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What School Leaders Need to Know About English Learners

Foreword by

Rosa Aronson and JoAnn Bartoletti

Can English language learners (ELLs) be an asset to the learning environment? This question is at the heart of *What School Leaders Need to Know About English Learners*. The answer is a resounding yes when school leaders understand how to empower these important, but often marginalized, students so that they may develop their skills and find their voices.

The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 charge educational leaders with Equity and Responsiveness and with cultivating a Community of Care and Support for Students that includes infusing the school's learning environment with the cultures and languages of the school's community. In many schools, ELLs represent over a dozen languages and cultures.

At the same time, there is a growing demand for higher, more rigorous standards for all students. School leaders are responsible for the academic performance and progress of each student in their schools. With the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the intent is to make accountability for ELL students an equal priority.

We believe that school leaders play a crucial role in creating a culture of high expectations and an environment of support in their schools in which ELLs can succeed. *What School Leaders Need to Know About English Learners* is the perfect intersection between TESOL and NASSP—the point at which school leaders learn from the TESOL community how to best deliver English language programs to this growing segment of students who

enrich the culture of their schools. School leaders should use this book as a foundation to design, develop, and lead ELL programs in their school communities.

What School Leaders Need to Know about English Learners outlines effective, research-based strategies and offers best practices to help both ELL and content-area teachers succeed in their respective roles. From understanding what it means to “know English,” to fostering a school culture that values and welcomes multiple languages and cultures, to understanding how ELLs can best acquire language and learn content, each chapter succinctly offers strategies that will enable school leaders to set their schools apart from others.

What School Leaders Need to Know about English Learners also questions false assumptions about ELLs that can lead to misguided instructional strategies. It outlines how ELLs can be a great asset to schools. For example, these students already know a language that many of their peers do not. Further, ELLs often navigate between two cultures, a skill that is more and more essential for all students as our world becomes increasingly interconnected.

Leadership is second only to instruction in school-based factors that affect achievement (Wallace Foundation.) We believe that school leaders must make the extra effort to create the critical contexts in which these students thrive. *What School Leaders Need to Know About English Learners* ultimately serves our ELL students so they can reach their fullest potential. They deserve nothing less!

Rosa Aronson
Executive Director
TESOL International Association

JoAnn Bartoletti
Executive Director
National Association of Secondary School Principals