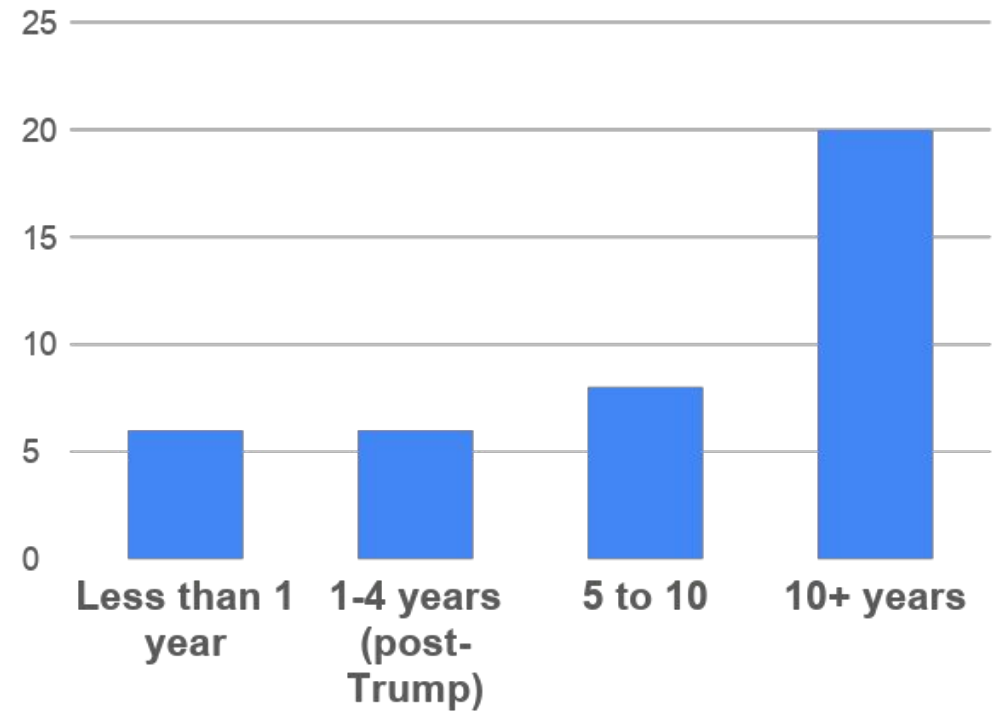
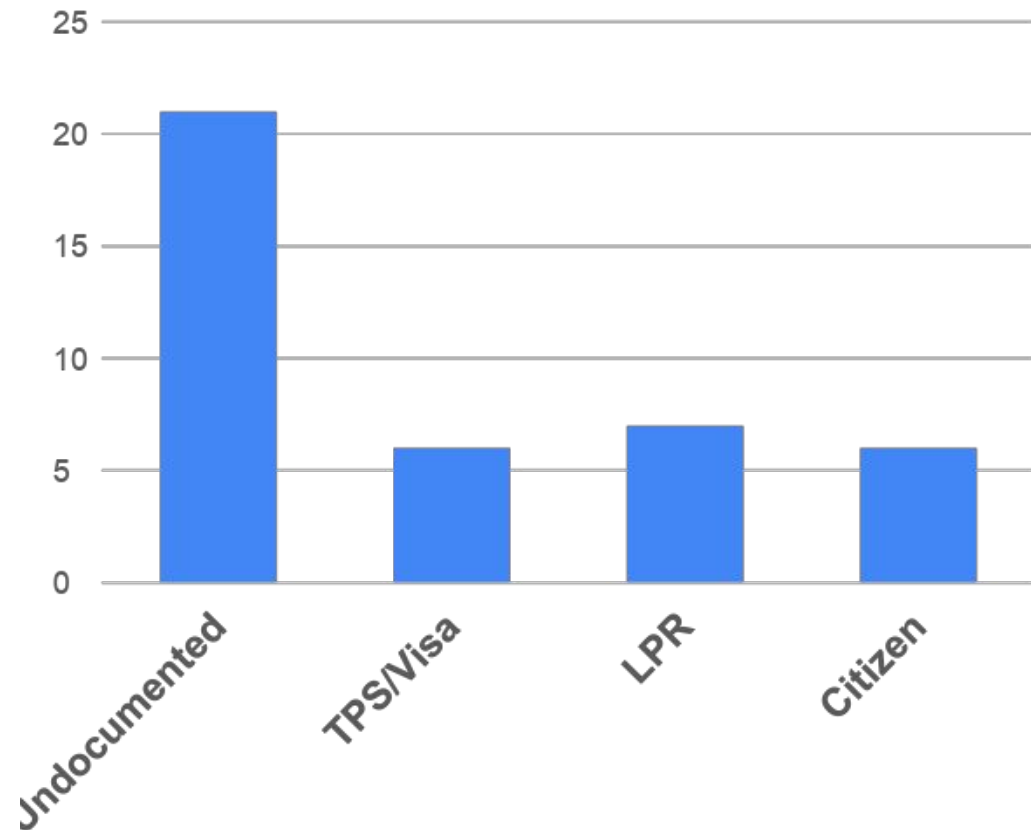
# Conclusion

- Schools serve as spaces filled with opportunity, resources, and caring adults for Central American unaccompanied youth
  - Youth were especially grateful to educators who spoke their language and connected them with resources like health services and everyday necessities.
  - Many students spoke of values like respect as important for their sense of belonging in the school
- Schools are also spaces of stress and inflexibility for these students.
  - Most of the youth in this study worked about 35-55 hours a week in the service sector in order to help pay off debts, groceries, rents, legal fees, and to send money back to Central America

# Fragile Belonging: motherhood and migration in a sanctuary city, Sarah Bruhn, Ph.D.

## Demographics

IMMIGRATION STATUS





## Care & Uncertainty during times of crisis

Yes, they have watched out for me, she sent me a message that if I need something, or anything, I can communicate with anyone at the school. I've also received help, they brought me food and gift cards.

- Beatriz, undocumented El Salvadoran mother of 2





## Managing family reunification

I was imagining that I'd see the same child that I had left. The truth is it's really difficult, because when you leave them, you don't live their childhood, you don't share all the moments of childhood with them. It's really hard.

- Flora, undocumented El Salvadoran mother of 3

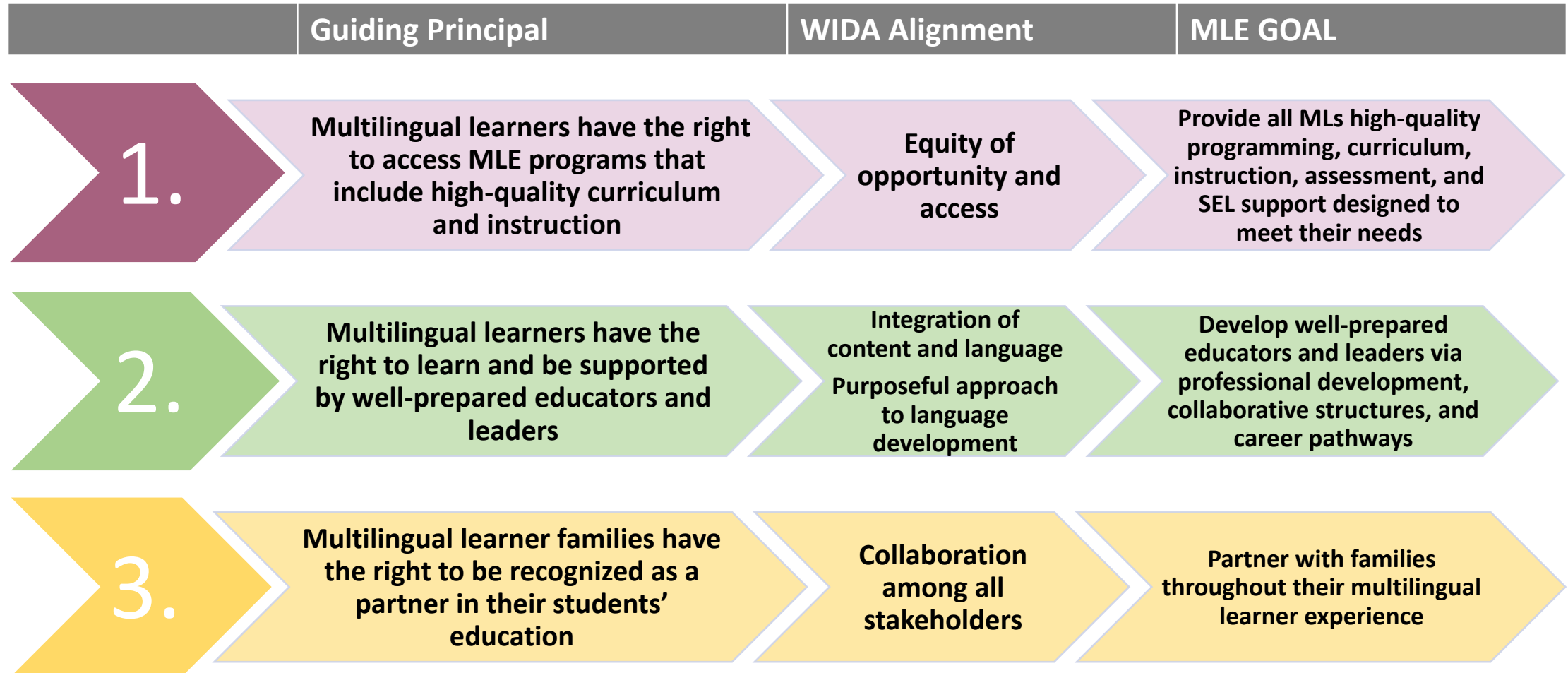




# CONCLUSIONS

- Schools provides a meaningful foundation for resources and belonging
  - Educators who understand challenges of separation and unification
- Feelings of belonging strained by exorbitant housing costs
- **Schools are motivation to stay**

# MLE Strategic Vision



# Discussion

What are our responsibilities as educators, school and district leaders, and community members to ensure success of multilingual learners and their families?