

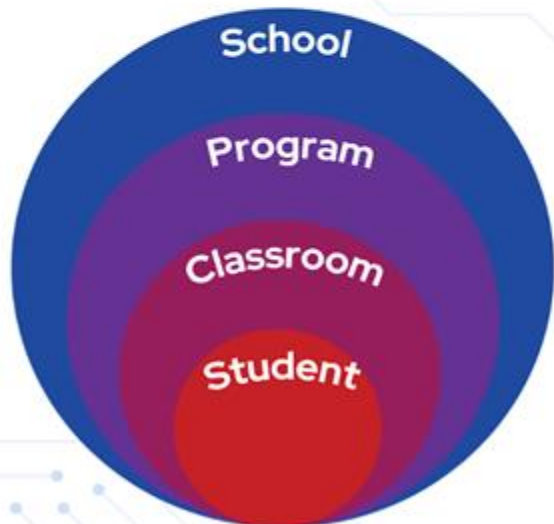


mlrc

Multilingual Learning
Research Center

School Improvement Pathways

FRAMEWORK



Welcome!

Apr. 8, 2026

**Please introduce
yourself!**

**In the chat, please share
your school/organization
and location.**



Today's Webinar

What is
the MLRC
School
Network?

How do
we
support
schools?

MLRC School
Improvement
Framework

How can
you get
involved?

Today's Facilitators



**Esther
Bettney Heidt**

*MLRC School
Network Researcher*



Jon Nordmeyer

*MLRC School
Network Director*



Jacob Huckle

*Head of Multilingual
Learning, Dulwich
College Suzhou*

The MLRC is a research center based at the top-ranked School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

We **collaborate** with scholars and schools around the world with a focus on **equity** and **innovation** to improve outcomes for **multilingual learners**.

Collaborate.

Discover.

Transform.

The MLRC School Network



150+ schools in 60+ countries

As a global **research–practice partnership** dedicated to excellence and equity for multilingual learners, we explore challenges and co-create impactful solutions through **access, improvement, action and insights.**

Why (not) Research?



Research

The diagram consists of two large, stylized arrows pointing towards each other. The left arrow is purple and points to the right, containing the word 'Research'. The right arrow is blue and points to the left, containing the word 'Practice'. The two arrows meet in the center, creating a gap between them.

Practice

- Only **1/3** of teachers regularly engage with research
- Research is either **not accessible** or **not relevant** to practice
- Researchers are often **disconnected** from classrooms

(Walsh et al., 2022)

The MLRC School Network

Access

Research-based tools for professional learning *to build knowledge and skills in teaching MLs*

Improvement

Collaborative inquiry *to identify assets, provide feedback and set school goals for serving MLs*

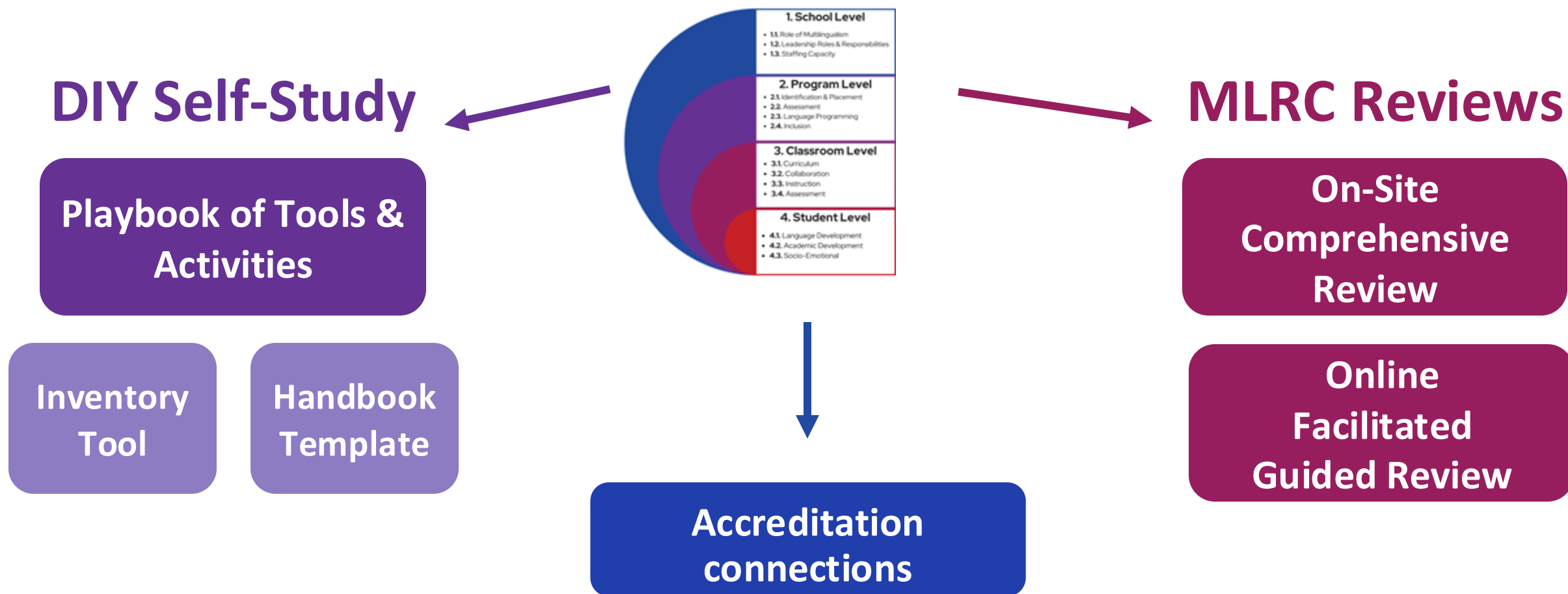
Action

School-based action research, implementation and dissemination *to build collective efficacy*

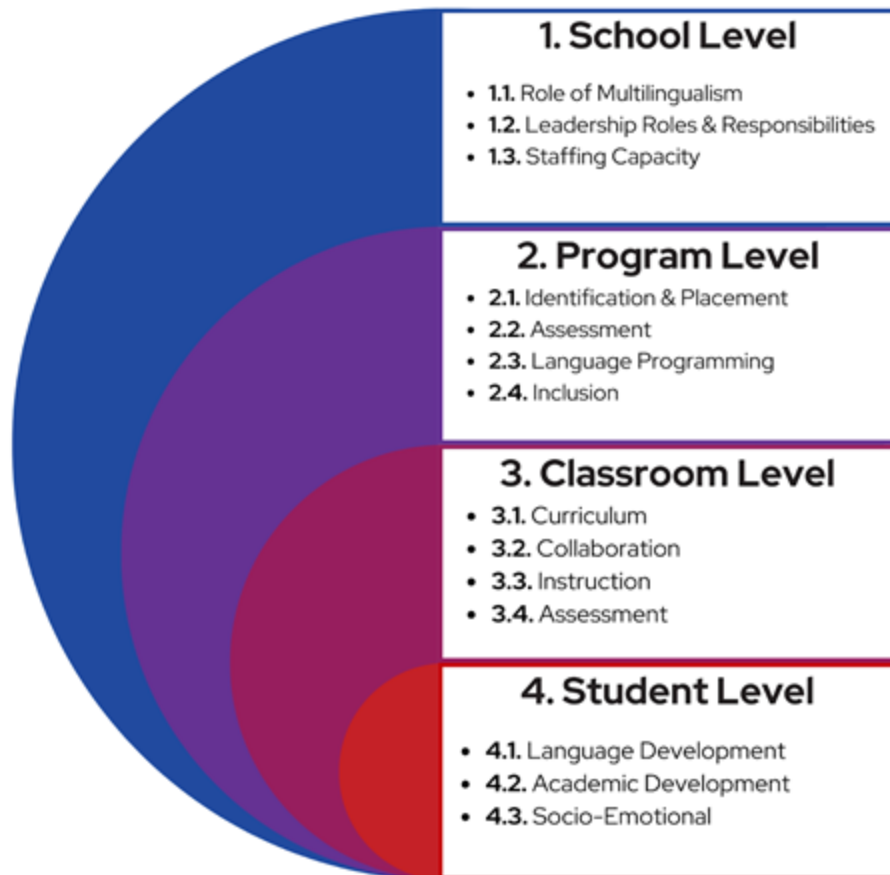
Insights

Shared investigation across schools *to create new knowledge about teaching MLs*

MLRC School Improvement Framework

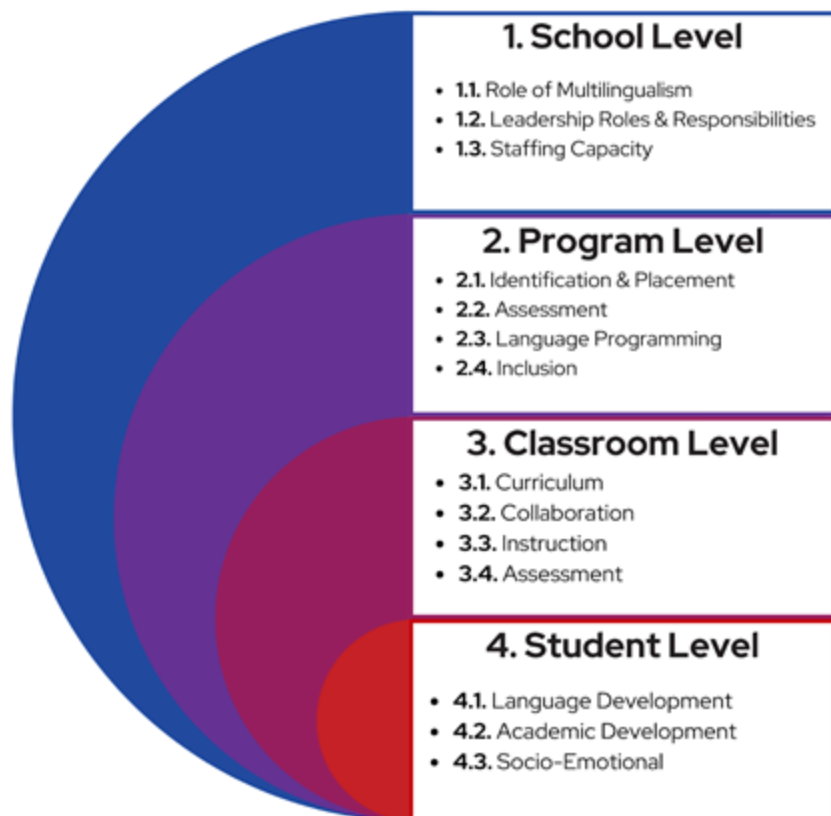


The MLRC School Improvement Framework



- **Indicators of quality** for schools serving MLs
- Created by the MLRC with a **team of global researchers**
- Reviewed by **international experts**
- Grounded in **current research and practices** in international schools
- Complements **strategic planning and accreditation** for continuous improvement

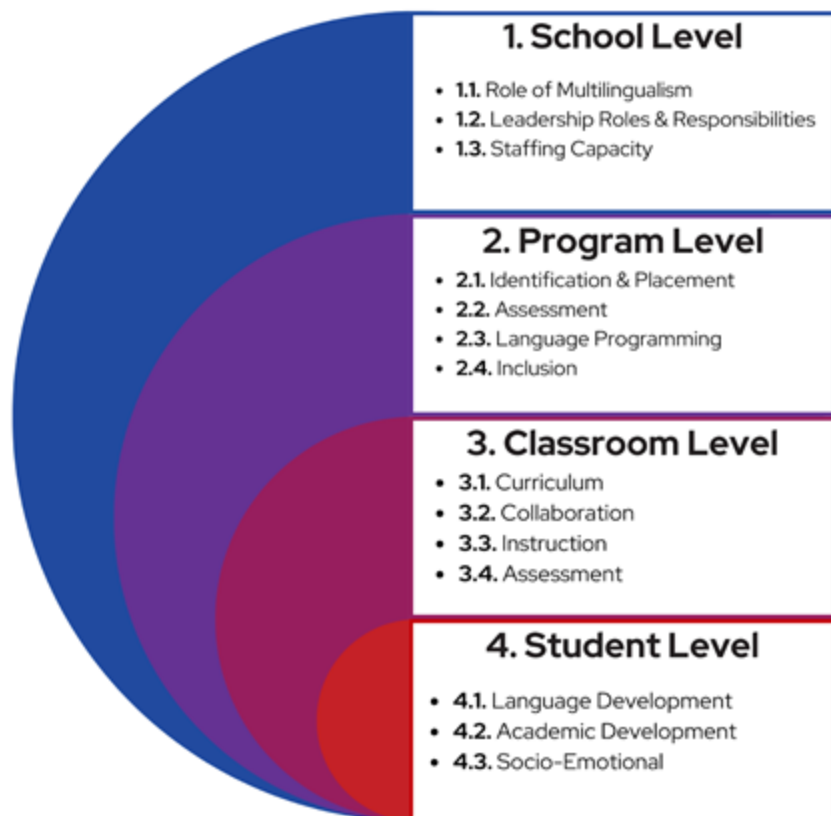
School Level: Values, Strategic Planning, & Growth



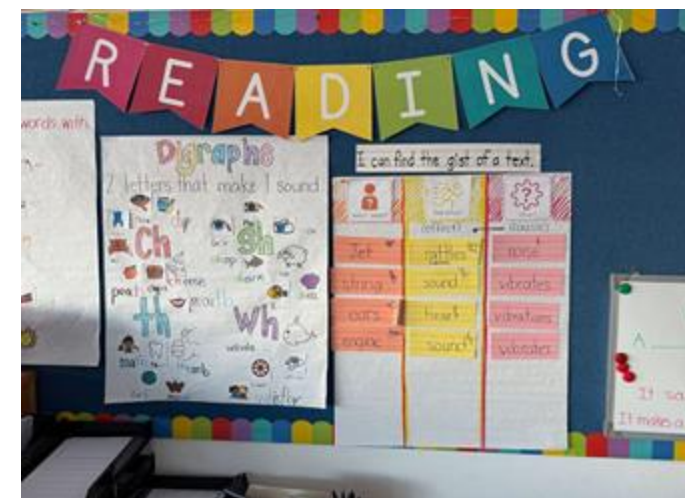
- **1.1. Role of Multilingualism**
- **1.2. Leadership Roles & Responsibilities**
- **1.3. Staffing Capacity**



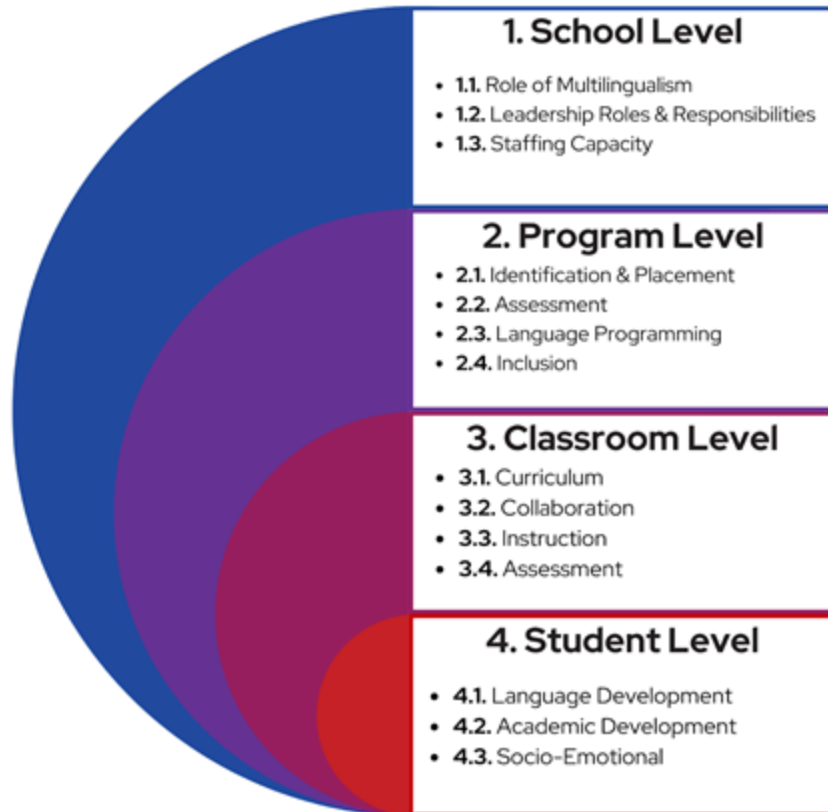
Program Level: Policies, Programs, & Processes



- **2.1. Identification & Placement**
- **2.2. Assessment**
- **2.3. Language Programming**
- **2.4. Inclusion**



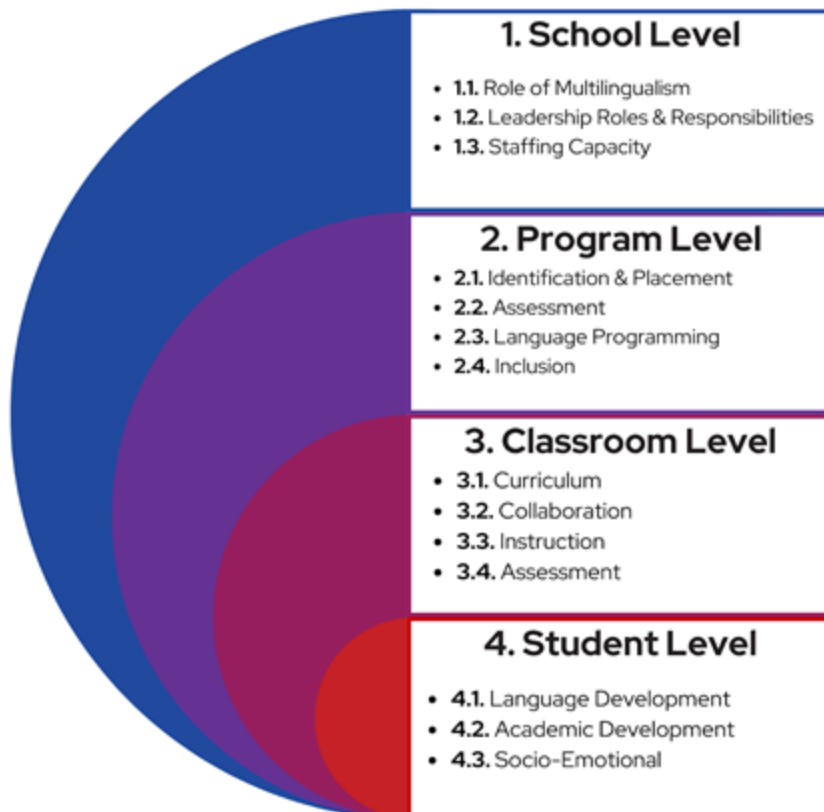
Classroom Level: Teaching and Learning



- **3.1. Curriculum**
- **3.2. Collaboration**
- **3.3. Instruction**
- **3.4. Assessment**



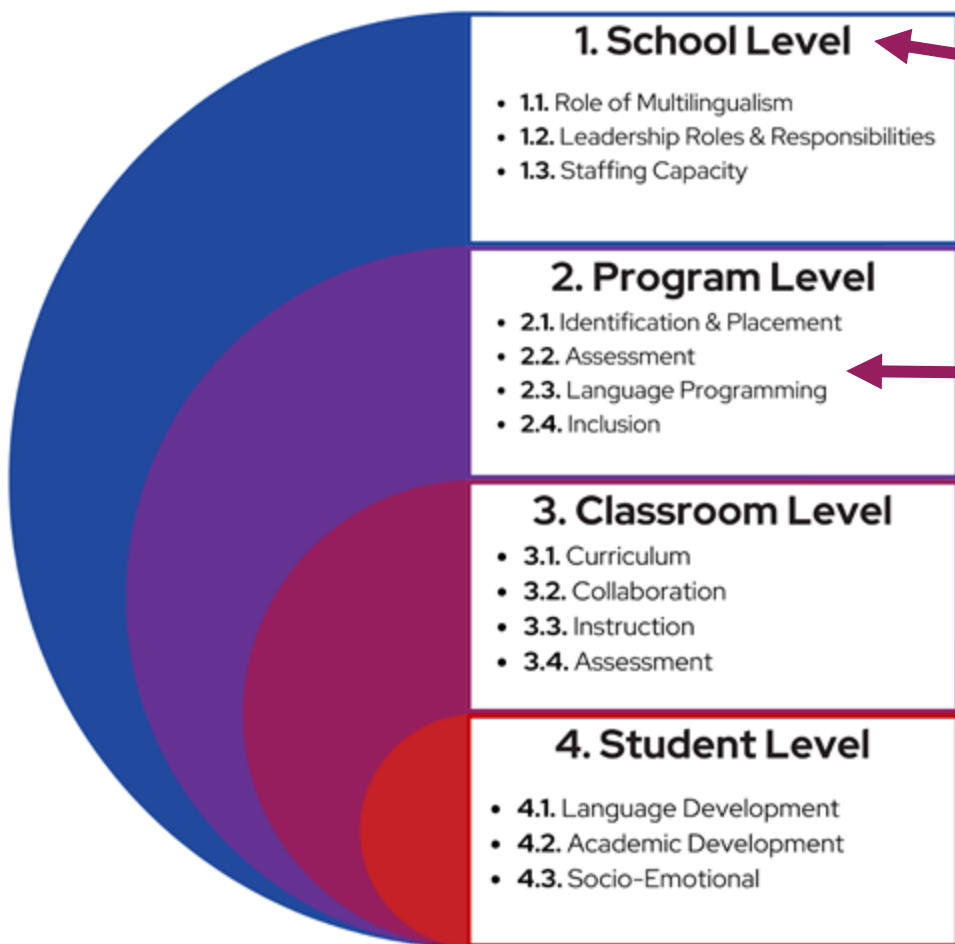
Student Level: Individual Development



- **4.1. Language Development**
- **4.2. Academic Development**
- **4.3. Socio-Emotional**



The MLRC School Improvement Framework



4 Levels

14 Themes

Indicators

Research Connections

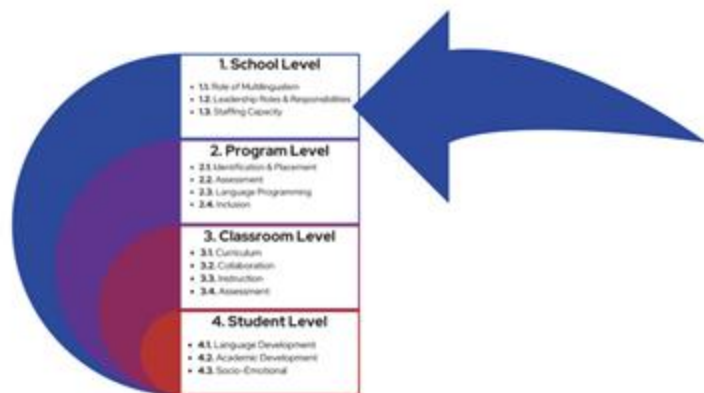
1. SCHOOL LEVEL: Values, Strategic Planning, & Growth	
1.1. Role of Multilingualism	
Research Connections	<p>The first language or languages that a child learns play a critical role in their educational development. This is the foundational medium through which children first interact with the world, construct knowledge, and develop cognitive and social skills. Research indicates that the continued use and development of home language(s) are essential for academic, linguistic, and social development, especially when the main language of education is a different language.</p> <p>Beyond cognitive and academic benefits, learning in a student's home language(s) affirms cultural identity, promotes self-esteem, strengthens family and community ties, and is key to future opportunities for multilingual, multicultural children.</p> <p>Collaboration between home and school is key for effectively supporting multilingual learners. As families and caregivers engage with students in different languages, mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities and effective practices will help bridge the home and school worlds for multilingual learners.</p> <p><small>(Baker & Wright, 2017; Bettney Heith & Olson-Wyman, 2020; Chalmers & Orfield, 2019; Chumak-Harbutah, 2012; Cummins, 2021; Garcia, 2009)</small></p>

1. SCHOOL LEVEL: Values, Strategic Planning, & Growth

1.1. Role of Multilingualism

- 1.1.1. **Language policy:** School has a clear, mission-aligned language policy that includes the use of language by all community members and across language programs.
- 1.1.2. **Language policy implementation:** Language policy includes details on implementation, is easily accessible, widely used and understood by faculty, students, families and caregivers.

**MLRC
School
Improvement
Framework**



SCHOOL LEVEL: Values, Strategic Planning, & Growth	
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Reading Research Connections

Share in the Chat:

- Share **one key connection** from the research or a **question** related to your school context.

1. SCHOOL LEVEL: Values, Strategic Planning, & Growth

1.1. Role of Multilingualism

Research Connections

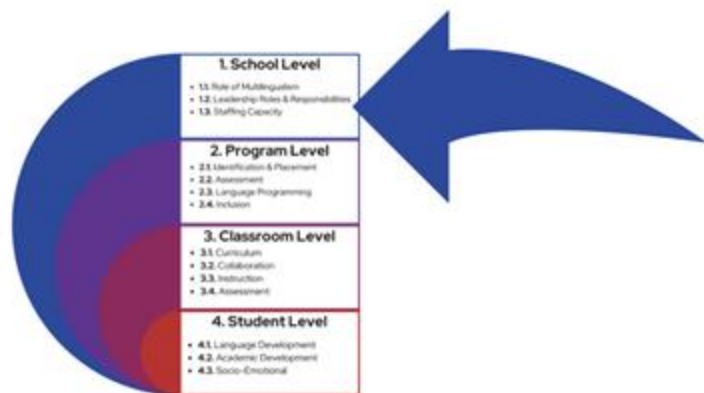
The first language or languages that a child learns play a critical role in their educational development. This is the foundational medium through which children first interact with the world, construct knowledge, and develop cognitive and social skills. Research indicates that the continued use and development of home language(s) are essential for academic, linguistic, and social development, especially when the main language of education is a different language.

Beyond cognitive and academic benefits, learning in a student's home language(s) affirms cultural identity, promotes self-esteem, strengthens family and community ties, and is key to future opportunities for multilingual, multicultural children.

Collaboration between home and school is key for effectively supporting multilingual learners. As families and caregivers engage with students in different languages, mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities and effective practices will help bridge the home and school worlds for multilingual learners.

(Baker & Wright, 2017; Bettney Heidt & Olson-Wyman, 2025; Chalmers & Crisfield, 2019; Chumak-Horbatsh, 2012; Cummins, 2021; Garcia, 2009)

**MLRC
School
Improvement
Framework**



MLRC Program Review Framework

The following descriptors offer a framework for the MLRC review of school, program, classroom, and student level practices for supporting multilingual learners.

1. SCHOOL LEVEL: Values, Strategic Planning, & Growth

1.1. Role of Multilingualism

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- **1.1.2. Language policy implementation:** Language policy includes details on implementation, is easily accessible, widely used and understood by faculty, students, families and caregivers.
- **1.1.3. Dispositions about multilingualism:** Faculty explicitly share positive beliefs about multilingualism. They consider languages and multilingualism to be part of the core provision of the school.
- **1.1.4. School-wide events:** Diverse languages and cultural assets are regularly recognized and celebrated at school-wide events.
- **1.1.5. Engagement with local community:** School prioritizes engagement with local community and recognizes community's linguistic and cultural assets. Students and staff are provided with opportunities to develop community languages and to engage with local community.
- **1.1.6. Engagement with families and caregivers:** School provides regular, accessible opportunities for families and caregivers to participate in, support and provide feedback on their multilingual students' learning.
- **1.1.7. Linguistic landscape:** School's physical, virtual, and social environment reflects the multilingual nature of students, families and community.



Connecting Research to Practice

1. Read & Apply: Pick one of the **indicators** from *from this section*,
1.1 Role of Multilingualism.

- Reflect on how this indicator relates to your context.
- At your school, is this indicator:
 - ***Not Started Yet, Started, Developed, or Well Developed?***

1. Share in breakout rooms:

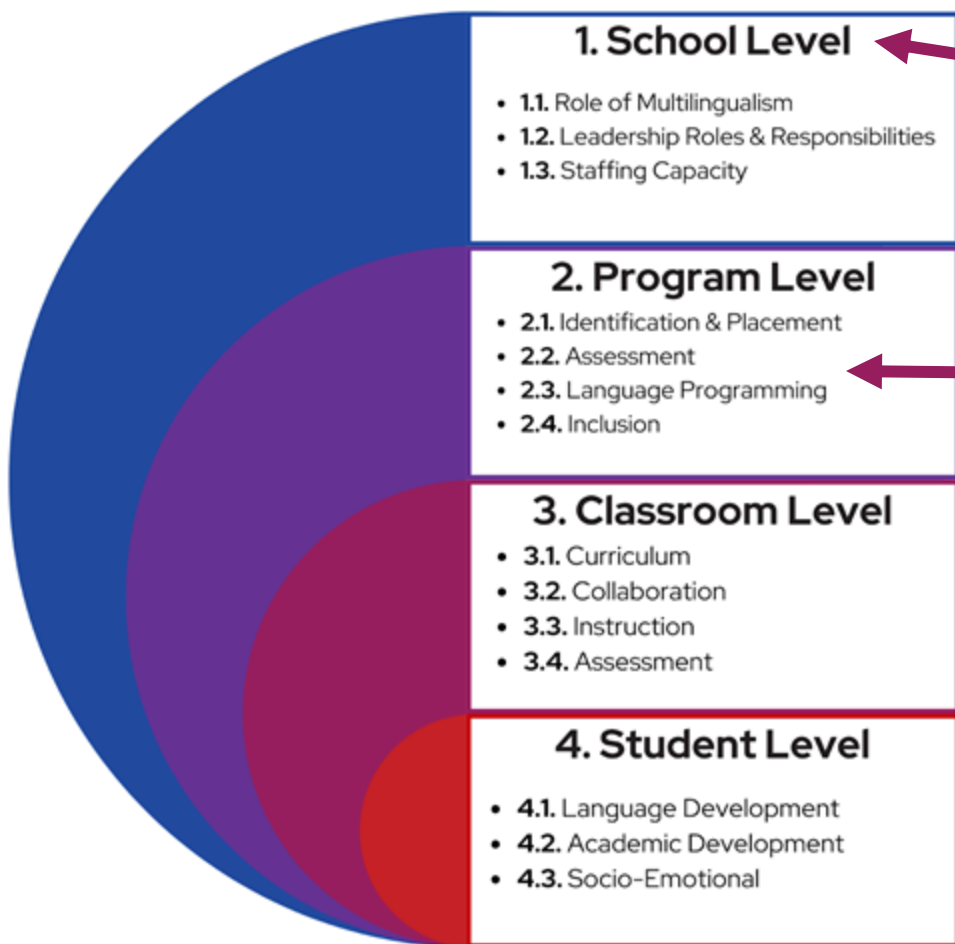
- How might you use the School Improvement Framework with your colleagues?

1. SCHOOL LEVEL: Values, Strategic Planning, & Growth

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The MLRC School Improvement Framework

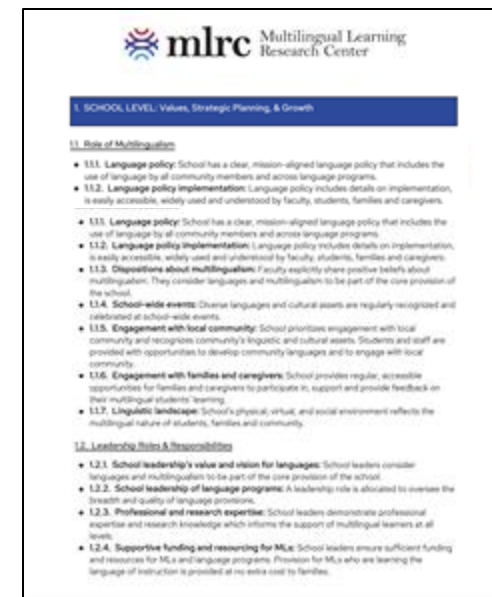


4 Levels

14 Themes

65 Indicators

Research Connections



Impact: School Improvement

*MLRC supports leadership
teams to...*

Learn about ML program features
and patterns of effectiveness

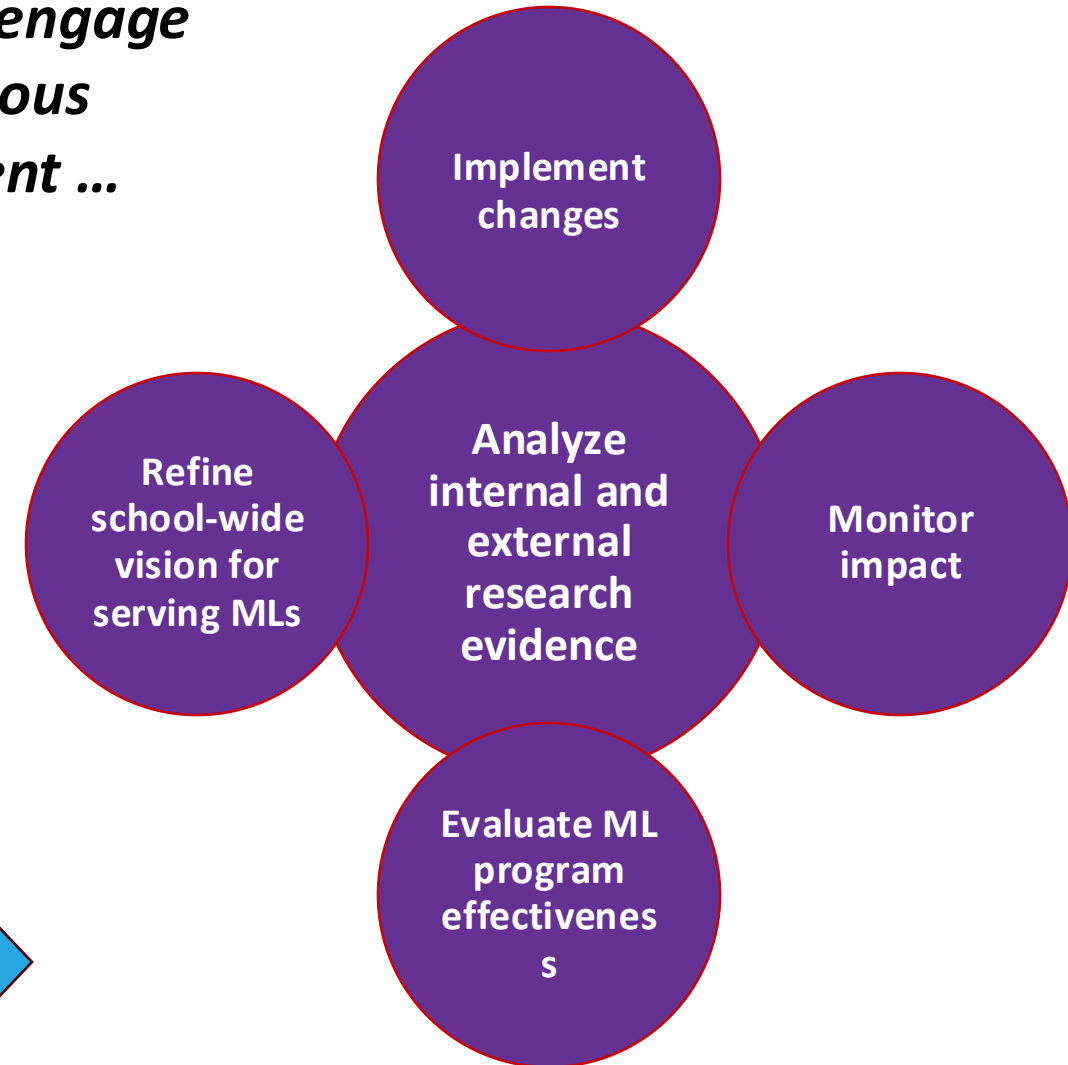
Recognize effective teaching
practices for MLs

Model and facilitate the skillful use of
research evidence

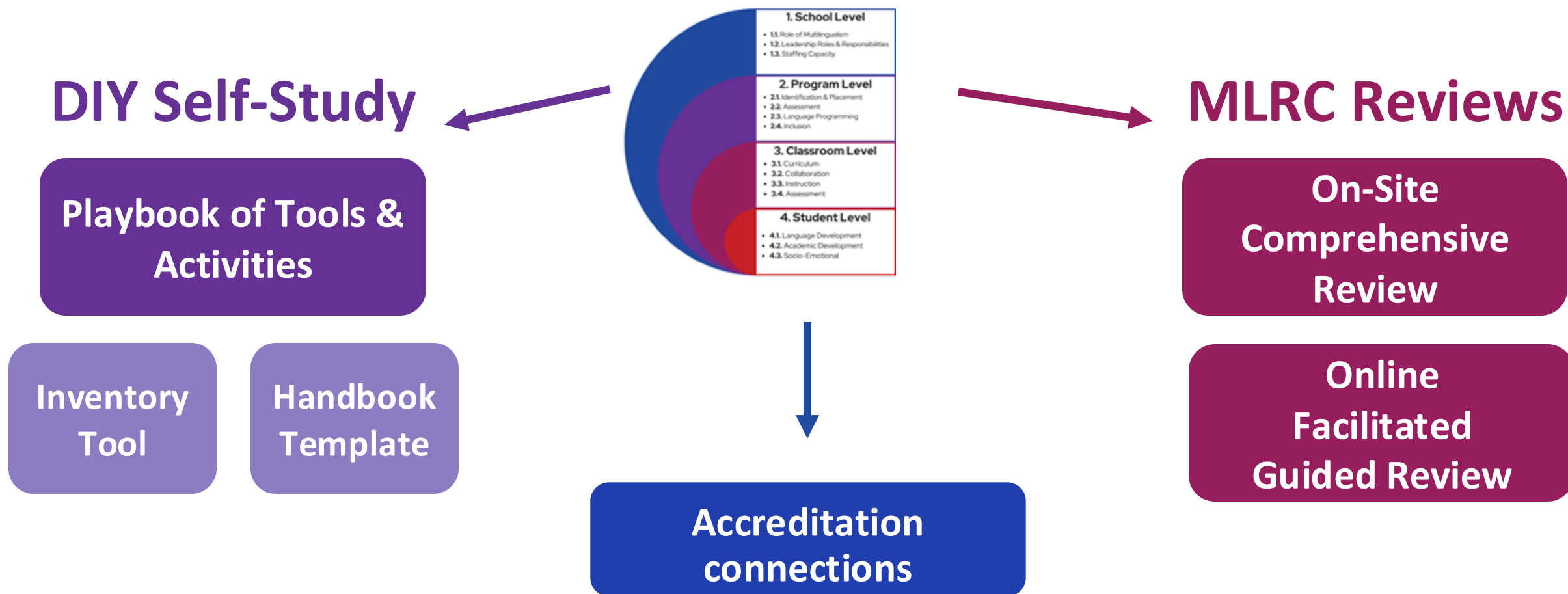
Inform research-based policy
decisions and program changes

Scaffold the development of
collective teacher efficacy

*...so they can engage
in continuous
improvement ...*



MLRC School Improvement Framework



Join Us Next Week!

School Improvement Pathways Webinar



April 15th



8AM US CST

Join us on
Zoom!



Step 1: Familiarize

- **Activity 1A:** Research Connections
Jigsaw Reading
- **Activity 1B:** KWL Chart
- **Activity 1C:** Key Terms Traffic Lights

Step 2: Inventory

- **Activity 2A:** Team Inventory
- **Activity 2B:** Snowball Inventory
- **Activity 2C:** Survey Inventory

Step 3: Deep-Dive

- **Activity 3A:** ML Student Shadowing
- **Activity 3B:** Lesson Observation
- **Activity 3C:** Linguistic Landscape
Learning Walk
- **Activity 3D:** Stakeholder Focus Group
Discussions
- **Activity 3E:** Policy Audit
- **Activity 3F:** Collaborative Policy Review
- **Activity 3G:** Staffing Capacity Survey
- **Activity 3H:** ML/EAL Handbook

Step 4: Action Plan

- **Activity 4A:** Diamond-Ranking
Prioritization
- **Activity 4B:** Effort/Impact Prioritization
- **Activity 4C:** Action Planner

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Insights

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Discover.

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How can our school get involved?

- ✓ **Join the MLRC School Network**
- ✓ **Explore the MLRC Online Research Hub**
- ✓ **Partner with us for School Improvement**
- ✓ **Send a team to a Research Symposium**
- ✓ **Present or publish your work!**



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Questions?

MLRC@wcer.wisc.edu

