Chicagoland Partners for English Language Learners

Making a Positive Difference for Students, Families, and Communities

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Preparing professionals to lead extraordinary lives

Since 2007, Chicagoland Partners for English Language Learners (CPELL) has been changing the future of education. CPELL is a federally funded National Professional Development Grant from the Office of English Language Acquisition.

Housed within Loyola University Chicago’s School of Education, CPELL provides tuition scholarships for teachers in partner districts for a unique graduate education cohort program, which leads to either a Masters in Education with an ELL Endorsement or the ELL Endorsement only. This core function of the program builds better prepared educators and administrators who can transform schools to improve student outcomes.

“This is the first educational experience where I felt the focus of my professors was for me to learn, achieve, and acquire new knowledge and build on existing knowledge. I loved my experience at Loyola, that I was taught relevant material, given clear expectations, assessed on what I learned and what I synthesized, and most importantly, always given the opportunity to try again until I got it right. Thank you.”

—Annette W., CPELL Scholar and graduate, Class of 2010

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Building capacity

The reach of the grant, funded at $2 million over a 5-year period, does not stop with teacher preparation. CPELL provides school-based comprehensive professional development to improve the classroom instruction of ELLs at partner schools.

Leadership preparation is a key component of this program, which is aimed at creating systemic change. CPELL is distinctive, placing an emphasis on developing systems of support that educate district- and building-level leaders, ELL teacher-leaders, and educational and parental advocates for bilingual students. This practice builds organizational capacity by supporting ELLs in the classroom and through the entire educational system.

“Our partnership with CPELL has been positive for the entire district, at the primary, intermediate, and middle school levels. We believe that methods and strategies that are helpful to ELLs are helpful to all students. The majority of our students have another language spoken at home. It is important that the entire staff assume responsibility for meeting the needs of ELLs—not just the ELL teacher.”

—Francisco Perez, Principal, Fairview School District #72

Supporting parents

Recognizing and supporting the vital connection between students and their families, CPELL has incorporated an important third aspect to the program—parent programming to build bridges between school and home.

What parents are saying:

“This session showed me the importance of communicating with children, especially in the first language”

“I gained valuable information to better teach my son learning skills.”

“Excellent material. Very informative. Thank you.”

Current partner districts include:

- Adali E. Stevenson #125
  www.d125.org
- Aptakisic-Tripp #102
  www.aptakisic.lake.k12.il.us
- Chicago Office of Catholic Schools
  www.chicagocatholicschools.org
- Fairview #72
  www.fairview.k12.il.us
- Hawthorn #73
  www.hawthorn73.org
- North Shore #112
  www.nssd112.org
- Skokie #68
  www.skokie68.org

Meaningful impact

With CPELL, an amazing transformation is taking place, positively impacting seven school districts, representing more than 3,000 teachers and administrators, and nearly 19,000 students and their families.

Using the data collected over the course of this grant, CPELL is building data-driven educational practices and working closely with our partners to empower schools to use student data in meaningful ways.

The power of this collaboration results in using data for improved instruction, advocacy, and program development with evaluation and process improvement.

The need for this type of educational training is great. CPELL is shaping the future with this comprehensive model and utilizing data to help inform new programming.
Stakeholder-driven partnership

One of the unique elements of the CPELL model involves the use of an iterative process. This process is used within each of the partner school districts as well as within each leg of the program.

■ The process begins with listening to the administration, teachers, and parents within the district. A needs assessment is conducted to collect data on the various aspects that CPELL seeks to address within the bounds of the program.

■ Data is collected and then analyzed by the CPELL team and CPELL’s external evaluator. These data are used to identify areas and themes that will inform the content for professional development (PD) sessions for administrators and teachers, as well as workshops for parents.

■ Based on the data, professional development sessions are created and presented to school administrators. Sessions for teachers are also created to address the specific needs of each district.

■ Parent workshops are developed to support the student’s home language while he/she learns English in school. Parents are encouraged to work with teachers and ask for the support they may need, ultimately fostering parents’ collaboration and comfort with the U.S. educational system. Books written in the family’s home language are made available to the children to encourage literacy and family reading time. Parent events are delivered in collaboration with school events. CPELL provides translators, childcare, and food for each of these events.

■ Feedback forms and evaluations are collected from the participants at each administrator, teacher, and parent session, providing CPELL with real-time data for shaping the next development session.

■ The CPELL Scholars (a cohort group of students in the graduate program) are pivotal in the iterative process. As they progress through the CPELL program, the students develop a network of support between their educational facilities. By teaching and learning simultaneously, they can employ the strategies learned in their classroom and become teacher-leaders within their respective schools.

■ Communication is the key to successfully delivering programs, creating a broad base of shared knowledge, and developing cooperative leadership across the different districts. The CPELL Governing Board, composed of CPELL members, partner district administrators, and CPELL Scholars, meets throughout the year to share successes and challenges, and voice their needs. Communication also occurs at school district planning meetings, via an email listserv, and through the CPELL website, luc.edu/cpell.

This iterative process builds capacity within the districts, allowing for an organic organization that can respond quickly and appropriately to individual needs and create systemic change for on-going student growth.

How CPELL works

The elements that surround the outside of the diagram are the expressions of the work accomplished by the iterative process outlined in the center.
We welcome you to learn more about the CPELL program and our partnerships.

Visit luc.edu/cpell