

Student Portrait - Selina, Grade 5

Who are they? Selina is a 10 year old female 5th grade student. Selina arrived in the US this year from Oaxaca and had formal schooling in her home country. She scored Novice in Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking on the initial ELPAC and the primary home language is Mixteco, although she is also fluent in Spanish. Selina came to the United States with their mother, father, and four younger siblings. Selina is very close to her family still in Oaxaca and speaks to her cousins and grandparents nightly. Her family does belong to a large church community in which they are very active. Selina has made friends at church, although they do not all attend the same school.



Education is very important to the family and the parents expect the children to attend school regularly and receive passing grades. The family does attend meetings requested by the school, but they are not active in the school wide activities and functions held throughout the year. None of the members of the family speak English, but all are bilingual in Spanish.

What are their interests? Selina enjoys spending time with her family, helping her mother in the kitchen, music, and soccer. She is beginning to make friends at school and enjoys spending time with them during lunch and recess. She is not shy about asking questions or requesting what she needs in her native language or second language.

Selina is starting to adopt American pop culture and comes to school in clothes borrowed from friends as she adds to her own style. She is emulating their clothes, behaviors, and mannerisms. She is displaying traditional pre-adolescent behavior at school, such as giggling and texting friends.

What are their strengths as a learner? Selina is eager to learn and remains engaged in all of her classes. She is able to read and write in her native language. She has no formal state assessments from the United States school system and she scored Novice in all domains of the ELPAC. When given assessments in her native language, she has shown she is able to read and do math above grade level.

What are their challenges as a learner? Selina does not speak any English, which makes it difficult for her to access concepts in her content classes. Although she is outgoing with her friends at lunch, she will not attempt to speak English with them or in class, even when one on one with an adult. She will not yet attempt to do any assignments or assessments in English.