



Santa Barbara Unified
Every child, every chance, every day.

2025-2026 INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK



Acknowledgements

Superintendent

Dr. Hilda Maldonado

Board of Trustees

Gabe Escobedo, President

William Banning, Vice President

Rose Muñoz, Clerk

Sunita Beall

Celeste Kafri

Instructional Framework Executive Committee

Dr. Sonia Wilson

Denise Alvarado

Dr. Deborah Martinez

Allison Quijano

Dr. Mallory Price

Tricia Poelstra

Nellie Hill

Melissa Ewart

Jesus Campos

Xóchitl Tafoya

2024-25 Instructional Council

2024-25 Districtwide Leadership PLC

2024-25 Superintendent Student Advisory Council

Principals Elementary & Assistant Principals



Santa Barbara Unified

Every child, every chance, every day.

High Quality Tier 1 Instruction Roadmap

COLLABORATION

- Student Voice
- Collaborative Conversations
- Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

BELONGING

- Relationships
- Social Emotional Learning
- Name, Face, Story

ACADEMICS

- Learning Targets
- Success Criteria
- Assessments

C

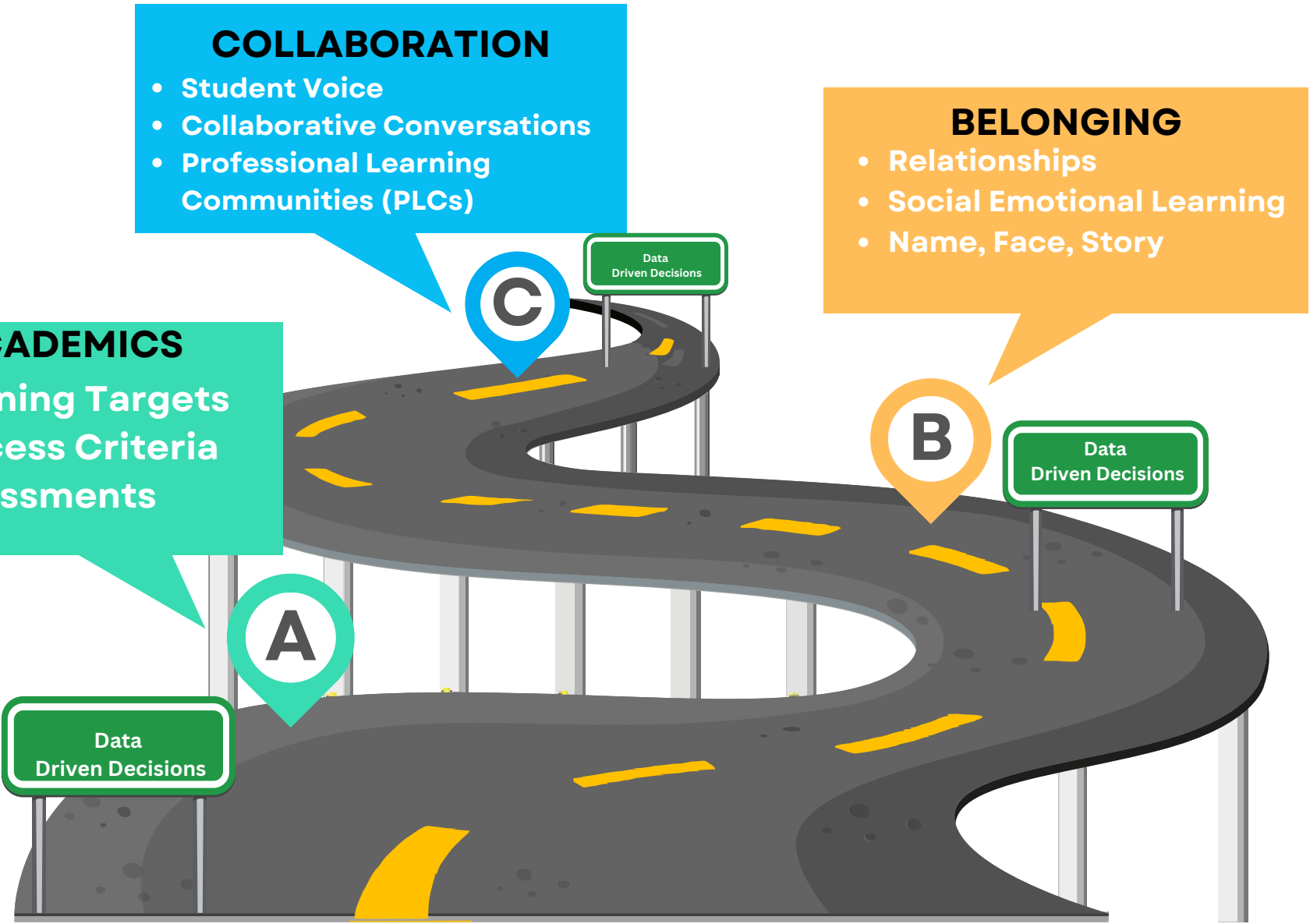
Data
Driven Decisions

B

Data
Driven Decisions

A

Data
Driven Decisions



Santa Barbara Unified Instructional Framework



ACCESS TO GRADE LEVEL ACADEMICS

- Implement curriculum and instruction aligned to **grade-level standards**
- Purposefully define **learning targets** and **success criteria** to support teacher clarity and student agency
- Plan using **Universal Design for Learning** to meet the variable needs of our students
- Intentionally plan opportunities to authentically use and build **disciplinary language**^{3, 4}
- Design opportunities that require **rich language and literacy** practice^{3, 5}
- Prioritize **cognitively demanding** tasks⁵
- Strategically use **common formative assessments** to measure and advance student learning



BUILD A CULTURE OF BELONGING

- Foster a sense of **affirmation, safety, and relevance** for our students¹
- Develop students' **social emotional learning** to support awareness of self and others
- Leverage and value the **linguistic and cultural assets** that all students use to communicate and learn²
- Center students' lived **experiences and identities** and practice perspective-taking of others^{1, 2}
- Discover, build on, and amplify students **funds of knowledge**²



CULTIVATE COLLABORATION

- Use data in **Professional Learning Communities** to collectively make instructional decisions to improve student outcomes
- Prioritize **collaborative experiences** for students to build collective knowledge and exercise **agency** in their learning
- Foster partnerships between students, staff, families, and community²
- Value student and teacher voice to foster an interconnected community



Santa Barbara Unified
Every child, every chance, every day.

¹⁻⁵ Alignment to SBUSD's 5 Key Practices for Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLs).

ACCESS TO GRADE LEVEL ACADEMICS

- Implement curriculum and instruction aligned to **grade-level standards**
- Purposefully define **learning targets** and **success criteria** to support teacher clarity and student agency
- Plan using **Universal Design for Learning** to meet the variable needs of our students
- Intentionally plan opportunities to authentically use and build **disciplinary language**^{3, 4}
- Design opportunities that require **rich language and literacy practice**^{3, 5}
- Prioritize **cognitively demanding** tasks⁵
- Strategically use **common formative assessments** to measure and advance student learning



WHEN **ACADEMIC** INSTRUCTION IS GRADE LEVEL...

EDUCATORS...

- Align instruction and assessments to **grade level expectations**.
- Integrate **learning targets** and **success criteria** into every lesson, so that students understand what they are learning and how they will be assessed.
- Use data from **formative assessments** to inform instruction.
- Provide appropriate **scaffolding** and **extensions** designed with **learner variability** in mind.
- Build **disciplinary language** for all students through modeling, routines, and intentional instruction.
- Ask students to explain their process versus only sharing their product.
- Facilitate structured small and whole group discussions to deepen understanding.
- Explicitly teach and practice routines to allow all students to participate in rigorous learning.

STUDENTS...

- Believe themselves and their peers to be intellectually capable of high academic achievement.
- Connect their prior knowledge and background to content and learning.
- Set meaningful academic goals.
- Regularly reflect on progress towards grade-level learning.
- Do the majority of the thinking, persevere in challenging tasks, and engage in **productive struggle**.
- Articulate the purpose of their learning and how they will demonstrate what they have learned.

BUILD A CULTURE OF BELONGING

- Foster a sense of **affirmation, safety, and relevance** for our students ¹
- Develop students' **social emotional learning** to support awareness of self and others
- Leverage and value the **linguistic and cultural assets** that all students use to communicate and learn ²
- Center students' lived **experiences and identities** and practice perspective-taking of others ^{1, 2}
- Discover, build on, and amplify students' **funds of knowledge** ²



WHEN THERE IS A CULTURE OF BELONGING....

EDUCATORS...

- Learn about students' **marginalized identities** and related **structural/institutional barriers**.
- Explicitly teach and practice routines to develop students' **emotional capacity**.
- Use **asset-based language** to communicate that all students are capable of achieving grade-level expectations and contributing to the learning community.
- Value and **leverage students' home language** and culture to make connections and build knowledge.
- Use texts and resources that provide students the opportunity to see a diversity of perspectives and identities, including their own.
- Regularly reflect on their own **racial, ethnic, and linguistic biases**, and how these biases influence their instructional practice and classroom environment.

STUDENTS...

- Develop and practice skills to manage emotions, build relationships, and make responsible decisions.
- Contribute to discussions, ask questions and help their peers.
- Use language, actions, and agreed-upon norms to contribute to a positive classroom community.
- Explain when and how their learning connects with their lives and aspirations.
- Express interest in and empathy for perspectives and experiences different from their own.
- Proudly communicate using their **full linguistic repertoire**.
- Demonstrate respect, interest, and appreciation for their peers' home language(s) and cultures.

CULTIVATE COLLABORATION

- Use data in **Professional Learning Communities** to collectively make instructional decisions to improve student outcomes
- Prioritize **collaborative experiences** for students to build collective knowledge and exercise **agency** in their learning
- Foster partnerships between students, staff, families, and community ²
- Value student and teacher voice to foster an interconnected community



WHEN WE CULTIVATE **COLLABORATION**...

EDUCATORS...

- Use agreed-upon protocols to respond to **PLC questions** in order to plan instruction, assess student learning, and respond instructionally.
- Welcome opportunities to learn from and with other educators.
- Plan for and teach **routines** and **structures** that allow students to develop **agency** through **collaborative learning experiences**.
- Create conditions for conversations that elicit different ways of thinking, and help students reflect on how diverse perspectives are assets to their learning.
- Pose questions that advance student thinking, deepen students' understanding, and promote meaningful reflection, rather than seeking **expected answers**.
- Regularly elicit and respond to feedback from students as a way to improve practice.
- Plan learning experiences that include interactions with family and community.

STUDENTS...

- Work in partners and groups in which they share ideas, build on one another's thinking, and deepen understanding of content and skills.
- Reflect on self and group member actions and contributions, and how their individual and collective efforts contributed to learning.
- Explain how different ways of thinking and diverse perspectives are assets to their learning and the wellbeing of the community.
- Use **social awareness** and **interpersonal skills** to listen actively, relate across lines of difference, communicate respectfully and clearly, resolve conflicts, and seek and offer help.
- Express interest in learning from and about their own families and communities, and those of their classmates.

¹⁻⁵ Alignment to SBUSD's 5 Key Practices for Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLs).

SBUSD'S Five Key Practices: Effective Instruction for Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLs)

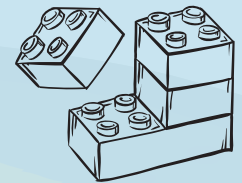
1. Foster Affirmation, Safety and Relevance

Safe and affirming classrooms foster an environment where intellectual risk-taking is encouraged. In such a community of learners, everyone is empowered to ask questions, explore diverse perspectives, respect different approaches to problem-solving, and collaborate meaningfully with one another.



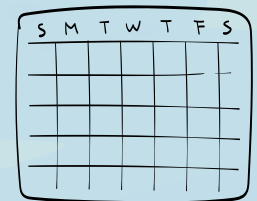
2. Build on Students' Funds of Knowledge

Understanding and leveraging students' funds of knowledge requires recognizing the English language proficiency levels and primary language strengths of Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLs), as well as exploring their interests, life experiences, educational backgrounds, and the cultural and familial resources they bring to the classroom. Teachers must not only value and celebrate the multilingual abilities of students, including their use of different dialects, but also acknowledge the diverse levels of literacy among multilingual learners. By tapping into cultural and community resources, educators can make content more relevant and meaningful, ensuring that all students have the tools they need to succeed.



3. Commit to Integrated and Designated ELD

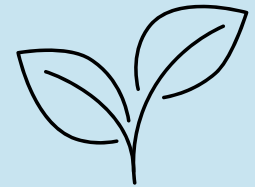
Ensure that Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLs) receive purposeful, daily Designated ELD instruction, as well as Integrated ELD across all content-area disciplines, to support comprehensive language development throughout the school day. See Chapter 2 of the SBUSD Master Plan for Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLs) for more detailed descriptions of integrated and designated ELD.



SBUSD'S Five Key Practices: Effective Instruction for Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLs)

4. Cultivate Disciplinary Language

Disciplinary language involves the ability to comprehend and communicate subject-specific concepts through speaking, listening, reading, and writing. By intentionally developing this language, educators empower students to think critically, engage in academic discourse, and access complex content across all disciplines. Teachers should address vocabulary, syntax, and discourse levels, consider various text types (e.g., literary, nonfiction, diagrams, audio), and create opportunities for students to engage with and demonstrate their understanding.



5. Prioritize Rich, Cognitively Demanding Language and Literacy Experiences

Providing cognitively demanding instruction means designing opportunities that offer meaningful access for all students to engage in complex tasks—those that allow for multiple solutions, diverse perspectives, and open-ended thinking—through authentic, unscripted dialogue and collaborative exploration.



For more information about these practices, see the *SBUSD Master Plan for Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLs)*

