Transcript for Registering Students From Language Backgrounds Other Than English
A webinar held November 5, 2012
Presented by: Jason Greenberg Motamedi, REL Northwest; Theresa Deussen, REL Northwest; and Annette Zehler, Center for Applied Linguistics

Jason Greenberg Motamedi:

(begins with slide two) Good Afternoon and welcome to the Registering Students From Language Backgrounds Other Than English webinar. I am Jason Greenberg Motamedi, speaking to you from Education Northwest in Portland, Oregon, and I have with me Theresa Deussen and Zafreen Jaffery. We also have Annette Zehler, from the Center for Applied Linguistics, in Washington DC. I’m going to take just a moment and make a few quick housekeeping notes.

(next slide) As you may have noticed, everyone is muted on entrance. However, if you have questions for me or Annette, please use the “chat” function and I’ll circle that right down there—it’s right down there in the bottom. Please use the “chat” function verifying that it’s sent to host, type your question or comment into the box, and press send. While we may not have time to address those during the webinar, we do plan on creating a list of questions and answers, and will try to address all of your questions as you ask them.

(next slide) We will also be conducting a few participant surveys. These will pop up on the lower right screen, right below the chat window. You can see it right down there. Again, please answer the questions and hit the submit key. Finally, at the end of the webinar, we ask you to take 10 minutes and participate in an evaluation survey. This is an important part of our federal funding and we hope you can take the time to participate. Your browser will automatically go there after the webinar, and the link will also be e-mailed to you.

(next slide) I will quickly go over the schedule for today. In a moment, Theresa Deussen will take a few minutes to talk about Education Northwest, The Regional Educational Labs, and the community for which this work was done. Annette Zehler from the Center for Applied Linguistics, our keynote presenter, will discuss why names are important and what we can do to ensure students are correctly registered. Finally, I will take 10 minutes at the end to discuss the naming convention reference sheets in eight different languages, how to use them, and where to access them. So I am going to hand you over to Theresa.

Theresa Deussen

(next slide) Thanks, Jason. I usually like to start by talking, really briefly, about who we are and give people a little bit of context about where this work comes from. So, Jason and I and our colleague Zafreen, who’s backing us up here, all work at Education Northwest, which is a regionally based nonprofit that provides technical assistance and conducts research and evaluation—all in support of strong schools and communities. We work primarily in the five Northwest states, although some of our work is national. We work on grants and contracts with federal, state and district educators. One of our important federal contracts is REL Northwest.
What is a REL anyway? The acronym stands for Regional Educational Laboratories. The Department of Education funds a network of ten RELs across the country and has done so actually since the 1960s, when the RELs were first established under the Johnson Administration to serve as a bridge between educational research and practice. On the map you can see the ten funded regions—complete with REL Pacific moved over just south of California and Arizona on the map. Today’s webinar is the culmination of some work initiated, I don’t know, four or five years ago at REL Appalachia. At that time, the Center for Applied Linguistics, or CAL, contracted with REL Appalachia to produce the report that Annette going to be telling you about shortly, including guidance on how to register students from different language backgrounds—the language backgrounds that are common in that region in Appalachia. Those of us at REL Northwest who work with English learners have always really liked the practical guidance provided in that report, and in the past year, we have been able to take it and expand the work CAL did to cover six other language groups that are more common in our region.

So, as part of current REL Northwest contract, we work with educators all around the Northwest on challenges they have identified as important to them. In our work with a group of educators in the south Seattle area that work on the Road Map Initiative, that’s in the seven districts that are shown here on the map. These are high immigrant populations and they are all working really hard to serve students from so many different language backgrounds. To give you a sense of the kind of population, there are seven districts and across those seven districts 60 percent of students are students of color, 54 percent are low-income, 17 percent are currently designated as English learners, with many more who formerly had that designation. Altogether, students speak 167 different primary languages.

Today and in our work on this topic we are not going to provide data on all 167 languages, but rather we are going to focus on some that spoken more commonly than others. As you can see on this chart, Spanish is the most common language that is spoken by students after English. It’s spoken as a primary language by more than 16,000 students. The next most common languages, displayed in order of prevalence, are Vietnamese, Somali, Ukrainian, Russian, Tagalog, Cantonese, and Punjabi, which is spoken by almost 1,200 students in the area. What our work does, we hope, makes it a little be easier for register students from these language backgrounds accurately and then to ensure that educators have complete and accurate information about the students, in order to serve them appropriately. So that’s the context and background on the work and having laid that out a little bit I’m just taking the ball over to Annette Zehler from CAL, with whom we’ve been very fortunate to collaborate on this project. Annette is a Senior Research Associate at CAL, where her work focuses on capacity building in districts with emerging English learner communities and take on it.

Annette Zehler

OK, thank you very much. I am very pleased to be part of this session today and for those of you participating with us I really applaud your efforts in joining the seminar to directly address the issue of student names. We are having this discussion today because many of you in schools and in district offices have noted that there is real issue to be addressed. You may already have direct experience with the challenge of registering a student or maybe of matching a student’s test results with those of registered students. You may have wondered why there are such difficulties sometimes in matching a registered student with an assessment result or how
you could better match all of your student data with other information in district files. We hope to answer some of those questions in this discussion with you today.

(*next slide*) So the goals of our discussion, first of all to recognize why a focus on student names is important for your school and your school district. You may already have been experiencing some of those challenges and understand why. But, we also want to help you to understand why student names may vary from record to record, and talk a little bit about what it is in the languages that maybe causing some of that inconsistency so that you have an understanding that may help you to address the issue too. Which gets to a third goal, which is to talk about the importance of your role either as a person in the front office, or as a person at the registration table, or even a person in the district office trying to address a mismatch in files, or even a database person. Then also, what we would like to do is to suggest some steps, as Theresa mentioned. One of our goals is to not only talk about the differences, but to also suggest some ways in which you or your school district might try to address some of the inconsistencies. Some procedures you might put in place to help reach that goal of having the entries of students’ names become more consistent.

(*next slide*) So, that gets us to a question of, “What is your role in working with students?” This is where we actually have one of the first small surveys that we would like to ask you to complete so that we can understand who was here having this discussion with us. We would like to know your role and approximately how many different language groups you work with, just roughly. If there is one major language group, what is that? It may be that you have multiple language groups and there is no one majority or you may have several and there is one that stands out as having the most students representing that language group. So we will just pause for a moment or two here to let you take a look at those questions and if you could just fill those out. We will just talk for a moment.

(*next slide*) Perhaps while you continue to complete that, I would like to step back and talk a little bit more about the background, which Theresa began to mention about the origin of this presentation. As Theresa mentioned, at the Center for Applied Linguistics we began to look at how schools and districts could manage different naming conventions as part of our work on the Regional Educational Laboratory Appalachia. This was a few years ago. The state director of services for English learner students asked for guidance that they could share with their school and district staff. They were having some problems in matching records and seeing that there was an inconsistency in many of the data entries. So, we looked at the languages and the naming conventions for the top five languages represented in our four state region. The top languages that we were looking at were: Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic, Korean, and Japanese.

The report we ended up producing, which you see here on the slide, actually overlaps by two languages—Spanish and Vietnamese—with the eight largest language groups that you are serving in this region, as Theresa just described. The authors of our report were: Nicole Marcus, Carolyn Adger, and Igone Arteagoitia at the Center for Applied Linguistics. You see a picture of the cover of that report “Registering Students From Language Backgrounds Other Than English” and that report will form the basis of much of what I’ll be discussing with you here, and we’ll have the link to that report provided at the end of the PowerPoint slides. Jason, I was wondering if this would be a good point to report back on some of responses some of the surveys.
Yes, absolutely. I am just quickly looking and what it looks like we’ve got nearly a third, or less, closer to a quarter of the people are working in databases. Wow! About 15 percent are front office staff and registration clerks. Nearly a third has other roles, which we can’t tell now. As I am looking also, most people—more than half of the people here—dealt with more than 25 languages in their group, in their school. So that was 54 percent, while a quarter had 11–25 languages. There are a lot of languages there.

OK, so the task becomes really that much more challenging, if you are trying to look across all of the different languages and cultures that are enrolling in your school. I think that as we talk about different ways that languages might differ, you probably see a lot of those reflected in your districts and schools. I would like to step aside though and think about what these often new groups of students in the schools mean for your school, for your school district. It may be that you are a district with an emerging English language learner community. Meaning that perhaps you may have started out with just a few students, some a different language group, and now perhaps many are enrolling in your school. So, it may be a new experience for many of the persons in the school or district office or in the classrooms. I think at this point to recognize that this is a new experience for many and to provide information to the staff and so our topic here only relates to one way that that newness can effect basic school districts’ operation; such as, registering students. This is where differences in cultures, including different expectations about school and schooling, and better tracking with others including differences in naming conventions come in. So, it is good to have the kinds of conversations that we are having today. But, it’s also important to recognize that with these new students and this newness there is also an important opportunity and resource for the schools, for the students and for staff alike. These students and their families offer rich resources. Next slide please.

They offer rich resources and connections with other cultures and in a very personal way. There are opportunities for learning on both sides about languages, societies, ways of living and interacting as students begin to form friendships, talk about differences, or just simply experience the world in the classroom and in the school together.

These students are bringing the world outside the U.S. into the classroom and into their teacher/student relationship and student friendships. As we begin to talk about registering students and about the inconsistencies that can come about, it is important to address a need for consistent data. It is also important to offer information that we hope is not only helpful but also interesting for you and to also keep in mind that this is in the context of something that comes with a lot of benefits for the school and the district. We would like to turn next, actually, to thinking a little bit about that experience—and your experience—in working with student names in particular.

We’d like to know what challenges you may have faced, given some inconsistencies with student names, or how they presented challenges for the students you have worked with. We have another brief survey; actually, it is one question. If you have a point of experience that you would like to share, please note that and Jason will be taking those and noting those. We are
not going to report back on them right now, but we are going to save them and report back at
the end when we are also talking about some of the steps that people may be taking. But I will
give you a moment to enter your response. Hopefully, you’ve had a chance to get your response
down or to think about that and perhaps we can continue to work on it if you are not quite
finished. We’ll go on and talk about why getting the name right is so important.

(next slide) Here’s where perhaps, from your experience, you may already have some idea of
where this can be such an important part of the school experience. When there is an
inconsistency in how a name is entered, then there may be some lack of recognition of a student.
For example, a student who is registered at a central registration site could go to a separate
school where they have presentably been established as registered student. But, find that
perhaps due to the inconsistency between how the name has been entered and how the student
reports herself as being named, there might not be recognition that that student is indeed
registered. I have heard of that happening to a middle school student just entering the district—
new—and going to the school being told on that very first day of school, no, she wasn’t
registered because how she presented her name that day was different than how it was entered
in the registration. That can be very, very upsetting to a student and also very difficult for the
school to address on that first day, as well.

Also, there is the issue of matching students with specific assessment results. Students may take
a test, and then, as the district is trying to pull those records together to look at the percentage of
students in a certain group who have taken a test, they may not be able to match the assessment
and the assessment results with the students who are listed as being required to take that test.
We may not have accurate student information in the database. We want to be sure, also, that
the teachers can accurately get the data that has been collected relevant to their own students.
With a lot of the ways in which people work with data within the school district, if there isn’t
consistency from, say, the name entered on the attached sheet to a name entered in an
attendance book, or a name entered in a broader district database, it can be very problematic for
trying to really ensure that all of that student’s experience in the school or school district is being
pulled together and located in one place. Then why do these kinds of inconsistencies occur and
why is getting the name right so challenging?

(next slide) First of all, in any language and in English as well, there are differences in how we
use personal names. For example, Sam or Samuel, so that can happen in any language. The
system may not recognize them as the same person.

(next slide) There are also differences in how the sound systems are structured in different
languages. That would be something that also may cause problems from time to change to write
that language in the English language. There may be difference in how names are written, that
also may cause problems in trying to change the language and write it in the Roman alphabet.

(next slide) There is also variation across cultures in counting their structures. For example:
differences in order or in the number of elements in different parts of the name. Finally, there is
the issue of data entry forms. In English, we are assuming that there is a first, middle, and a last
name in most of the forms that we work with. There are limitations often in the blanks of those
fields for first, middle, and last name. So there may be the problem that a lot of the places where
we are asked to enter the student name data, there is really not a good fit between what the form
is allowing us and what is really needed to adequately reflect the name of that student. That is another issue as we are trying to ensure consistency across.

(next slide) What I would like to do is to talk a little bit about some of the differences that lead to changes when the language is transcribed into English and where the inconsistencies come from both looking at spelling and looking at the structure. We are going to find spelling differences often in a number of names.

(next slide) Again in English, there are names that have a lot of different variations in how they can be spelled. Some of our database system already may have search routines that can come and search for those and automatically try to find a particular entry. There are also spelling differences in languages other than English, where there may be different alternative ways of representing.

(next slide) For example in Spanish, Lopez with a ‘z’ or with an ‘s’ but our database systems may not use easily search and recognize those. There are some just variations in how a name is spell that their systems may not capture. There are also...next slide please.

(next slide) There are differences in transcribing a name from a non-Roman to a Roman alphabet. There are differences in trying to work from a sound system in one language and transferring it into English with a different sound system. For example, in Korean there are some sounds that, basically, complete sounds that make differences in meaning for us. For example, in English ‘b’ verses ‘p’ mark differences in meaning, back verus pack are different words for us. However, those sounds are not distinguished in Korean. Similarly, ‘k’ vs ‘g’ and ‘l’ vs ‘r’ are not sounds that would convey a meaning difference in Korean. You would find as going from a very common Korean name, such as Park. It would be written in a number of different ways: Ba; Pak, Bak and Kim; Gim, Ghim and Lee; Rhee, Ri Yi, so those are ways in which different persons going from Korean to English may make assumptions about how best to reflect that sound in the Korean language. Next slide please.

(next slide) Another different kind of example of how spelling a child’s name in English can present problems or complexity is Arabic. Because in that writing system, words in Arabic are written without most vowels being required. That would be equivalent in English, for example, to writing “brn” for barn, burn, born, brain. You have to work with the context then to recognize what that actual word is. So you could understand then, if you are trying to take a child’s name from Arabic and write it in English, that you may run into some problems in that there would be greater variability in just how those vowels would be interrupted. That is why you might often see a number of different ways, for example, of writing Muhammed as shown on that slide. So these are all some reasons why you might see inconsistency in spelling as a child’s name is written in English. Next slide.

(next slide) There often differences in structure that can affect how a student’s name is listed. In English, of course, we speak about first, middle, and last name. And our last name is generally to be our family name. But in Asian languages that family name frequently comes first. What is even trickier, is that sometimes students who may be, for example, Cantonese students. They may keep that ordering, such as it is in their native language, with the family name first and then the given name or they may decide that they will try to follow the orderings, such as it is in English, and have the student’s first name or given name first and then present the family name.
When you are registering a student who comes from a language background such as Cantonese or Japanese, it is really very difficult then to talk about first names and last names and confusion can arise when there is not a consistent entry of that student’s name using the first name and last name requirements in English. We want to be careful to particularly when there is that kind of order difference that we are communicating with the family and with the student to more accurately make that transcription into the English first name and last name data entry. Next slide please.

(next slide) Now Spanish and some other languages as well, there is another structural difference and that is that some names may have two elements to them. So, here is an example of two elements to the first name or given name and two elements to the family name. Now in Spanish the family name is actually composed of the father’s family name (in this case Garcia) and the mother’s family name (Lopez). If you are limited to choosing one or part of that family name to put into a database, you wouldn’t want to put the very last one because what’s most significant within Spanish naming conventions would be the father’s family name, Garcia. That again is a case where if we don’t really understand the naming conventions and we don’t have a consistent approach to how to enter those into our first, middle, last name data entry system we might have variation there, where Maria Teresa might be Garcia in one place and Lopez in another. So that is another way in which our understanding of the names can help us to try to establish rules for more consistently entering the name. Next slide please.

(next slide) We have talked about a lot of the ways in which there can be some differences in how names might be entered when we are trying to register a student. We talked about how those differences can come about. No one wants to really think about, “OK, if we understand this we know that there is a lot of inconsistency.” What can you or your school district do to help ensure that there would be greater consistency? We would like to pause again at this point to ask: What are you doing or what steps might you have taken in your school or your school district to help address the consistency of student names? We’ll just pause, again, for a short moment to let your respond to that. OK, what we’d like to do then is we’ll report back on those in a short while but to talk about some suggestions for registering students.

(next slide) One of them is, to begin by making a point of thinking about the kinds of questions that a registrar should ask the parents or guardians, when a student comes in to register a student. These should be questions that basically start a conversation with the parents and with the student as well, to jointly decide upon that name should be listed. You may want to, given all the differences in languages, you may even want to think about how those questions might be shaped for different languages, where you see different sources of inconsistency. Jason mentioned earlier that the Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest has begun to develop some language reference sheets, so that you can use those as a guide and as a resource when you sit down with a family and begin that process of registering a student. I know Jason will be describing those more at the end of this particular part of the session. Some other suggestions are…next slide please.

(next slide) Some other suggestions shown on the next slide are (I think it will pop up in a moment,) are to also when you are having that conversation with the family to ask them if they have any other official documents that lists the student’s name written in the Roman alphabet. As you are discussing how that student’s name should be written, it is best to go with a form that is already in official documents. Hopefully, the student would be listed consistently in the
documents but oftentimes that might not be the case and if there are different forms per students’ names, then you probably want to have a further discussion about how best to resolve that. Next slide please.

(next slide) Basically, what is really, really important, I think, is to make sure that there is that conversation. You want to make sure that the parents and the guardians and the student understand how important it is to use a consistent spelling and consistent way of listing the student’s name. In fact, you may want to consider providing the family with a card that has the student’s name on it. Showing the specific spelling and structure that the student has agreed upon to help them understand that wherever they go in the school or the school district, that they should use that particular form of the student’s name so that at any point in the system that student shows up in the very same way. That would be really a key point, I think, of all of this that we have been talking about. That is—to have that conversation and to talk to the person registering the student, to talk to teachers so that everyone is aware of how it really is important to have that understanding across all the persons who are working with students and working with the data, in which represents that student’s name. So that is at registration and that takes us to our next slide which is really, we started to mention it, suggestions for during the school year, let me just pause here a moment.

Jason, if you could tell us a little bit about what some of the responses have been as far as the challenges that some of the persons joining us today having conquered and also any steps that they have noted, that they have been taking in their school and their district.

Jason Greenberg Motamedi

Yeah, I haven’t gotten together and managed to get all of the steps put together yet. But I think it is astounding that 64 percent of respondents or 64 percent of the districts, more or less, have taken some steps. I’ll try to get together and put together what those steps are and we can definitely post them up online later on.

Annette Zehler

Great! Were you able to take a look at some of the challenges that persons mentioned that they had experienced at all?

Jason Greenberg Motamedi

No, unfortunately not.

Annette Zehler

So we’ll post those as well. What we’ll do is post those and we’ll look forward to looking through the kind of steps that those of you joining with us today have already taken. I think that will be really very helpful to others. So this is a great opportunity to be sharing those.
What we also have wanted to take a look at too, is not only just the registration point in which the student is first entering the school, but also suggestions for during the school year, which is to ensure that teachers and other staff are basically on the same page. Understanding that it is really important to pay attention to how there needs to be a consistent spelling and consistent way of entering the student’s name on any form. Then also, within the district or the school we do see that there are inconsistencies in how a student’s name is entered in the record keeping system. People should be aware of the fact that those can be addressed and that there should be efforts made to correct those inconsistencies in the system and that they are aware of what those steps would be to get the corrections made. So that the importance of this really is clear to all those who are working with the students and the different points at which information is gather about students and their performance. So these suggestions that really have to do with those who are working with the families directly, working with the students directly. Those at this point of registering a student, but then also in other points such as: when students take assessments, when surveys are completed, etc. There is another part of the system overall where these inconsistencies play a role and where there may be suggestions for addressing them. These have to do with the database.

Those of you who are working within the school or within the school district can’t really directly address these. Working with the database is something that’s often only possible at a district level or at the state level. Any kind of changes made in the database is an extremely, often a very extremely complex process and can be very expensive because you are not only talking about one database you may be talking about a set of related databases. Still, we wanted to talk about those and it sounds like there are a number of you out there who are already working with us from the database site. That’s great to have your input on this as well.

There are a couple of different things, a few different things that might be considered. One might be to modify the database in some way to accept different name formats such as names with multiple elements. Whether or not that is possible, you might think about adding variables to the database, so that when there are questions about a match between a student in one database and in another that you may be able to look at other information about the student and establish some search techniques to take advantage of this information. To better be able to hone in on it and make a judgment about whether that is two different students you are looking at or one and the same student. Things might be their background, their date of birth, gender, maybe some additional variables that help to narrow down who that student is. We want to do this and we want to pay attention to names because even when you have student identifiers, they are not always going to be individual student identifiers. They are not always going to be accurate and you often need to look at the name and look at other variables to make a decision about the student record that you are looking at.

Another possible way of working with this might be if you have existing database fields and they may not accept all of the student’s name. For example, they may not accept two-element names for last name; you might have some rules about how those names are entered. For example, you could say, drop the second part of that Spanish student’s two-element family name and just put the father’s family name in the database field. But then have a comment field where they can recognize the whole student name so that no information is lost. Sometimes databases may see a space in a name listing as a marker for the end of information in a certain variable so even if you have enough space in a variable just the fact there being the two elements may be enough to cause the system to not completely read the two-element names. If you have
ways of looking at what your database allows, recognizing that, and providing some way in which all that information about the student can somehow be noted, that might be another way to address it. Since many of you are already working with the databases, it may be that some of the suggestions that you’ve provided, some of the steps you’ve taken would be additional ideas for people to share and so we’ll look forward again to looking at the kinds of input that we’ve received. Finally, I just wanted to point you to the next slide to reference for the report.

(next slide) There is the link to the Institute of Education Sciences site and through that, you can search for publications and find the registering students and language backgrounds other than English report. I have also included there another reference that I think provides some really clear description of some of the challenges that names present. And it’s not talking about just schools and school district. The whole challenge with working with names and databases is one that runs across a lot of different areas of our society and so it is one that others have been looking at. But the McCallium-Bayliss and Adger paper is a very nice presentation of some of the things that we have been talking about today, too, if you want to look further at those.

(next slide) So with that, thank you for time and for your joining with us today and here is contact information, if you would like to follow up in any other way with this whole discussion. So thank you very much and I’ll turn it back to Jason.

Jason Greenberg Motamedi

(next slide) Thank you, Annette — thank you very much, Annette. If any of the participants have questions for Annette, please take a moment and send them to the host via the chat function. We will answer them in a compiled list we post up online so that everyone can see them. With Annette’s background on why getting names is important, I want to move on in the last few minutes of this webinar to discuss the Naming Conventions Reference Sheets.

To support schools and districts in correctly registering students with non-English names, we have create a series of quick reference guides to the naming conventions in the eight prevalent languages of our region, Spanish, Vietnamese, Somali, Ukrainian, Russian, Tagalog, Cantonese, and Punjabi (Muslim). Punjabi (Sikh) is forthcoming, and we hope to have Arabic, Korean, Cambodian, as well as Native American and Alaska Native guides sometime next year. We created these sheets with the idea that they could be printed off, and held in the front office to support staff in registering students from these languages. They can be downloaded and used free of charge. We plan to modify these sheets based upon your feedback. I am now going to speak quickly about how we created these forms, but let me first say that these are naming conventions reference sheets, NOT language conventions reference sheets. They are intended to help school staff members understand naming conventions, so they can understand and ask better questions of parents and students, and be aware of potential issues.

(next slide) The creation process in these reference sheets began with a 3-step review modeled on the one which CAL did for the original report, which Annette discussed. The information on naming conventions was initially collected from language experts. These were generally native speakers with a background in linguistics or language teaching, as well as experience in the U.S. public school system. So, most of our experts were university professors or instructors from Portland State University or University of Washington. Nearly all of them had experience registering students. The information on the naming conventions was gathered from experts
and compared to the published scholarship, as well as reviewed by linguists, a socio-linguist, and other native speakers to ensure accuracy. In addition, we asked staff members at the WA OSPI to review the forms to ensure that they were consistent with CEDARS requirements. The final step of this process is you: That is, review by educators— you and other school and district staff members—as well as database workers to ensure that it is not only accurate, but useful. So, we ask for your feedback on these forms.

(next slide) I am going to switch now to the Spanish Naming Conventions Reference Guide, which we are going to use as an example so I can show you what’s in each of these. Here you see the first path of the reference. I am just going to quickly discuss it. The Spanish Naming Conventions Reference Guide should provide what you need to know about Spanish names and these have an emphasis on Latin American and specifically Mexican names to correctly recognize patterns and ask informed questions of the parents. The first section, “What you need to know,” right up there, contains important information about that language’s naming conventions. These include the order the names are spoken in, if they use middle names, multiple part names, and women’s adoption of husband’s names. For Spanish, we see that Spanish names do not typically use middle names, have multiple part names, such as Rosa Maria, have 2-part last names, as we already discussed with Annette, which include both parents last names, and use accents as well as the letter and the ñ, an n with a tilde above it. The second section, “Registering students”, helps put knowledge into practice; so, recommending that you ensure that all names (including both last names) are included in databases and documents as well as you enter all parts of the last name and include accents and the letter ñ. Also the sheet provided an example of an imagined family with typical names, as well as how these names may fit into your database. In Spanish, we have the student, right down there, Genoveva Morales Tirado, and her parents. To clarify things, we have color-coded names, so first names are in red and last names are in blue.

In this example, we can see that Genoveva’s last name is indeed composed of two parts, Morales coming from her father and Tirado coming from her mother. The opposite side of the sheet includes a section entitled, “Remember.” This is a few more details about the language, and a general warning that these naming practices do indeed vary within the population and that there’s just an overview.

In addition, we have a section with more examples. In this case we show the example of Martha, whose name is too long to fit into a database, an imaged database now, and we show how one way of doing this would be where we take the first, first name and her first last name. Then, finally down below, we have a section on addressing parents, students and family—A quick primer on how to politely address parents in a culturally appropriate way, and how to know about different ways of addressing students. In Spanish it suggests that you use the first of their last names, so José Demetrio Morales Vizcarra we could call him Mr. Morales, and his wife as Mrs. Tirado. And in addition, there is talking about nicknames, and how do we address written materials. I am going to move backwards onto some of the vindications of these reference guides.

(next slide) As I mentioned, the sheet provides a general overview of the naming practices within specific language groups; they have number of limitations. First of all, variations so this is variations within the populations. These sheets will not provide accurate information for all speakers since naming practices vary greatly within population groups, within language groups. For example, naming conventions are often based on religious affiliation, in our case, we
discovered after we started this that Punjabi Sikh and Punjabi Muslim speakers have remarkably different naming preferences. Consequently, we will be producing two different naming sheets. However, it is important to remember that these are just overall views and they don’t provide for all variations. Two—using a **translator**: These sheets cannot help you communicate with parents who do not speak English. These guides can only help if you can communicate clearly with the parents and students. Similarly, **transliterating names** from non-Latin writing systems into English is a complex task that should be done by a qualified translator or the parents. These reference sheets do not provide guidance in how to transliterate names from other writing systems. Finally, we cannot account for **database limitations**, that is how many characters are allowed into each field—very long names may exceed the character count of your database field—and some databases do not allow accents, special characters, or even spaces between names.

As Annette stressed, the goal of these sheets is to help you come to an agreement with parents on a name that respects both their cultural patterns and the constraints of the database. That name should be written out and provided to the families and students indicating that this is the name that will be used officially at school. Doing so will help students and families remember to use the modified name in school settings. We hope to be able to provide such a form translated into a number of different languages in the coming year. Finally, one limitation I have not mentioned is English nomenclature or names for names. It appears that many database systems including CEDARS use the words “first” and “last” names, yet as Annette pointed out, first names may not be first, and last names may not be last. It is also worth pointing out that the term “family name” also doesn’t work with all languages, since two of the languages we are discussing—Somali and Punjabi—do not share one common name across different generations of families. To be consistent with your databases we have used the terms first and last name in most of these forms. However in two of the languages—Cantonese and Vietnamese—we have switched to “given” and “family” names which make a little bit more sense.

*(next slide)* Thank you very much for your time today. I have provided a link up here, which is at the Education Northwest website. The website has links to all of the naming conventions reference sheets, as well as a link to the original report, and we will put a link for reference to the other report, which Annette mentioned earlier. It will also have an archived version of this webinar and will have questions and answers, those which you have asked using the chat function. I’d like to say that we really regard this as a work in progress and we welcome any feedback to improve these sheets. It is our hope that by understanding naming conventions, school will be able to honor and respect varying naming practices among English learner populations—fostering healthy relationships among school, family, and community members. By understanding naming conventions, school staff members will improve the way student data are entered into the databases, which will improve the quality of those data and ultimately the ability of those districts is to track students over time, match files across data assessments. Ultimately, make meaning from that data.