




When you think of reclassifying English learners with disabilities, what words come to mind?

Please reflect and share an idea in the chat...

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Promoting Equitable Reclassification of Multilingual Learners with Disabilities

Knowledge Building for State Education Agency Leaders

Dr. Sara Kangas, Lehigh University | May 8, 2024

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- Welcome
- About NCSI
- Equitable Reclassification

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NCSI at a glance

- Led by WestEd + partners AIR & NASDSE
- Focus on capacity building for State Education Agencies (SEAs) – who in turn build regional and local capacity – for equitable outcomes for children and youth with disabilities
- Funded by Dept of Education – Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)
- Currently in our 10th year of service
- Provide Universal, Targeted, and Intensive TA for all 60 SEAs

- 1. Impact: SEA Leaders**
 - Coaching & mentoring for new and seasoned special education directors and staff
- 2. Impact: IDEA Compliance**
 - Supporting design & implementation of comprehensive and integrated general supervision systems
- 3. Impact: Effective Instruction**
 - Capacity building on evidence-based practices for teaching and learning for students with disabilities

The National Center for Systemic Improvement | 4

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Aims of Webinar

1. to provide the latest policy trends and research findings regarding equitable reclassification for ELs with disabilities
2. to promote collaboration between EL and special education SEA leaders

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PROMOTING EQUITABLE RECLASSIFICATION OF ENGLISH LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES

Sara E.N. Kangas

 **LEHIGH** UNIVERSITY | College of Education

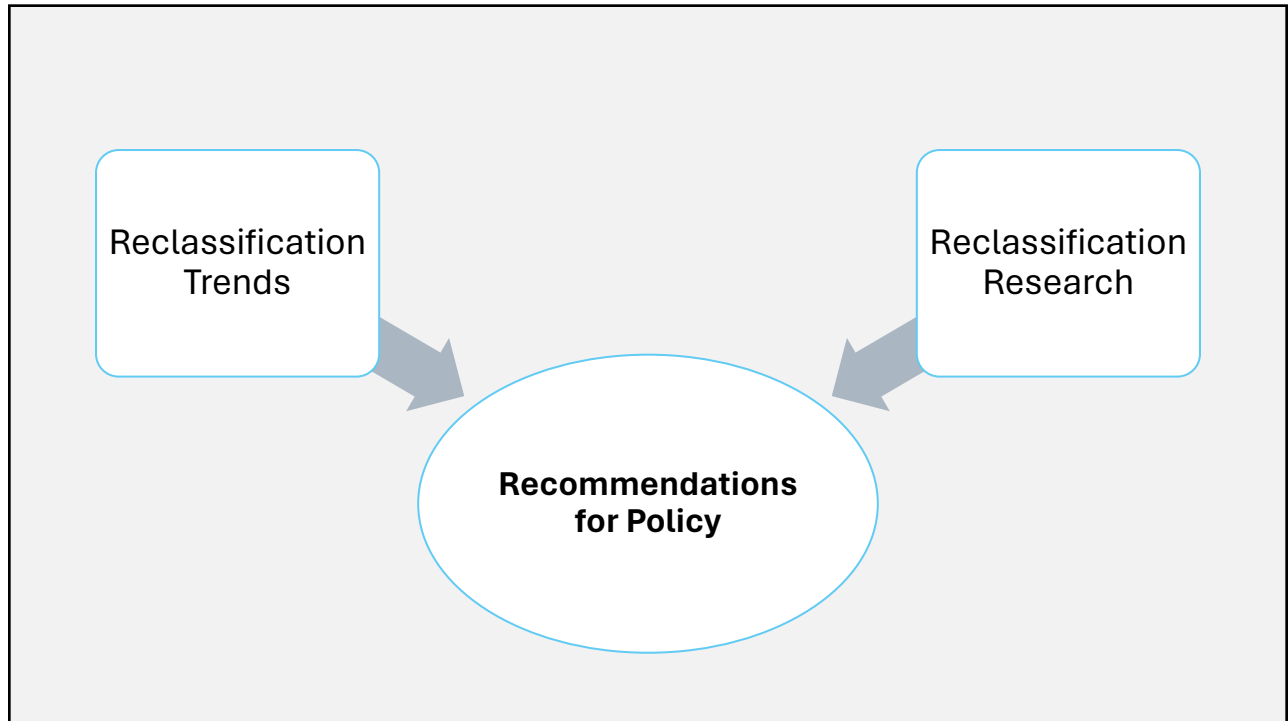


APRIL 2024

Policy Brief

- **Funder:** Spencer Foundation
- **Purpose:** Support SEAs in refining reclassification policies
- **Use:** Foster collaborative discussions and decision-making

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Background

Students identified as **English learners with disabilities** increased by 50% from 2006 to 2020 in U.S. schools. Cooc, 2023

ELs with disabilities constitute

- 16.1% of all ELs National Center for Education Statistics, 2023
- 11.7% of students served under IDEA Office of Special Education Programs, 2022

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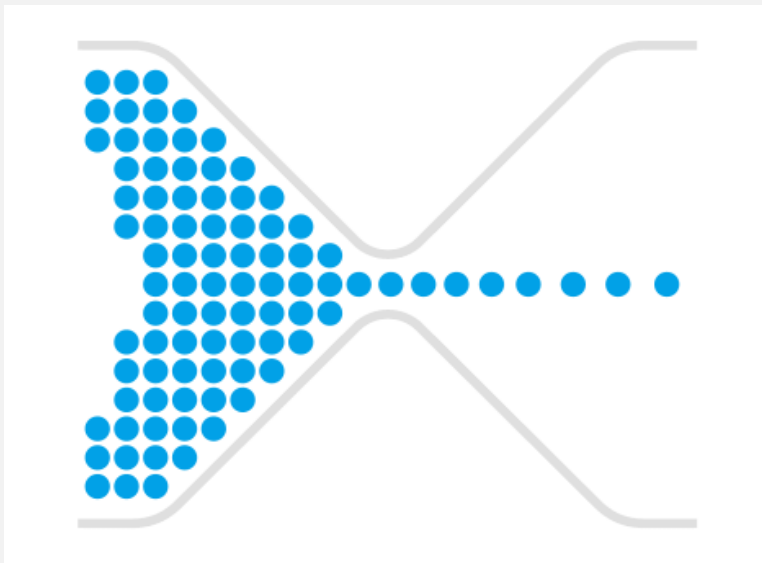
Background

In 2018, ELs with disabilities constituted only:

- 0.8% of the 14.2% of ELs reclassified as fluent English proficient
- 3.6% of the 27.4% of ELs making progress in their English language proficiency (ELP)

Office of English Language Acquisition, 2021

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Research has uncovered a reclassification bottleneck, where ELs with disabilities get “stuck” in language services

Burke et al., 2016; Schissel & Kangas, 2018; Stama et al., 2015; Umansky et al., 2017

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Why does it matter?

Remaining in language services for prolonged periods of time can be associated with **unequal learning opportunities**, including limited access to peers, rigorous content-area instruction, and college preparatory courses

Callahan & Shifrer, 2016; Dabach, 2014; Kangas & Cook, 2020, 2023; Menken et al., 2012; Thompson, 2015

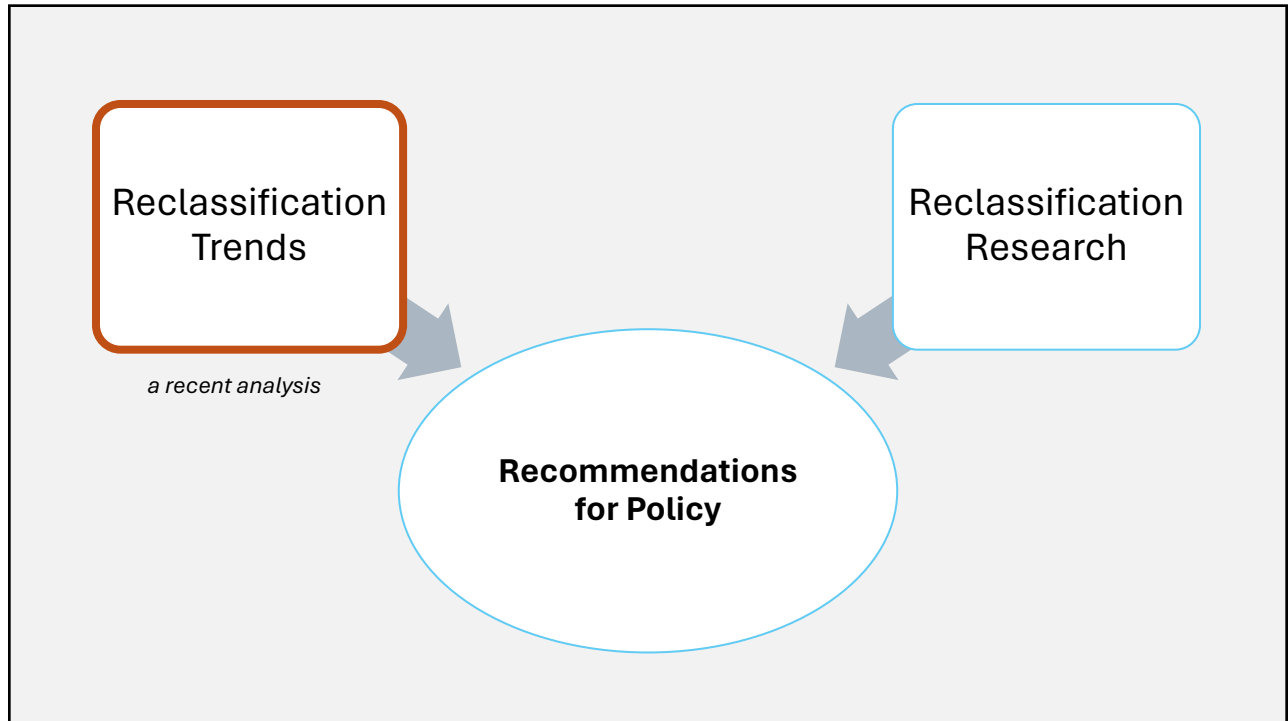
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Why does it matter?

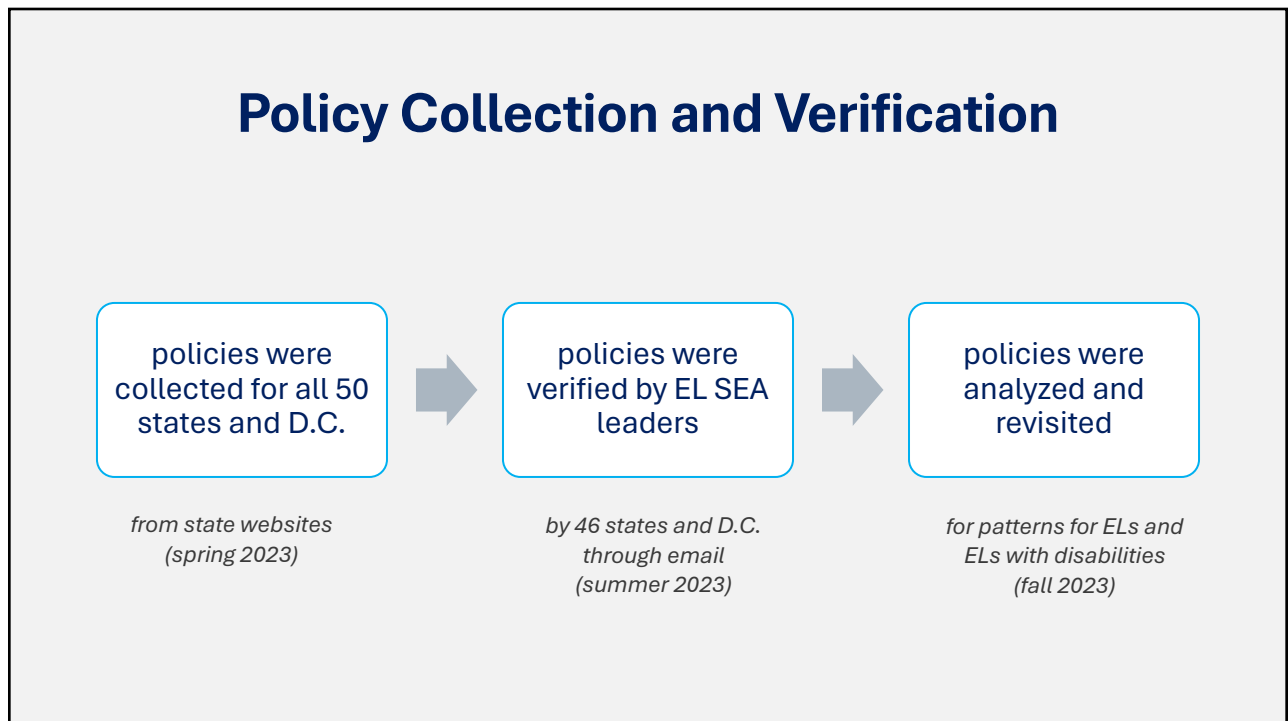
Prematurely reclassifying can **deprive ELs with disabilities of language services** they need to access the general education curriculum as well as disability-related services

Kangas & Schissel, 2021

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Reclassification Context

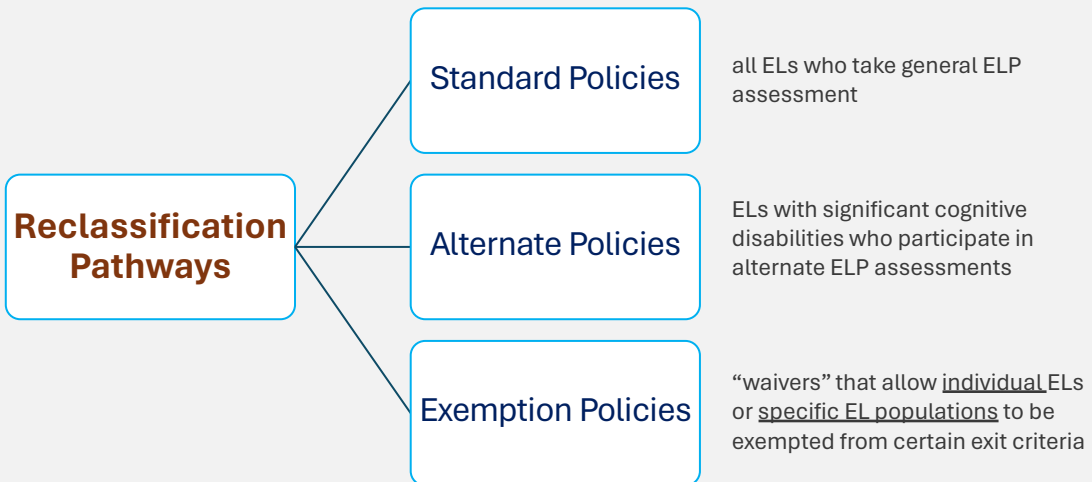
Each state determines what it means to be “fluent English proficient”

- linked to English language proficiency (ELP) assessments

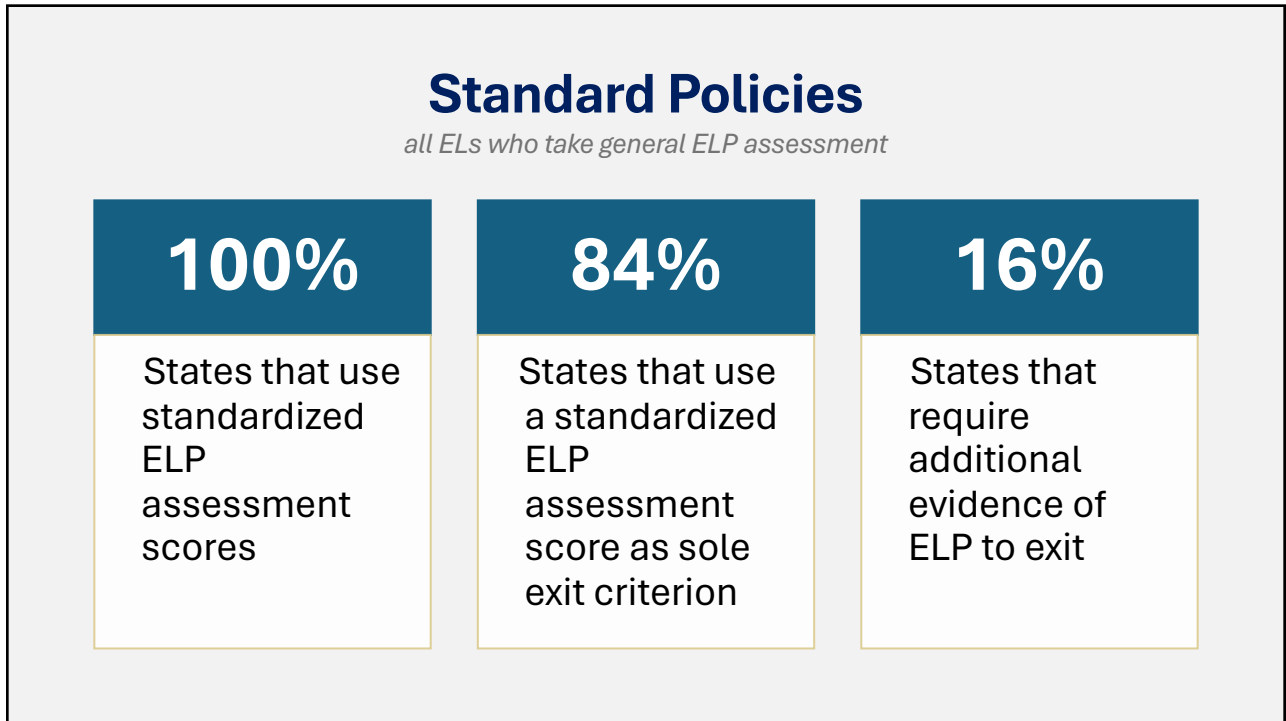
Extensive variation across the states:

- Number and type of criteria
- Consideration of disability

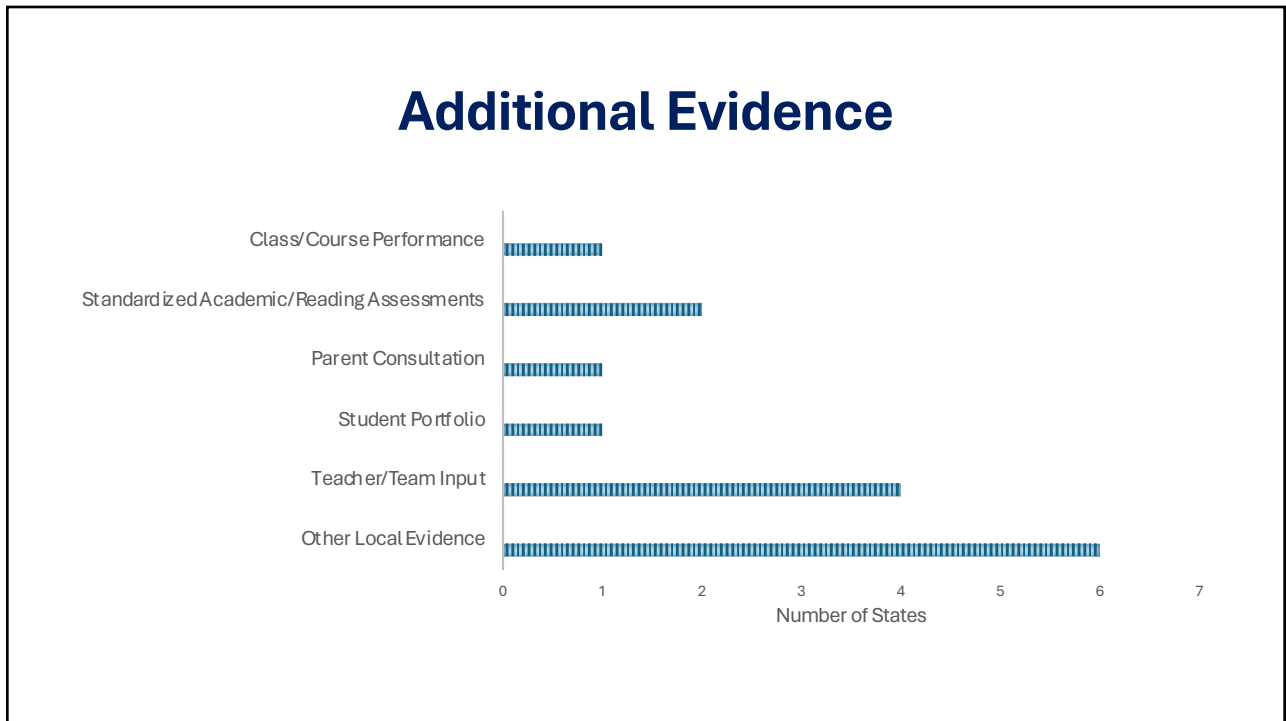
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	Standardized General ELP Assessment			Standardized Assessments		Class or Course Performance	Student Portfolio	Teacher or Team Input	Parent Consultation	Other Local Evidence	Individual Exemption/ Pathway
	Composite Score/Level	Domain Scores	Literacy Composite Score	Academic Scores	Reading Scores						
AL	✓										
AK	✓										
AZ	✓	✓									
AR	✓										
CA	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓	
CO	✓		✓							✓	
CT	✓	✓									
DE	✓										
DC	✓										
FL	✓										
GA	✓*										
HI	✓										
ID	✓	✓									
IL	✓										
IN	✓	✓									
IA	✓										
KS	✓						✓			✓	
KY	✓										
LA	✓										✓
ME	✓										
MD	✓										
MA	✓		✓							✓	
MI	✓										
MN	✓	✓*									
MS	✓	✓									
MO	✓						✓				✓

	Standardized General ELP Assessment			Standardized Assessments		Class or Course Performance	Student Portfolio	Teacher or Team Input	Parent Consultation	Other Local Evidence	Individual Exemption/ Pathway
	Composite Score/Level	Domain Scores	Literacy Composite Score	Academic Scores	Reading Scores						
MT	✓										
NE	✓										✓
NV	✓*										
NH	✓										
NJ	✓			✓		✓		✓		✓	
NM	✓										
NY	✓*										
NC	✓										
ND	✓	✓									
OH	✓	✓									
OK	✓*										
OR	✓										
PA	✓									✓	
RI	✓										
SC	✓	✓									
SD	✓*										
TN	✓		✓								
TX	✓	✓			✓			✓			
UT	✓	✓									
VT	✓										
VA	✓										
WA	✓										
WV	✓										
WI	✓*										
WY	✓		✓								

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Alternate Policies

ELs with significant cognitive disabilities who participate in alternate ELP assessments

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states

have alternate reclassification policies

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states

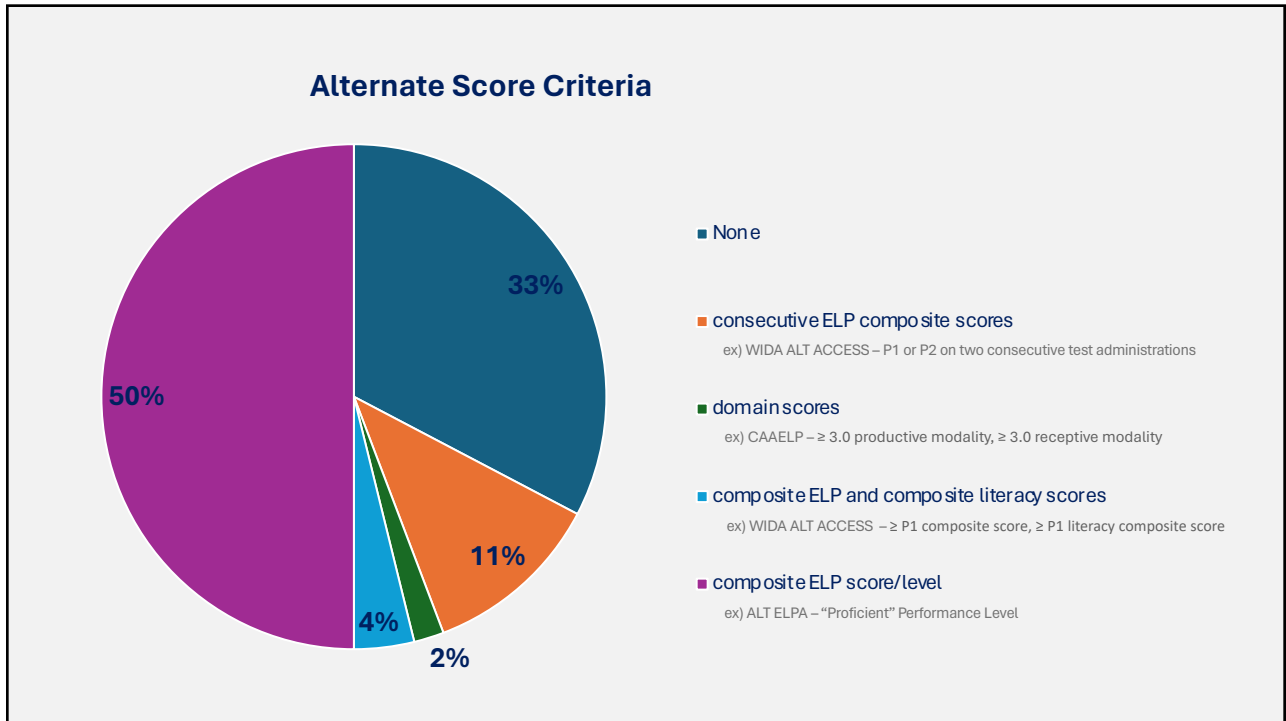
do not have (or are in the process of developing) alternate reclassification policies

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states

have prohibitions on reclassification with an alternate ELP score

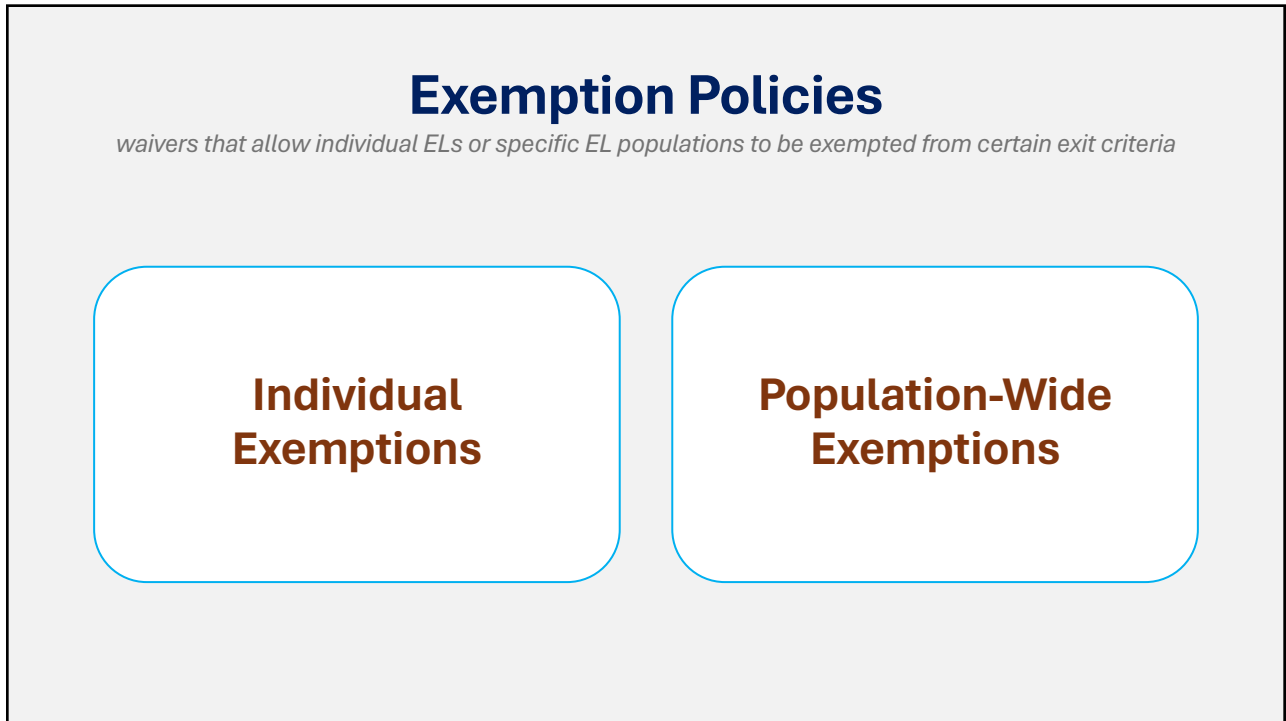
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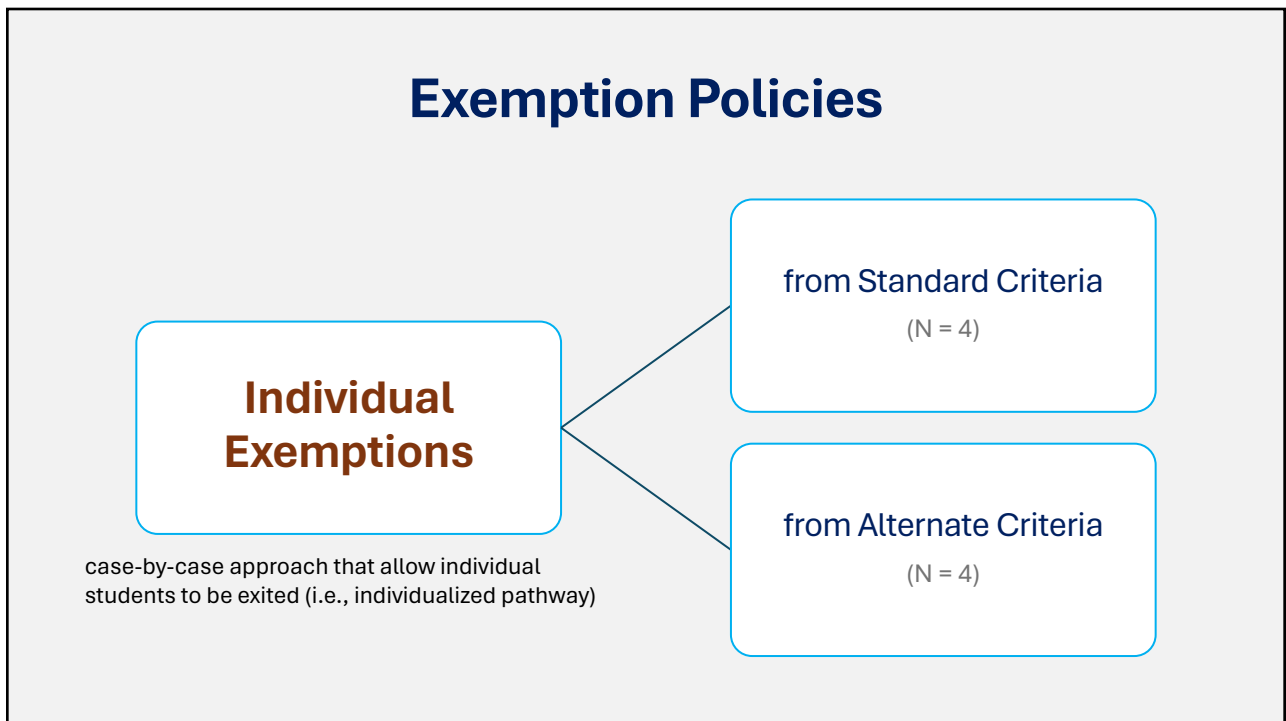
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	Standardized Alternate ELP Assessment					Class or Course Performance	Student Portfolio	Teacher or Team Input	Parent Consultation	Other Local Evidence
	Composite Score/Level	Domain Scores	Literacy Composite Score	Composite Score Comparison (2 or 3 test administrations)	Standardized Academic or Reading Assessments					
AL				✓				✓		
AK										
AZ	✓									
AR	✓									
CA	✓							✓	✓	✓
CO	✓		✓							✓
CT		✓+								
DE	✓									
DC										
FL	✓									
GA				✓				✓		
HI										
ID	✓									
IL										
IN										
IA	✓									
KS										
KY	✓									
LA	✓									
ME	✓									
MD	✓									
MA										
MI	✓									
MN	✓							✓	✓	✓
MS										
MO										
MT	✓									
NE	✓									
NV	✓									
NH	✓*									
NJ	✓							✓	✓	✓
NM	✓									
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OH										
OK				✓*						
OR	✓									
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WV	✓									
WI	✓^									
WY	✓									

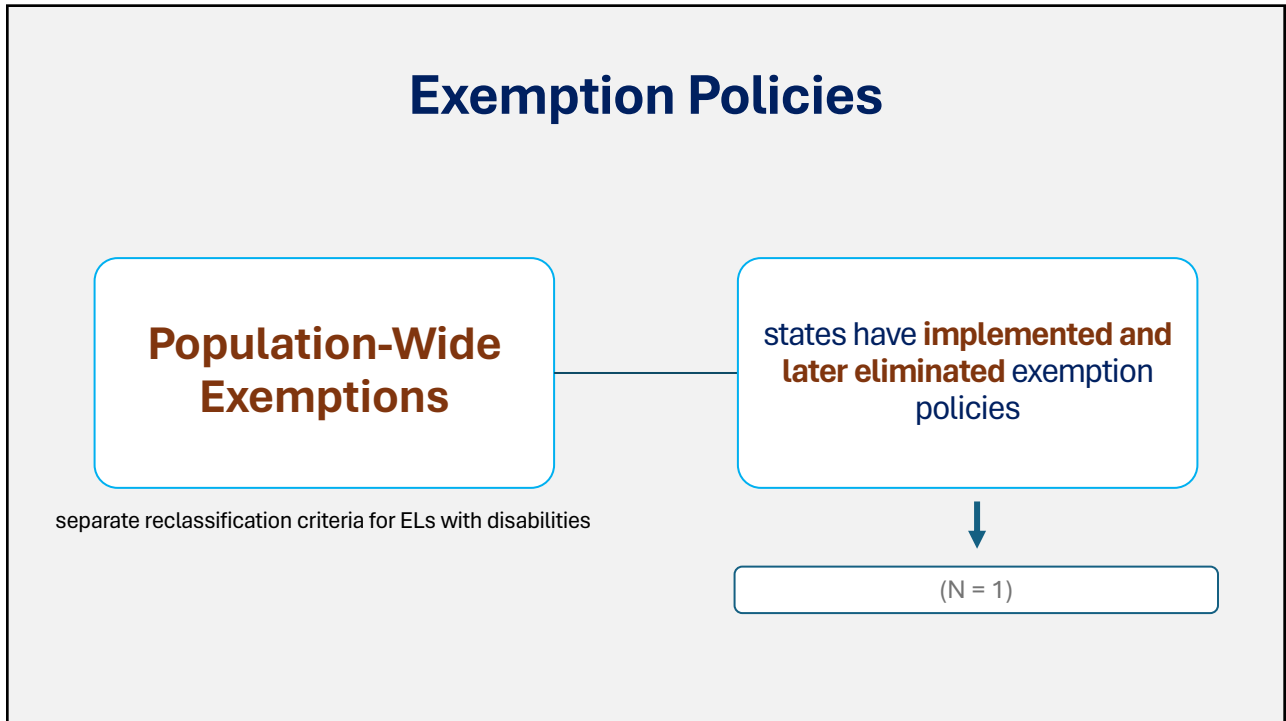
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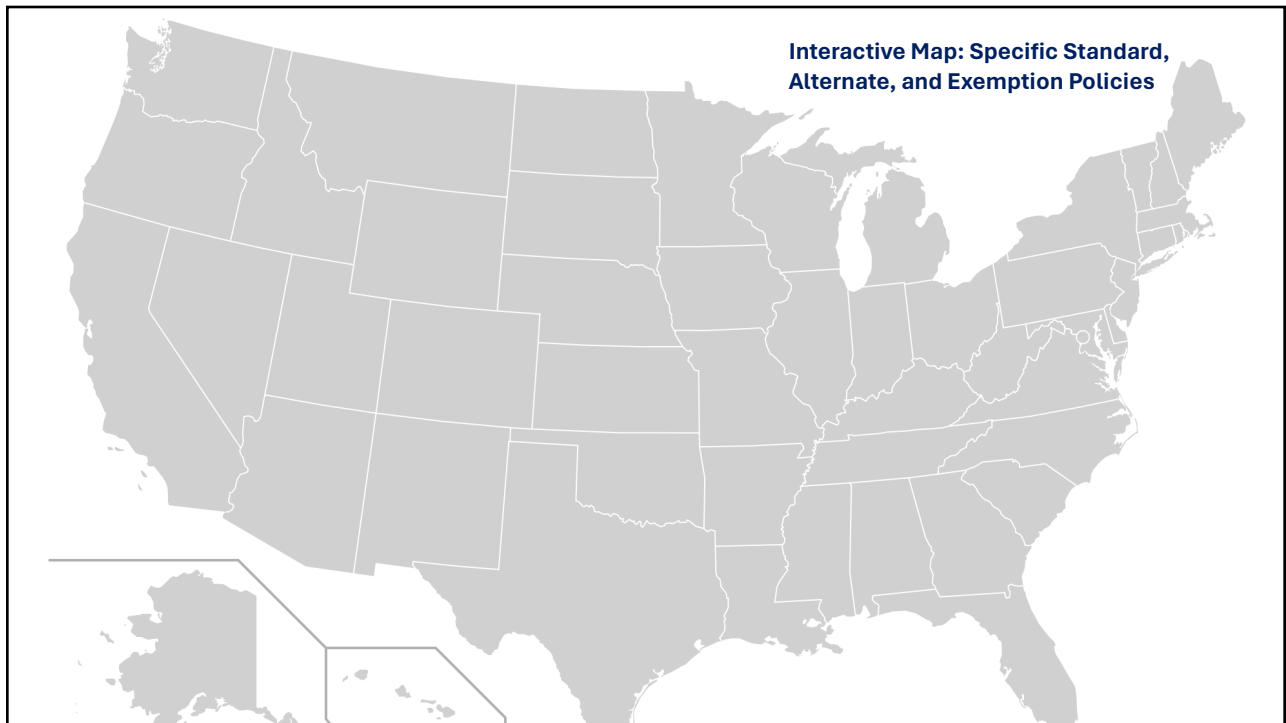
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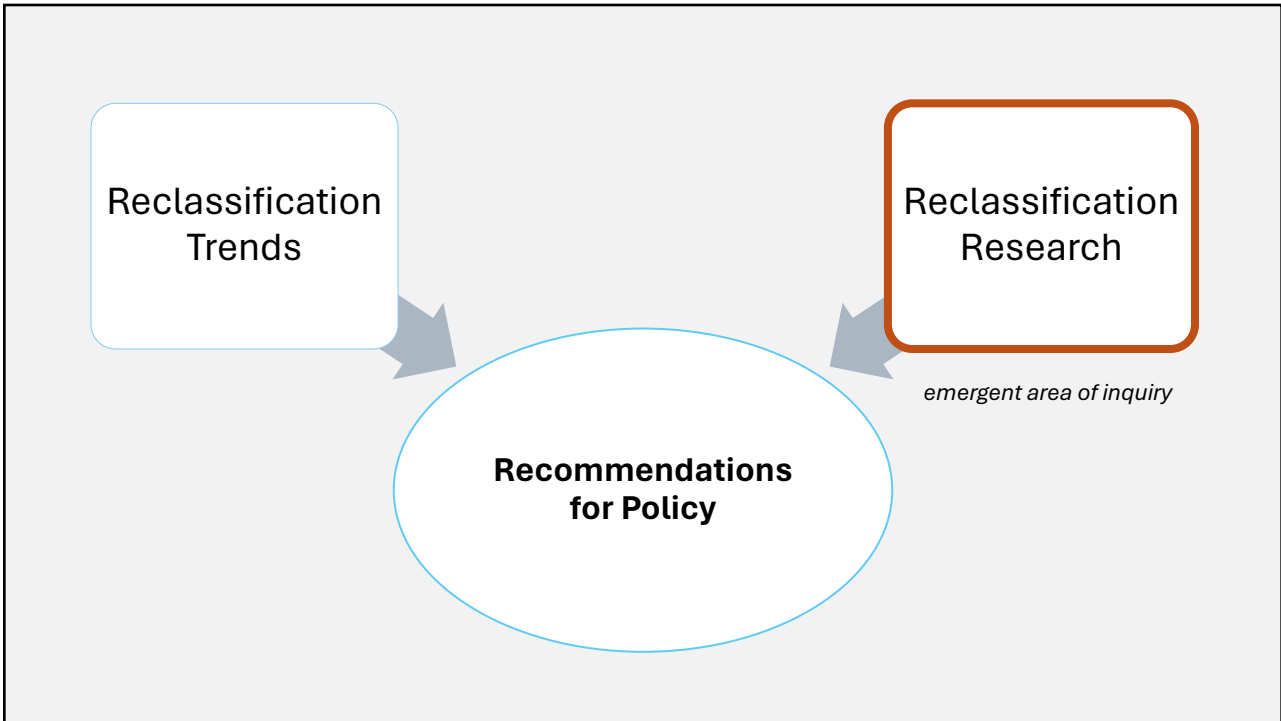


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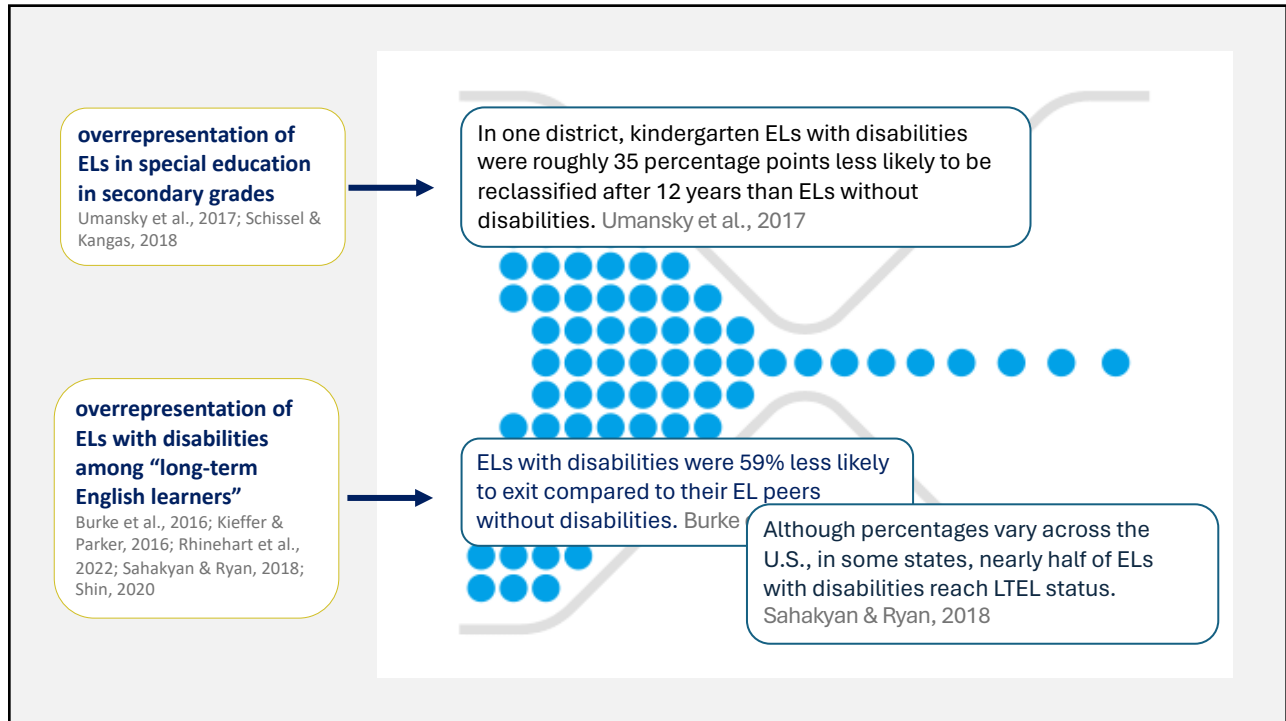
Questions or comments?

on reclassification policy trends

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Systemic Challenges to Equitable Reclassification

in Policy	in Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Singular exit criterion Adoption of alternate ELP assessments Parent and student consultation Multi-year ELP score comparisons Alternate ELP assessment cut scores 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to dual services Quality of learning opportunities Collaborative decision-making Use of evidence Perceptions of student ability

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Policy-Based Challenges

Singular exit criterion

- Majority of state policies require an ELP assessment score as the sole exit criterion
- Multiple stakeholder groups recommend using additional evidence in conjunction with an ELP score Linquanti et al., 2016; Park & Chou, 2019; WIDA, 2023

Adoption of alternate ELP assessments

- Some states do not have a designated alternate ELP assessment for ELs with significant cognitive disabilities
- Taking a general ELP assessment, even with accommodations, may yield inaccurate ELP scores de Valenzuela et al., 2022; Schissel & Kangas, 2018

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Policy-Based Challenges

Alternate ELP assessment cut scores

- Some state policies have not specified a cut score that would enable ELs with significant cognitive disabilities to exit
- Prohibitions on exiting with an alternate ELP assessment score, citing that alternate ELP scores—of any kind—do not meet grade-level ELP standards de Valenzuela et al., 2022

Parent and student consultation

- Parent notification more common than parent/family engagement
- Exiting is a high-stakes educational decision that warrants parent/family and student consultation Brooks, 2023; Burho & Thompson, 2021

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Policy-Based Challenges

Multi-year ELP score comparisons

- Assist in understanding if ELs with disabilities are making ELP gains
- Can be difficult for LEAs to navigate, especially when ELP assessments are updated and revised Schissel & Kangas, 2021

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School-Based Challenges

Access to dual services

- Inadequate ELP support for ELs with disabilities is common U.S. DOJ & ED, 2015; Zehler, 2003
- LEAs to wrestle with demands of dual service provision, often delivering only one set of services Kangas, 2014, 2018

Quality of learning opportunities

- ELs with disabilities experience more restrictive placements and limited exposure to content-area instruction and English that is at grade-level standards Cooc, 2023; Cioè-Peña, 2021; Kangas & Cook, 2020, 2023

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School-Based Challenges

Collaborative decision-making

- Collaborative decision-making during reclassification is a challenge for LEAs Estrada & Wang, 2018; Hill et al., 2014
- EL teachers can operate as sole-decision makers Kangas & Schissel, 2021

Use of evidence

- Teachers experience difficulties making data-based recommendations Estrada & Wang, 2018; Hill et al., 2014
- Teachers may use “gut instinct” to determine whether disability is cause of ELs’ ELP scores Kangas & Schissel, 2021

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School-Based Challenges

Perceptions of student ability

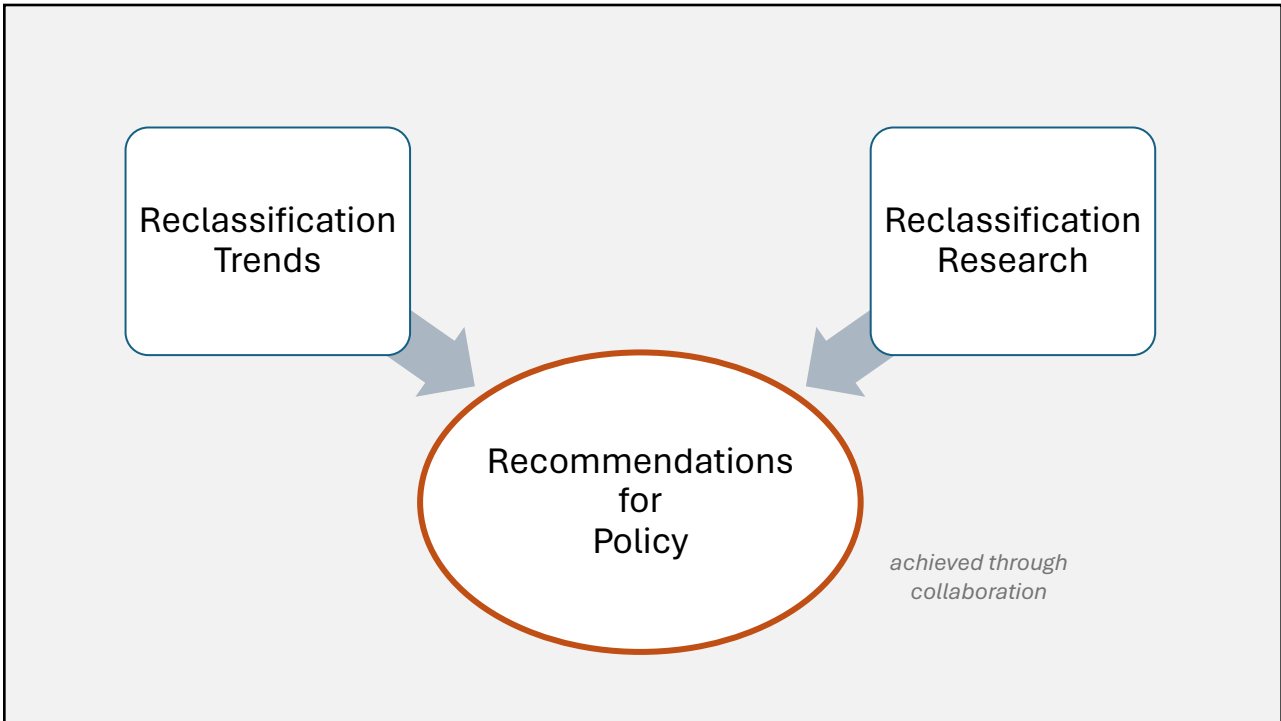
- Students are often perceived in deficit terms because of their language, disability, and race Cioè-Peña, 2021; Martínez-Álvarez, 2023; Paradis et al., 2021

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Questions or comments?

on emergent research findings

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#1: Move toward multiple forms of ELP evidence

- Consider additional evidence of ELP
- Recommend viable local data
- Establish procedures for missing domain scores

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#2: Support multi-stakeholder decision-making

- Promote team-based approaches
- Engage parents as decision-makers
- Empower older ELs with disabilities

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#3: Refine policies for alternate ELP assessments

- Establish exit criteria
- Eliminate exiting prohibitions
- Exercise caution with multi-year score comparisons

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#4: Seek deeper understanding of exemption policies

- Understand the current landscape
- Seek guidance on exemption policies

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#5: Elevate practices and mindsets that support ELs with disabilities

- Collaborate to shift educator mindsets
- Encourage opportunities for educators to come together
- Support the examination of learning opportunities

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Additional questions and comments?

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Please help us continuously improve 😊



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https://meadowscenter.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3VJC9Xun7rtcfAy

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Thank you

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WestEd is the lead organization for NCSI. For more information about the work of WestEd, NCSI, and their partners, please visit www.ncsi-wested.org and www.wested.org



NCSI includes staff from the OSEP funded Parent Training and Information Center and Regional Parent TA Centers and the OESE funded Statewide Family Engagement Centers.

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