



**The Politics of Schools and Money:
Building Awareness about Channeling Practices for
Supplemental Resource Allocations to Serve English
Language Learners**

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Abstract: One of the aims of K-12 supplemental programs is to maximize the potential for success of students who bring special needs into a classroom. Therefore, the intent behind a large majority of these additional resources is to support programs that are designed to address the needs of otherwise marginalized students by leveling the playing field. The purpose of this work is to shed light on how supplemental funds are potentially *channeled* from the source to the students for whom these funds are intended and whose needs these funds intend to serve. Specifically, this article draws attention to the dynamics associated with channeling practices of supplemental dollars for English language learners. This article concludes with a practical discussion to offer insights for navigating the typical channeling practices of these funding streams.

Keywords: Educational finance, educational policy, ELL, language minority students, supplemental and categorical funding

La política de las escuelas y el dinero: La conciencia sobre las prácticas para canalizar la asignación de recursos adicionales para cumplir con los estudiantes de inglés

Resumen: Uno de los objetivos de los programas complementarios K-12 es maximizar el potencial de los estudiantes para el éxito que traen necesidades especiales a un salón de clases. Por lo tanto, la intención detrás de una gran mayoría de estos recursos adicionales es apoyar los programas que están diseñados para satisfacer las necesidades de los otros estudiantes marginados, nivelar el campo de juego. Este trabajo arroja luz sobre cómo los fondos adicionales se canalizan potencialmente desde la fuente a los estudiantes para los cuales se asignan estos fondos y cuyas necesidades de estos fondos están destinados a servir. En concreto, este artículo llama la atención sobre la dinámica asociada con las prácticas para la canalización de dólares adicionales para los estudiantes de habla Inglés. Este artículo concluye con una discusión práctica de ofrecer conocimientos para navegar las prácticas de plomería típicos de estas vías de financiación.

Palabras clave: financiación de la educación, la política educativa, ELL, estudiantes de idiomas minoritarios, fondos adicionales y categórica

A política das escolas e do dinheiro: Conscientização sobre as práticas de canalização de alocações de recursos suplementares para atender os estudantes do inglês

Resumo: Um dos objetivos dos programas complementares K-12 é maximizar o potencial de sucesso dos alunos que trazem necessidades especiais para uma sala de aula. Portanto, a intenção por trás de uma grande maioria desses recursos adicionais é apoiar programas que são projetados para atender às necessidades de outros estudantes marginalizados, nivelando o campo de jogo. Este trabalho lança luz sobre como os fundos suplementares são potencialmente canalizados a partir da fonte para os alunos para quem esses fundos são destinados e cujas necessidades estes fundos pretendem servir. Especificamente, este artigo chama a atenção para a dinâmica associada com as práticas de canalização de dólares suplementares para alunos de língua inglesa. Este artigo conclui com uma discussão prática para oferecer insights para navegar as práticas de canalização típica desses fluxos de financiamento.

Palavras-chave: financiamento educacional, política educacional, ELL, estudantes de línguas minoritárias, financiamento suplementar e categórico

Introduction¹

The contemporary classroom landscape of U.S. public schools is marked by much diversity, encompassing language, heritage, immigrant status, race, and income backgrounds, just to name a few. Likewise, not only are U.S. schools diverse, they are rapidly becoming more so as student needs widen and change. Given this demographic landscape, it is impossible for all students to begin their educational trajectories on the same level playing field. In other words, some students need more in terms of services than others to address the different needs they bring into a classroom. This very understanding is grounded in the intent to ensure a more equitable experience that also promises a more equitable academic trajectory, especially for those students and subgroups of students that are habitually marginalized. As a result, the vertical-equity approach to funding school programs has been the norm in the K-12 educational community for over half a century. These extra funds or

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supplemental programs are designed to assist local educational agencies (LEAs) with addressing diverse students' needs.

The intent behind supplemental programs has also held steady. These programs exist to maximize potential for student success by apportioning additional funds toward bolstering their education. However, there has also been a wide disconnect between the intent—what these programs aim to accomplish—and the reality. That is, on the one hand, supplemental programs exist to ensure more equitable education for otherwise marginalized students in order to improve these students' academic trajectories. On the other hand, it has been well documented that the playing field has not changed much, and generally does not change much, for marginalized student subgroups as they move through the K-12 pipeline, in spite of supplemental programs securing extra funds for additional services.

In response to calls for finding better ways to address marginalized students' needs and to shed light on why these students continue to experience educational conditions that are less adequate than that of their more privileged (for example, monolingual English-speaking) peers, a number of well-grounded debates within the educational finance community have taken root. Some of these debates have focused on why there has been little to no change in the quality of education marginalized students experience in spite of the existence of supplemental programs designed to bolster their educational experiences. For example, a number of cost studies (see National Conference of State Legislatures, 2005; New York Immigration Coalition, 2008) took aim at determining the true cost of quality education for English language learners (ELLs). These studies assert that although helpful, supplemental programs that are currently in place are not merely enough to adequately fund and support the needs of ELL students. Additionally, strong equity-related arguments highlighting the critical need for more equitable educational practices (encompassing both in- and out-of-classroom contexts) to ensure that ELLs are afforded fair opportunities to master and excel at learning (Chabon, Brown, & Gildersleeve-Newmann, 2010; Rumberger & Gándara, 2004; Tung, 2013) have served as a moral imperative with topics concerning supplemental funding for ELLs. These arguments offer much insight into the role of and need for supplemental programs and provide a number of possible solutions (e.g., ensuring quality instruction, fair assessment practices, appropriate and equitable accommodation practices while at the same time valuing students' biculturalism and embracing them as bilingual individuals, leaders, and valuable contributors to the society). In all these important discussions, as well as in policies that support supplemental programs, there is a shared agreement (from the perspective of what supplemental programs are meant to accomplish, as related to the policies guiding these programs, all the way to what these programs actually do accomplish in light of their intended goals) that the students for whom these funds are intended should be at the forefront of the decision-making process as it relates to allotments, LEAs' allocations, and site expenditures of supplemental dollars. Yet, several scholarly contributions have shown that this is not always the case (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Rumberger, 2008; Jimenez-Castellanos & Okhremtchouk, 2013; Loeb, Bryk, & Hanushek, 2007; Timar, 2007).

In this article, I argue that one explanation for this disconnect might stem from preexisting dynamics (political and otherwise) linked to various hierarchical systems within local organizational structures that oversee and, therefore, directly influence the allocation of supplemental resources meant to support programs designed to address students' specific academic needs (also see Jimenez-Castellanos & Okhremtchouk, 2013; Okhremtchouk, 2011). I further argue that these dynamics often influence local allocation practices for supplemental dollars, routinely resulting in a top-down approach, which, in turn, prioritizes school district or institutional needs over the student needs for which the supplemental funds were intended (Matsudaira, Hosek, & Walsh, 2012; Timar, 2007;

Wong & Meyer, 1998). The ELL student population has been selected as the case in point for this work due to a number of factors: (a) the process by which supplemental funds are triggered for this student population (Figure 1) requires a number of stages and is very involved; (b) in addition to federal Title III categorical grant dollars, 46 states across the nation have their own supplemental funding programs to address ELLs' needs, but the way by which these funds are allocated to school districts differs from state to state; (c) the constituency factors that contribute to both school district and site (local) allocation processes merit discussion and further examination (which remains a quite significant gap in school finance literature); and (d) to take a closer look at local dynamics that could potentially influence and contribute to both local allocation of supplemental resources and expenditures. All of these factors are important to consider when discussing supplemental programs funding additional services for ELLs since many of the educational improvement efforts (programmatic and otherwise) for this student subgroup are channeled through supplemental funding streams. For the purposes of this work, I call the allocation and expenditure practices (i.e., channeling) of categorical funds into question. By looking at the channeling practices of specially earmarked supplemental dollars, I aim to add a more comprehensive perspective to the larger discussion pertaining to adequacy of these funds. It is important to note that the arguments posed in this article are not designed to chip away at the adequacy discussion, but instead to introduce another perspective to help explain some of the factors that may contribute to the inadequacy of resources designed to address ELLs' needs and, therefore, this work is designed to strengthen as well as support the adequacy arguments.

I define supplemental programs (encompassing categorical grants) as restricted funds intended to meet the needs of various, often marginalized, student populations (including ELLs) by providing supplemental funding to create and sustain supplemental programs without much or any cost to LEAs (Okhremtchouk, 2014a). These programs can be found at both the federal and state levels. Federal programs such as Title I and Title III, designed to meet the needs of students from low-income families and to assist students with limited fluency in the English language, respectively, are a good example. All but four states have their own supplemental programs to address ELLs' needs in addition to federal Title III; since, although helpful, Title III resources are not nearly enough to fund supplemental programs for ELLs (Millard, 2015). State supplemental programs often echo and closely correspond to the goals of their federal counterparts (e.g., compensatory education, special education, English language development (ELD), or bilingual education, among other state-specific targeted grants); however, the ways by which these funds are allocated to LEAs differ from state to state.

To this end, in terms of LEA allocation guidelines and goals, all categorical programs narrowly define eligible activities and only allow funding to be used exclusively for a specific purpose. The assumption here, as is intended by these programs (at least in a theoretical sense), is that the practice of supplementing education and services for students would bring about a more equitable educational experience. Having said that, over the years supplemental programs have been criticized for various flaws within funding formulas that guide distributions of this aid, which often impede program policy objectives (Jimenez-Castellanos & Okhremtchouk, 2013; Matsudaira et al., 2012; Timar, 2007; Wong & Meyer, 1998). For example, Timar (2007) found that when funding formulas are not exclusively tied to policy objectives, allocated funds often fail to target the intended student subgroups. In some cases, these ambiguous formulas even allow resources to be channeled to districts without evident use for these funds, often leading to (expected) misappropriation of these dollars (Timar, 2007).

Looking more specifically at ELLs, the educational trajectory in U.S. public schools has been fairly grim for this student population. To this end, reports reflect that ELLs often receive distinctly

different education than their counterparts and that their educational conditions are inferior than that of their peers (Okhremtchouk & Jimenez, 2013; Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000; Rumberger & Gándara, 2004). Furthermore, these students continue to be burdened with high-stakes tests (they are tested more often than their peers due to requirements associated with English proficiency standards) and subjected to culturally deficient curricula, and more often than not do not have access to primary language supports (Abedi, 2008; Gándara & Merino, 1993; García & Rodríguez, 2011; Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000). All of this, not surprisingly, contributes to and often negatively influences their academic performance (Gándara et al., 2008). In short, the system fails this student population, which is reflected in higher than average dropout rates amongst ELLs, especially in secondary schools (Gándara & Baca, 2008).

Conceptual and Theoretical Framing: Responding to Language-Minority Students' Needs—Supplemental Funding Intent Conceptualized

Generally, the response to language minority student needs has been facilitated by a number of stages that comprise the intervention process with an end goal of ensuring these students' academic achievement. These stages (as policy intends) involve data-driven decisions. In other words, these decisions are called to be data driven and require an availability of individual student data that trigger identification, classification of students, resource allocations that certain language minority subgroups trigger, and mandated supplemental (categorically funded) services that follow. Thus, based on these stages, funds are expected to be appropriately channeled from federal and state agencies to the local level (i.e., LEAs and their corresponding schools) to provide services as a way to ensure the academic success of language minority students, and ELLs in particular. Further, as is the case with all monetary supplemental resources channeled through supplemental programs, a close alignment with student needs is called for and directly tied to as well as dependent upon good identification and monitoring systems, both in terms of student characteristics and in terms of expenditures of supplemental resources to target appropriate subgroup of students and their needs.

In order to better explain this intervention process, Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the intended stages.

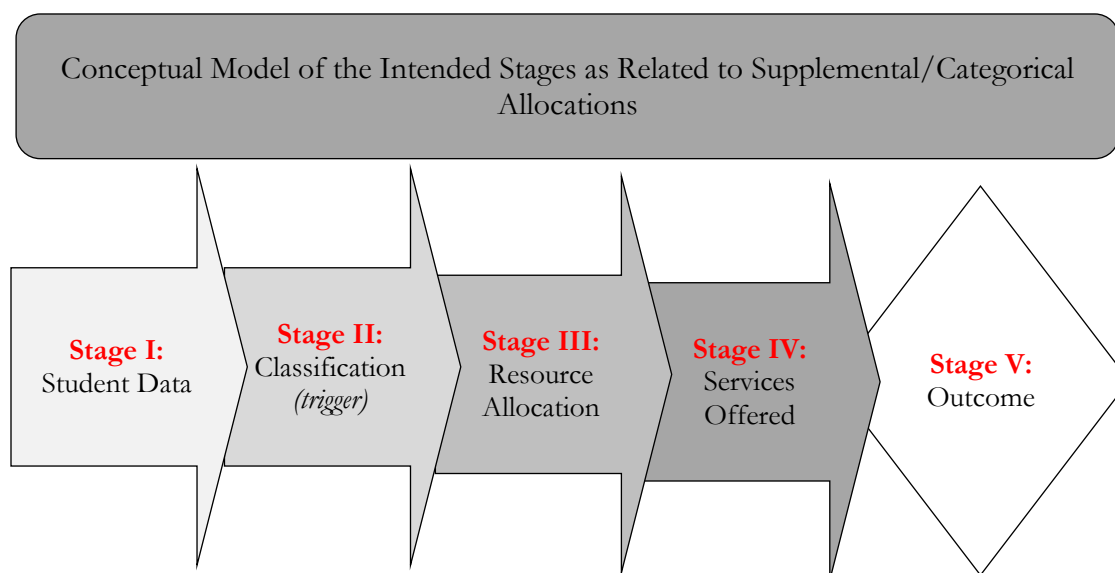


Figure 1: Conceptual model of intended stages

Again, the intent behind the establishment of federal and state supplemental funding streams is to meet the needs of certain student populations to increase academic outcomes. In Stage I, the data reflecting student backgrounds and academic needs must be readily available before determining and assigning eligible students to their classification categories, i.e., identification of student needs relating to linguistic, socioeconomic, or other academic (e.g., students with disabilities) backgrounds is critical for correct classification and identification of students who qualify for supplemental resources. Once these data are available, the classification (Stage II) can take place. Data assessed to determine appropriate classification may include language proficiency tests, prior service records, academic achievement records, reclassification to fluent English proficient status, parent/teacher recommendations, self-reports, and other referrals initiated by educational professionals. After undergoing this process of qualification for supplemental services, students are identified and these counts of eligible pupils determine supplemental support (Stage III).

Although this process may vary to some degree from state to state, supplemental funding thresholds are typically determined based on the numbers of qualified students and other district/school characteristics (as established by funding formulas). Once the amounts are established, resources are then distributed to LEAs, who then determine how to channel supplemental aid within their local agencies. Stage IV represents supplemental services that aim at addressing qualified students' needs. Since categorical allocations have a number of restrictions as to which student populations can benefit from these funds, LEAs are also responsible for overseeing these investments according to state and federal guidelines. The establishment of local, district, and school procedures as well as structures (in forms of committees represented by community members, parents, and district/school personnel) is often required for engagements in recommendations pertaining to investments in services offered to targeted students. Finally, in Stage V, it is expected that student outcomes (typically measured by academic success) supported by supplemental programs will show gains in achievement among individual students and/or groups of students for whom these funds are intended.

In theory, this process as proposed here is linear: the student data are available, students are correctly identified and classified, numbers reported reflect the actual number of students who require additional services, resources are appropriately determined and allocated (i.e., allocation

practices strictly adhere to programmatic guidelines), schools and districts make investments that focus on supporting and promoting the academic achievement of the students for whom supplemental/categorical funds are intended, and those students who qualify for and receive additional services from supplemental programs demonstrate academic growth. Although linear from a theoretical point of view, largely it remains unknown how this process actually intervenes in the lives of ELLs and whether this process is followed, for whom, and how often.

Intent vs. Reality: Lack of Congruency with Student Needs

Taking all stages of the conceptual model into consideration, the entire process is designed to be linear, data driven, and closely aligned with students' needs. However, there are a number of factors that are potentially responsible for either affecting or bypassing these intended stages altogether that directly impact the goals of supplemental programs. An explanation for this occurrence could be disparate and divergent needs at each institutional level (i.e., state, LEA, school sites, county offices of education, etc.) for reasons that might not be within institutional control (e.g., accountability measures and pressures pertaining to these, monetary limitations, or lack of professional capital to sustain well-functioning programs, among other factors). As a result, the disruption of any one of the intended stages could interfere with the linearity of the intended process depicted in Figure 1 and therefore negatively impact how supplemental dollars are channeled to serve students.

This can be further illustrated by the following example. A lack of precision in classification practices for language minority students could either overestimate or underestimate categorical assistance for LEAs and their schools (see Okhremtchouk, 2014b; U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2006), which would directly affect the amounts of categorical dollars channeled to sustain supplemental programs. In turn, this trickle-down effect could potentially impact success, or lack thereof, of categorically funded programs, as well as their short- and/or long-term sustainability. As a result, navigating through district needs versus site needs versus student needs, as well as close alignment among these, becomes critical for designing sustainable supplemental programs that have a positive effect on targeted student populations. Unfortunately, this is often a challenge for LEAs, which, more often than not, has an unfavorable impact on the students who are entitled to benefit from these funds (Jimenez-Castellanos & Okhremtchouk, 2013; Timar, 2007). To complicate matters further, evidence shows that little accountability exists in the enforcement of categorical regulations pertaining to the ways in which LEAs spend both federal and state categorical allocations. This means not only does the money not always follow students' needs, but the distribution of categorical grants is often politicized as a mechanism of competing local interests (Timar, 2007). Hence, it is not unusual to encounter targeted programs that have a potentially disqualifying impact in favor of economically advantaged constituencies with political clout.

An Ongoing Struggle

To further explain the ongoing struggle between intent and reality in the allocation process of supplemental dollars, I consulted institutional theory to better understand the impact of deep-rooted aspects of social structures (e.g., rules, norms, routines, procedures, etc.) and the processes by which those structures become guidelines for social behavior (Scott, 2004). Since I aim to better understand as well as explain the tensions within various levels of channeling practices as these relate to supplemental programs and how those tensions evolved or were perpetuated by supplemental channeling guidelines, I believe that institutional theory helps unpack these dynamics.

According to Scott (2013), organizations are affected by various power dynamics, including the competition for resources among and within organizations and suborganizational structures,

which often leads to bureaucratic tensions between organizational levels (e.g. school level, district, state, etc.). Local entities often justify resource allocation based on the preferences of local decision makers and stakeholders (Kirst, 1995), meaning that local allocation practices for supplemental dollars are often nested in local systems with already existing internal struggles for much-needed resources. And, therefore, the local channeling practices of supplemental funds are heavily motivated by local contexts, which embody norms and habits of the organization (Picus, 1991; Wong & Meyer, 1998). In all likelihood, these norms often perpetuate already established and unquestioned practices in the system designed to meet (or at the very least favor) the needs of mainstream students.

Considering this argument, accountability is often called into question, more specifically, within a money-for-accountability approach. The assumption is that imposed regulations driven by monetary incentives will force or incentivize LEAs (i.e., school districts) to comply and utilize earmarked funds for their intended purpose. In theory, if these funds are being used as intended, then targeted student subgroups will benefit from supplemental services supported by these funds, which, ultimately, will lead to better academic and other outcomes. However, evidence shows that restrictions imposed by categorical expenditure guidelines do not necessarily guarantee intended use, better accountability (Timar, 2007), or better academic outcomes (Gándara et al., 2008). In reality, local structures find ways to justify the use of earmarked categorical dollars for purposes other than what was intended to sustain operations that are deemed most worthy (Kirst, 1995; Okhremtchouk, 2011), resulting in local contexts as well as institutional political dynamics taking precedence and playing a greater role in local expenditures of supplemental aid as compared to that of students' needs.

Along these lines, several reports point to the flaws that can exist within funding formulas. Under- or overidentification, as well as factors impacting distribution of supplemental funding streams, can easily lead to misappropriation of these dollars (Timar, 2007; U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2006). Further, other arguments speak to the inflexibility associated with categorical allocations, claiming that this type of aid can force local officials to choose between doing what is best for their students and following stringent appropriation guidelines (Loeb et al., 2007). Likewise, competing debates calling for a stronger and more careful local regulation of supplemental funding streams assert that a more careful approach (with supplemental resources serving as protective safeguards for the specific populations for whom the funds are intended) would help ensure that ELL students receive quality services (Jimenez-Castellanos & Okhremtchouk, 2013; Okhremtchouk, 2011).

Circling back to the institutional theory, it can be maintained that the allocation practices of supplemental funds are influenced by local contexts (in some cases more so than others), which embody cultural and institutional norms, as well as habits of the organization (Picus, 1991; Wong & Meyer, 1998). Institutional theory emphasizes these exact notions where locally established cultures as well as habits are reproduced over time (Scott, 2001). Further, I also argue that local practices of allocating and expending supplemental aid are often situated within already impoverished systems where there is simply not enough money to meet the needs at each educational level (Meyer, Scott & Strang, 1987). Accordingly, the context in which local systems operate has a direct and profound impact on the ways in which these resources are expended or channeled (Kirst, 1995). Ultimately (due to locally established practices, factors, and contexts), if resources are not tied directly to students for whom these funds are intended (starting with student data and classification as seen in Figure 1) then the entire supplemental resource channeling process is, by its definition, interrupted and becomes disjointed for the affected student subgroups.

Historical Background and Shift in Focus: ELLs and Supplemental Programs

Historically, language minority students and ELLs have encountered a great deal of discrimination and segregation nationwide. However, largely in the third quarter of the 20th century, there have been many well-intentioned state and federal policies designed to bring equality to the American public school system (e.g., disaggregation of public schools, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, access to bilingual education, the Equal Educational Opportunity Act of 1974, the Lau remedies, and equal access to education for all citizens, just to name a few). In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was put into place, establishing a strong foundation for allowing equal access and opportunity for all students and especially for those who are habitually marginalized. Three years later, in 1968, ESEA was amended to introduce the Bilingual Education Act (Title VII), which secured compensatory funding for ELL students to guarantee equal opportunities, to promote educational excellence, and to assist state and local educational agencies, institutions of higher education, and community-based organizations in building their capacity to establish, implement, and sustain programs of instruction for children and youth of limited English proficiency (LEP) (Stewner-Manzanares, 1988). These gains helped create a sustained movement that would continue to shape the educational conditions for ELLs in public schools.

In an effort to achieve equality, it became abundantly clear that the start of academic or life trajectories is not the same for everyone. As a result, equality arguments shifted to embrace equity—for which a theoretical and practical distinction was warranted. In education finance, *horizontal equity* refers to the equal distribution of funds and promotes the “equal treatment of equals,” assuming that “all students are alike and therefore should receive equal amounts” (Odden & Picus, 2007). The problem with this approach is that it only works if all students are the same, which is not the case for the U.S. students. As a result, due to major developments in the educational policy arena (e.g., the Bilingual Education Act of 1968; ESEA, 1965) and several landmark court cases (e.g., *Lau v. Nichols*, 1974; *Serrano v. Priest*, 1976), educational policies have migrated from the horizontal equity model to one of *vertical equity*, in which students with different needs require additional resources to better address those needs. Vertical equity calls for the unequal treatment of unequals and has gained popularity among policymakers and stakeholders; making it the most widely and commonly used method for leveling the playing field (Berne & Stiefel, 1999; Rodriguez, 2004; Timar & Chyu, 2010).

In 2002, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was signed into law as a reauthorization of ESEA with a number of new provisions. As a part of NCLB, Title VII was replaced by Title III, a formula-based grant program that completely reshaped the way immigrant students and children of immigrants (who have limited knowledge of English or desire bilingual instruction) are educated in public schools across the nation. Under Title III, language minority students must be instructed in English, and bilingual services are not officially supported, encouraged, or promoted. In fact, the focus on monolingualism in English for language minority students over the years gained popularity through local reform measures, some of which were achieved through state propositions (see California’s Proposition 227 of 1998, Arizona’s Proposition 203 of 2000, Massachusetts’ Question 2 of 2002). Further, Title III is more prescriptive, with a number of restrictions on the ways LEAs can invest supplemental allotment, and holds individual states responsible for generating reports and setting goals to monitor yearly progress. As such, in order to achieve the shift in and underlying goals of the supplemental programs under Title III, the channeling of funds have focused more on the administrative tasks of measuring academic success through standardized language proficiency tests rather than providing the most favorable education for ELLs to meet these students’ needs.

Specifically, Title III funds are designed to provide supplemental services to immigrant students and LEP students, or ELLs. The purpose of both the Title III LEP program and the immigrant program is to ensure that all ELL students attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment in English, and meet the same challenging state academic standards as their English-speaking counterparts. Unfortunately, however, in addition to scholarly research, years of post-NCLB data show that Title III programs have achieved very little if any intended results. A national evaluation of Title III performance survey in 2012 found that officials responsible for Title III oversight and school district administrators alluded to the fact that although Title III funds were helpful, these funds were quite inefficient to meet ELLs' needs. The officials pointed out that the existence of ELL supplemental programs would not be possible without the state support of such programs for ELL services (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

Along these lines, intradistrict school finance studies show that within a district, schools with more low-income Latino ELLs tend to receive a higher total amount of supplemental funding (Espinosa & Ochoa, 1992; Ochoa, 1994). That being said, however, Espinosa (1985) and others (see Jimenez-Castellanos & Okhremtchouk, 2013; Okhremtchouk, 2011) assert that categorical funds designed to address ELLs' needs are often misused, misappropriated, or used on low-quality instructional programs. In essence, it has been argued that local perceptions (of a deficit nature, marking ELLs as low performing) are, indeed, responsible for local allocation practices of supplemental resources. To this end, the programs serving ELLs are often designed to compensate for perceived student deficits, inabilities or inadequacies (e.g., selecting curricula that focus on remedial education) as compared to offering adequate services that would, indeed, address students' actual educational needs. These perceptions frequently result in low-quality educational programs and supplemental aid become synonymous with "deficit," leading to an institutionalized status quo reflective of the low-rigor programmatic approach.

ELLs' Educational Contexts

As federal and state policies protecting the language rights of ELLs and other language minority students have expanded, so has the opposition challenging these rights. Bilingualism amongst immigrants and the children of immigrants is still frequently viewed as a deficit (Grant & Sleeter, 2007; Herrera & Murry, 1999; Rodriguez, 2004). Further, bilingual programs, once legislatively perceived (i.e., under Title VII of 1968, which also spearheaded state mandates for bilingual education) as the best way of educating ELLs (and widely supported by the scholars in the field; see Hakuta & Diaz, 1985; Peal & Lambert, 1962; Portes & Hao, 1998; Rumbaut & Cornelius, 1995) in the 1990s, the nation has witnessed a steady decline in bilingual programs for ELLs. This erosion was caused, in part, by both state legislation via statewide propositions (e.g., California's Proposition 227, Arizona's Proposition 203, Massachusetts's Question 2), and federal mandate (Title III) which does not explicitly support, designed to discourage (or forbid altogether) bilingual instruction and/or designed to emphasize English-only instruction, which falsely assume more rapid assimilation into the mainstream classrooms while disregarding long-established best educational practices for ELLs. All of these developments contributed to and continue to result in a considerably lower quality of education for ELLs (Gándara & Baca, 2008; Gándara & Rumberger, 2008), despite the availability of supplemental programs and overwhelming expert support for bilingual instruction and primary language supports for ELLs. Further, and to emphasize an earlier point, increased accountability measures under NCLB require all students to be subjected to standardized testing (in addition to English language proficiency tests) on an annual basis even if they do not speak English, all of which marks ELLs as a low-performing group, additionally

contributing to an already-formed deficit view of the ELL population (Gándara & Baca, 2008). Relatedly, on the subject of the persisting achievement gap between ELLs and their monolingual English-speaking counterparts, several scholars, including Rumberger and Gándara (2004), Abedi (2008), Wolf et al. (2008), and García & Rodríguez (2011) question the validity and fairness of existing standardized assessments. In summary, not only are the conditions under which ELLs are expected to learn and achieve rarely conducive to their academic success, but widely held English-only notions, reflected in both state and federal mandates, are completely misdirected to focus purely on accountability (as measured by standardized tests—both academic and language proficiency) as compared to providing quality education that truly addresses the needs of this student population (Wixom, 2015). It comes as no surprise that the ELL population remains painted in a deficit light as one of the low-performing subgroups, and arguments that supplemental programs that carry financial entitlements have little to no success are likewise unsurprising.

Making Sense of Supplemental Resources for ELLs: An Examination of Differing Systems and Potential Channeling Outcomes

With limited empirical evidence on this topic, I focused on several recent reports (see Millard, 2015, Sugarman, 2016, and Verstegen, 2011) that describe supplemental programs adopted by states across the nation that are geared to address ELLs' needs. In this section I attempt to unpack the ways by which these supplemental resources could be channeled based on their corresponding categories while (in the section following) substantiating these with lessons learned from informal discussions with categorical program directors. After a careful review of reports that show how states allocate their supplemental funds to fund supplemental programs for ELLs, I found that the ways in which funds are channeled generally fall under one of four identified categories and are closely tied to the way individual states provide funding for ELL supplemental programs. I termed these categories as follows: (a) lumped,² (b) specific need/per-pupil earmarked categorical,³ (c) weighted,⁴ and (d) no specially earmarked state resources.⁵ These methods of channeling and factors that could potentially influence these practices are unpacked below.

Lumped

In states such as Alaska and California, ELL categorical grants and supplemental funding are lumped with other supplemental/categorical programs, due to either legislative appropriation or enacted flexibility measures. Thus, ELLs and their advocates are up against a steep campaign for their share of funds, since they are placed in a position of competition with multiple groups and interests that are either directly or indirectly associated with LEAs. In other words, lumping supplemental programs into one pot of funds creates a competition between groups, where those who manage to gain the most support are almost always guaranteed to secure more funding for their

² ELL grants and categorical programs are lumped with other programs, either due to legislative appropriation or flexibility measures, e.g., California, Alaska.

³ Per-pupil earmarked allocations, e.g., Colorado .

⁴ Weighted formulas for the students who require special resources (including compensatory); ELLs & FRLP (free and reduced lunch program) are included in the weighted formula; ELLs most likely qualify for both (i.e., compensatory programs and ELL funding). It is important to note that some of the “limped” programs also use weights; however, I do distinguish this category from others, since the weights used are designed to slightly amplify the allotments that are included in the joined pot with other supplemental resources.

⁵ No specific state categorical funding is available, e.g., Alabama.

interest groups, as compared to the ones that may not have as strong a support or as convincing a lobbying tactic. Related and equally important, the local allocation practices may also be guided by the LEA's performance goals. In this case, arguably, the ELL subgroup would be placed at a disadvantage regardless of whether an LEA deemed them high or low academic performers. That is, if ELLs are doing well, it is arguably unlikely that their programs would receive more funds in the future to either strengthen or expand upon the programs already in place. On the other hand, if ELLs' academic performance is deemed less than that of LEA's goals for this subgroup of students, then the focus on more time on task via more time spent in core curricular subjects, as well as more frequent benchmark exams to measure academic performance, is commonly to be expected. Therefore, if this is the case, additional supplemental funding is likely to be invested on items (i.e., exams, more time in core curricular subjects) that generally degrade the educational experiences of ELLs (or any other student population). It is also important to mention that such practices are often driven by and further perpetuate a deficit perception of this student population. As a result, in the states that lump their supplemental programs, a strong external constituency advocating on behalf of and for the needs of ELL students is necessary to secure an appropriate share of funds to meet the needs of this student population as well as to impact and influence internal allocation decisions. That is, if the external advocacy component is strong, it will assist in securing the internal support necessary to advance ELLs' interests. With this in mind, however, securing supplemental funds is only the first step in ensuring these funds are expended with fidelity. As a result, there still a need to monitor expenditures internally to ensure that the funds are expended on quality services and programs for the intended population and purpose. This is where internal professional competency and capital are necessary to properly channel allocations warranting appropriate expenditures. Hence, the lumped category is the most problematic of the three that guarantee supplemental funding. Although this category provides the most flexibility to LEAs, it is not as linear and requires both external and internal checks and balances.

Specific Need/Per-pupil Earmarked Categorical Programs and Reimbursements

For this category, the funds in states such as Colorado are specifically earmarked to address ELL needs and are channeled by state departments of education on a per-pupil basis. As a result, the linear structure and a more focused/direct allotment of resources directly geared toward and prioritize the students for whom these funds are intended, or arguably do so to a much greater extent than the lumped category described above. On the positive side, this structure eliminates the need for external lobbying to compete for funding. However, it also eliminates a chance for external constituency groups (stakeholders) to lobby for more funds than what is prescribed in these allotments. Additionally, since the supplemental funding is capped at the per-pupil allotments, supplemental programs must operate within the categorical restrictions outlined in each funding stream with less flexibility. Consequently, while external advocacy is the key in securing the funds and influencing internal LEA support in the lumped category, specifically earmarked categorical supplemental programs are much more reliant on internal constituency (although external constituency is very important and could play a significant role with a different focus). As such, the focus shifts from "how much" and "on what" to "how" these funds are to be expended. Additionally, professional capital (i.e., specific knowledge regarding term limits, allowable expenditures, administrative caps, and overall legislative knowledge of supplemental programs) at both LEAs and school sites is essential, since many specific-need categorical dollars are restricted and have term limits. To this end, term limits alone complicate matters; e.g., if funds are not used within a given term, there is a loss, which ultimately could lead to hasty decisions and mischanneling practices that are not well conceptualized or do not align with legislative intent tied to these

supplemental programs. Additionally, to prevent mischanneling of supplemental dollars, clear guidance from LEAs to their school sites is critical in conjunction with other (e.g., parent and advocacy group constituency) monitoring of expenditures to insure proper channeling practices.

Weighted

Weighted formulas are used for the students who require special resources (including compensatory). Both ELLs and other language minority subgroups (e.g., English-proficient students who have been reclassified) are typically included in the weighted formula. However, of these subgroups, ELLs are more likely to qualify for several. Although well intended, weights are harder to determine and navigate through, since this is not exactly a straightforward entitlement program where the dollar amount is directly tied to one specific subgroup and its need. As a result, in order to guarantee success (i.e., channeling of resources to students for whom these funds are intended), a strong local accountability system that embodies both external and internal constituencies is essential. Professional capital in the form of strong internal knowledge of funding streams and weights for various subgroups will help in achieving stronger accountability and securing resources to address ELLs needs.

School Districts' Needs vs. School Sites' Needs vs. Students' Needs

Districts' Needs Take Precedence

Based on informal semistructured discussions with categorical programs directors representing multiple states at a national meeting, the following insights emerged:

Administrative and oversight needs often take priority. Within this explanation, the theme of “keep the system operational” (Jimenez-Castellanos & Okhremtchouk, 2013) once again was prevalent. When asked to explain further, accountability measures and heavy standardized testing requirements emerged as key influencing factors. These requirements demand a considerable amount of funding and oversight to sustain ongoing testing practices that for some LEAs could mean multiple benchmark examinations throughout an academic year. In addition, directors conveyed a struggle with consistency among programs district-wide with respect to curriculum and other administrative tasks across individual LEAs' schools, requiring districts to employ administrative help with a teaching assignment to stay within LEAs' supplemental program guidelines/goals (often termed “teachers on special assignment”) to oversee programs designed to address ELLs' needs. As such, available supplemental funds are often expended on the support oversight practices to ensure uniformity and/or support for ELLs and oversight for testing efforts often at the cost of direct services to qualified students.

Funding many district-initiated and -generated expenditures. These include district professional development for the ELD/ELL lead teachers, salaries for staff who help with ELD and ELL efforts at the central/district office, standardized testing (for language tests) implementation, and consulting services. To this end, it was conveyed that there is often lack of “local capacity,” or, as I term it for the purposes of this article, school site professional capital to be able to manage some or all of the above-mentioned logistics at a school site level. This results in a need for ongoing professional development due to high turnover rates among school site staff and teachers. At times heavy reliance on consulting services was also mentioned as a necessary remedy. Some of the reasons include the following: consultants are short-term expenditures with less commitment, so can be called on when there is a need; consultants are often more readily available and come ready with a prescribed plan; and often consultants are more consistent and reliable “to move things forward” and better at “getting things done” compared to administrative support personnel or other staff at

district and school sites. Although there were references to the often-high cost associated with hiring consultants, it was also mentioned that the long-term expenditures for LEAs are considerably less than hiring additional staff and/or trying to use local capacities to organically grow and train their own, especially in high language minority and ELL districts, due to high turnover rates among staff.

District needs vs. school needs. Overall, there was a consensus that when allotments are considered, the centralized district office needs (in order to provide adequate oversight for the LEA's schools) take precedence. Although it could be argued that this is a necessary approach, it should also be considered that the school sites charged with providing direct services to ELLs do not have much say or autonomy over the segment of supplemental funds (often sizable) LEAs spend on providing services through the central office. This practice interferes with the channeling of supplemental dollars for programs that are designed to provide direct services to students. An alternative would be to reverse this stereotypical allocation pyramid, where supplemental allocations to school sites to fund direct services for students take precedence over central (i.e., LEA's) needs. It was also explained that LEAs should not be entirely faulted for these practices, but rather both administrators and policymakers should revisit a strong and persistent push for programmatic consistency and the ongoing focus on standardized testing. In other words, the message was that supplemental funds are limited and LEAs often operate in already impoverished systems where these entities are not only tasked with considering multiple student needs, but also are operating under regulations and constraints imposed by many accountability measures.

When the Money *Does* Matter: Supplemental Programs' Channeling Practices and Expenditures that Make a Difference

A number of factors have been associated with programs that are successful in supporting students who are in the process of learning the English language. These characteristics are described below. It is important to mention that while this list is in no particular order, the sixth component (i.e., extracurricular enrichment activities that support students' academic and social growth) appears to be the most influential for the students and school culture. In other words, when this component is in place, then other factors (discussed under items seven and eight) are self-evident and fulfilling. Additionally, programs that have academically rich and culturally relevant curriculum, including extracurricular activities, are typically more academically rigorous and include diverse academic support mechanisms (as outlined in factors two and three).

1. Authentic cultural awareness of the ELL student population(s) and their communities and needs, free of deficit thinking or victimization of this population and their communities, is a must. This includes efforts to empower ELLs' parents in taking part in decision making involving supplemental funding streams and, therefore, supplemental programs addressing their students' needs. These efforts must allow parents to feel a level of commitment that is personal in nature (i.e., with programmatic and resource discussions focused on their students' needs) to ensure authentic engagement and decisions pertaining to local allocations of supplemental dollars that will translate to well-thought-out programs.
2. Diverse academic support services that are holistic and comprehensive in nature (e.g., tutoring services—preferably with primary language support—in both English language and academic content, as well as evening enrichment classes for parents) are significant to both address diverse student academic needs and connect language minority communities to school sites.

3. Strong academic content programs in all academic subjects that would guarantee timely progression to graduation and postsecondary opportunities later in life. In other words, to grantee programmatic and, therefore, student success, academic rigor and opportunities for ELLs must be comparable to or, arguably, better than what is afforded to their monolingual English-speaking counterparts.
4. Programs with primary language components or instruction in students' primary language that benefit ELLs in-and-out-of-school contexts. Ideally, a primary language instruction program that also invites participation of the mainstream monolingual, English-speaking population, such as a dual-language bilingual program, would help organically transform school and student culture to ensure inclusiveness.
5. Minimal segregation/pull-out/push-in practices—as reports show, pull-out programs create a sense of segregation and void students of knowledge of the time missed in the classroom, further reinforcing isolation or “linguistic ghettos” that considerably hinder and stifle student success as well as future post-secondary opportunities (Abedi, 2008; Gándara et al., 2008, 2013; Gándara, Alvarado, Driscoll, & Orfield, 2012; Garcia, 2006).
6. Student participation and involvement in rich extracurricular activities that are academically inclined are paramount. This practice achieves a dual purpose, where it not only promotes the feeling of inclusion for ELL students who often feel marginalized, but also reinforces quality education and helps alleviate already existing or further stigmatization associated with the ELL label.
7. Stigma factor is in check (more likely—easier to achieve) or lacking altogether (less likely—harder to accomplish).
8. Programs provide not only academic and English language instruction, but also future academic opportunities—where language minority students have concrete future goals in mind that are coupled with high school graduation (i.e., school sites must think about and start addressing high school dropout rates among language minority students—especially ELLs—early, starting in elementary schools and not waiting until these students enter high school).

Discussion

In the course of this work, it became apparent that professional capital (the knowhow and procedural knowledge around supplemental funding sources) at both school district and site levels is one of the key components to the appropriate channeling of funds to meet the needs of ELLs. To put it simply, knowledge is power, meaning that program directors in charge of ELL education (who are well informed about supplemental funding streams and how these funds are to be utilized) are better positioned to advocate for and ensure that supplemental dollars for ELL are appropriately channeled. Further, the different appropriation practices and categories for channeling outcomes (i.e., lumped, specific need/per-pupil earmarked categoricals and reimbursements, and weighted) signify the important role that constituency plays or could potentially play in whether or not funds are appropriately channeled for their intended purpose, specifically, use on direct services to supplement education for intended populations—in this case ELLs.

Along these lines, district administrative needs as they relate to managing programs, overseeing standardized tests, and other managerial tasks were often given priority when decisions pertaining to allocation of these specially earmarked resources were made. This shows that the

existing guidelines for resource allocation fall short in safeguarding that specially earmarked funds are spent on direct services for students for whom these funds are intended. Additionally, each institution has a unique response due to the internal factors that may affect how decisions pertaining to local allocations and expenditures are made. In addition to internal constituency factors and professional capital (the knowhow) on the subject of supplemental programs, LEAs are also bound to respond to academic and other goals that may be outside of their control. Further, as noted earlier, LEAs often operate in already impoverished conditions. As a result, an overall lack or shortage of funds creates tensions surrounding how supplemental funds are channeled within these local contexts. Relatedly, the scarcity of funds also creates tensions among many advocacy/constituency groups, especially in those cases when these groups are forced to compete for their share of resources.

With the above in mind, institutional theory helps explain the processes by which supplemental resources are channeled once these dollars reach LEAs. From this perspective (i.e., institutional theory), it is important to recognize that administrators are largely impacted by the competition for resources within local contexts. Further, more often than not, these LEAs are already struggling for adequate funding for programs, among other power dynamics that affect day-to-day operations, which often leads to increased tensions among and within educational levels. As such, justifications for local allocations and expenditures funded with supplemental dollars are often based on local preferences, rather than students' needs.

Circling back to the conceptual model I use to frame this work, the overall process of supplemental resource allocation from a legislative/policy perspective is meant to be linear and to closely align with students' needs at the forefront (i.e., beginning with availability of student data to warrant appropriate classification), with the end goal of ensuring academic success for the student populations these allocations target, in this case ELLs. The central question then becomes, "who qualifies for funding?" and is the key in determining allotments for supplemental services to address ELLs' needs, which directly impacts the channeling of supplemental dollars. Yet, there is a great degree of variation among states in the ways by which they first identify and then classify their ELL students to trigger supplemental resources (Sugarman, 2016). Further, there is also much variation within states as these relate to individual LEA's classification practices (Cook & Linqanti, 2015; Okhremtchouk, 2014). In other words, language minority students might be considered or classified as an ELL in one state and not another, the same issue exists when individual LEAs within a state use discretion when classifying their ELLs (e.g., California). As a result, the numbers of qualified students for supplemental funding could be quite different from state to state or even within individual states.

In addition to the issue of classification practices that meant to trigger allotments to serve qualified students, the issue of how the funds are actually used by LEAs is one of the factors to consider. Time and time again it is evident that many LEAs view categorical funds as resources meant to prioritize and support district needs, rather than as an opportunity to provide direct services for targeted student populations. Thus, allocation preferences are often justified by local entities as a means of spending categorical dollars in ways they were not initially intended. This means that in practice, the intended channeling stages (Figure 1) are often interrupted, directly impacting (often negatively) the end goals of categorical programs. Further, these disjointed practices perpetuate local preference frequently driven by political as well as existing social capital among various constituency groups (whether internal [administrators and educators] or external [parental and other groups]) lobbying for these resources, rather than on students' specific educational needs.

With this disconnect in mind, it is important for administrators and others in charge of providing education to students who receive supplemental dollars to reframe the conversation around these funding streams and focus on the end goal of academic growth these additional resources aim to achieve. In other words, the question as to who, in the end, benefits from local allocations and expenditures of supplemental funds must be at the forefront of the discussion among school leaders in charge of providing oversight for supplemental programs. By refocusing the conversation on how these especially earmarked dollars are to be channeled, there can be less tensions between organization levels and thus, hopefully, more adherence to the linear allocation process designed to best meet the needs of schools' most vulnerable student populations.

As a means to this end, speaking a common language with chief financial officers (CFOs) will help navigate through budgetary decisions at the governance level, since each district's CFO is, arguably, one of the most important and instrumental people in the district. For example, whenever programs are discussed at school board meetings, the CFO is consulted. Additionally, the local professional capital will help with building a school site capacity, which is one of the key "constituency" factors discussed earlier in the section above. That is, strong parental involvement and community support are essential. In other words, the more site capacity at the school level, the stronger the organic advocacy/constituency factor, all of which helps build credibility when requesting additional resources or justifying existing programs for ELLs.

As a way to focus these conversations, school districts must ensure that the programs for ELLs are discussed in respect to both *quality* and *opportunity* in light of the budget. This ensures that "the cost fits the program," and not other way around (i.e., the program fits the cost), which is often the case, is at the forefront when decision-making discussions pertaining to supplementary programs take place. This is important because, as I argue in this work, the channeling of categorical dollars is one of the key factors in supporting programs for marginalized students (i.e., ELLs) and helps explain and shape as well as inform conversations around adequacy of supplemental allotments and later local allocations. That is, I further argue that channeling practices determine whether or not funds are being allocated in ways that best meet students' needs. This, of course, is easier said than done. However, simply reframing and redirecting this conversation along with having a concrete/well-rounded knowledge of supplemental funding streams will help with successful navigation through this process.

Further, in order to address these concerns, it is important to review ELL-specific and other supplemental streams for the upcoming academic year prior to the decision making and not simply to carry over already established practices adopted by the district into the next academic year. As such, decisions should be made based on prior years' academic (among other) successes and/or shortcomings, as opposed to supporting the status quo from prior years of already existing practices, which is often the case. This will also allow focusing and expanding conversations on needed changes to programs as well as programmatic vision for these programs, as opposed to only concentrating on purely monetary matters. Unfortunately, entities, in this case school districts (school boards in particular) are often highly allergic to change, even when the change is for the better (Meyer & Scott, 1983; Meyer, Scott & Strang, 1987), so early discussions for modifications to the supplemental programs will help reduce internal tensions and improve political dynamics as well as capital needed to impact positive changes to local channeling practices for supplemental dollars.

Broadly, this paper and discussion are meant to help explain the shortcomings of resource allocation for ELLs and the tensions that often exist and arise from the political dynamics that occur within the various educational levels. Thus, this discussion and the recommendations aim to bring light to importance of local channeling practices in providing adequate funding and educational services for those who need these most. Once these channeling practices become a part of a more

focused conversation within educational entities and school finance community, then students' needs can be brought to the forefront, and can serve as the guiding principle throughout the process as a whole.

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