

SEAL Evaluation Findings

The Sobrato Early Academic Language (SEAL) model is designed to build the capacity of preschools and elementary schools to develop the language and literacy skills of English Learners (ELs) and Dual Language Learners (DLLs). SEAL provides professional development, curriculum support, and technical assistance to school systems.

Researchers who conducted a multiyear evaluation found that **SEAL improved teaching practices** and that **SEAL ELs demonstrated stronger engagement as well as positive language development and academic outcomes**. This evidence demonstrates that SEAL can be replicated at scale (Center for Equity for English Learners & Wexford Institute, 2020).

Student Outcomes

Students in SEAL schools demonstrate increased engagement and positive outcomes in English and Spanish language as well as in English language arts and mathematics achievement. Although SEAL schools have higher concentrations of socioeconomically disadvantaged students than California schools as a whole, students in SEAL schools who have been reclassified as fluent-English proficient (known as RFEP in California) as well as those who are currently or who have ever been English Learners (Ever ELs) perform as well as or above their statewide peers.



Student Engagement

Educators reported that students were more joyful, confident, and engaged following implementation of the SEAL model.



English Language Development

Most ELs started kindergarten with beginning or early intermediate levels of English fluency; by the fourth grade most had well-developed English skills or had been reclassified as English proficient.



Academic Achievement

By fourth grade, SEAL Ever EL and SEAL RFEP students performed as well as or better than their peers statewide in both English language arts and math.



Biliteracy

SEAL EL students in bilingual programs also improved in their home language, Spanish, while those in English-only classrooms suffered Spanish loss.



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Impact on Teachers and Schools

SEAL is successful because it is a whole-school strategy. It encourages district leaders, principals, and teachers to establish systems and practices that support language development, literacy, and engaging, joyful learning—not just for ELs but for all students.



Engaging and Effective Teaching

Teachers were more collaborative, enthusiastic about teaching, and confident in their knowledge and skills following implementation of the SEAL model. Teachers also reported being more effective at engaging families of ELs in their children's learning and making home-to-school connections.



Schoolwide Coherence and Alignment

SEAL helped district and school leaders establish more consistency and alignment in teaching practices and expectations as well as align district policies and plans with SEAL values and goals.

About the Evaluation

The evaluation was conducted between 2015 and 2019 by Loyola Marymount University's Center for Equity for English Learners (CEEL) in partnership with the Wexford Institute. Researchers studied the feasibility of SEAL replication by examining SEAL implementation and outcomes in 67 schools from 12 California school districts.

This summary was created by SEAL, not the authors of SEAL's replication evaluation. To view the full report please see: Center for Equity for English Learners, Loyola Marymount University and Wexford Institute. (2020). Sobrato Early Academic Language (SEAL) Model: Final report of findings from a four-year study. <https://doi.org/10.15365/ceel.seal2020>