Supporting English Learners' Success

A Practical Guide for School Administrators

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pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CENTER FOR SCHOOLS
AND COMMUNITIES

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Introduction

English Learners in the United States

The United States has a long history of integrating immigrants into American society, and the foreign-born population in the United States has continued to steadily increase over the years. This growth has led to a corresponding increase in the English learner (EL) student population in U.S. schools.

The presence of ELs in U.S. schools is not new; however, less than 20 years ago, the vast majority of English learners were concentrated in just six states – California, Arizona, Texas, Florida, New York and Illinois – states that are considered traditional "gateways" for receiving newly-arrived immigrants. By 2015, however, 31 states across the nation reported an EL population that accounted for more than 5 percent of their total student enrollment. Additionally, the EL growth rate in nearly half of these states from 1995-2006 was over 100 percent.[1] The 2017 Condition of Education report by the National Center for Educational Statistics indicates that:

> The percentage of public school students in the United States who were English language learners (ELLs) was higher in school year 2014-15 (9.4 percent or 4.6 million students) than in 2004-05 (9.1 percent or 4.3 million students). In 2014-15, the percentage of public school students who were ELLs ranged from 1.0 percent in West Virginia to 22.4 percent in California.

As demographics shift across the country, teachers, principals and district-level administrators are faced with meeting the needs of our nation's diverse population of ELs, often for the first time. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), more than 80,000 ELs who represent over 200 different languages are enrolled in schools across the commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Most of these students receive services in a Title III Language Instruction Educational Program.

> As demographics shift across the country, teachers, principals and district-level administrators are faced with meeting the needs of our nation's diverse population of ELs, often for the first time. Effective program development and implementation requires administrators to have in-depth knowledge of the various aspects of education for ELs.

The educational success of ELs is the legal responsibility of every local educational agency (LEA) and relies on adequately trained leadership. Effective program development and implementation requires administrators to have in-depth knowledge of the various aspects of education for ELs. As school leaders, principals must be well-versed in, at minimum:

- Strategies and programs to facilitate a positive and welcoming school environment that values the assets EL students and their families bring to the school community.
- Federal and state regulations that govern all aspects of the educational program for ELs.
- The processes related to the screening, identification and placement of ELs.
- Using placement information to design the student's schedule and communicate with parents/families and all of the student's content teachers and support specialists.
- The LEA's formal language instruction educational program (LIEP) and how it will be implemented with fidelity at the building level.
- The LEA's parent/family engagement plan and how it will be implemented at the building level.
- Current research-based strategies and methods for teaching ELs and a plan to support teachers in collaborating to implement strategies in and across classroom instruction.
- Administering the annual ACCESS for ELs® language assessment.
- Monitoring EL student progress towards reclassification.

Often, principals must complete a variety of different trainings to prepare for this role. This reference guide is meant to be a resource for principals as they direct the educational experience of their school's ELs.

Policy Context of English Learner Instruction: An Overview of Federal Mandates

Being knowledgeable about the state and federal policies that inform the broad view of educational programs for ELs will assist administrators in designing instructional programs and monitoring their compliance over time.

Policies and mandates specify the legal requirements with which all entities of an LEA must comply. The Civil Rights Movement, and the resulting Civil Rights Act of 1964, serve as the foundation for various legislation pertaining to the rights of the nation's EL students. The following are federal mandates that represent the cornerstones for current regulations governing the education of ELs in the United States. These mandates serve as the foundation for state policies.

> There is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers and curriculum, for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education. – Lau v. Nichols (1974)

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin, stating, "No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." Thus, any programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance from the United States Department of Education, including LEAs, are obligated to comply with Title VI.

Lau v. Nichols (1974)
Lau v. Nichols (1974) is often referred to as the landmark court ruling in the education of English learners in the United States. This Supreme Court decision provides further clarity on the difference between equal and equitable educational practices. The Court unanimously ruled that the lack of appropriate supplemental language instruction for ELs in public schools violated the Civil Rights Act of 1964, ruling that, "There is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum, for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education."

This ruling requires all LEAs to design programs and practices that overcome linguistic barriers and afford ELs access to the same rigorous content and instruction as their native English speaking peers. Educators are required to provide adequate accommodations and supports to ELs at various English proficiency levels across language domains (e.g. listening, speaking, reading and writing) to ensure that curriculum, instruction and assessment are accessible. The ruling, however, does not endorse or prescribe any specific accommodations or instructional program, thus giving autonomy to state education agencies (SEAs) and LEAs to design appropriate instructional programs at the state and local levels.

Equal Education Opportunities Act of 1974
The Lau v. Nichols ruling was further codified into federal law via the Equal Education Opportunity Act (EEOA), passed shortly after the Lau ruling.

The EEOA requires that school districts establish language instructional programs that serve to eliminate language barriers in ELs' access to high-quality instruction. The EEOA states, "No state shall deny equal educational opportunity to an individual on account of his or her race, color, sex or national origin by…(f) the failure of an educational agency to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by its students in its instructional programs." While the EEOA declares that LEAs are obligated to "take appropriate action" to overcome language barriers, it does not endorse or prescribe any particular action(s) or instructional program model.

Castañeda v. Pickard (1981)

The Lau Remedies and the EEOA informed the implementation of various instructional programs across the country, and those programs achieved varying degrees of effectiveness. In 1981, Roy Castañeda, a father of two EL students, claimed that the Raymondville Independent School District failed to meet the instructional needs of his children. The plaintiff argued that his children were being taught in a segregated classroom and that the instructional program failed to overcome language barriers, thus denying his children equal access to education.

The United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit ruled in favor of Castañeda, citing that the school district was in violation of the EEOA. While the Court, again, did not mandate or endorse a particular instructional program, the ruling resulted in the creation of the Castañeda Standard. This three-prong assessment stipulates that the instructional program for ELs be:

• Based on sound educational theory.

• Implemented with adequate resources and personnel.

• Regularly assessed to demonstrate its effectiveness in overcoming language barriers.

Plyler v. Doe 1982

In response to a 1975 Texas legislation that denied free public school access to undocumented children, a class action lawsuit was filed under the premise that the legislation violated the Equal Protections Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution. This case made it all the way up to United States Supreme Court and, in 1982, the Court ruled that undocumented children have a constitutional right to a free public K-12 education in the United States. The ruling was based on the interpretation that a child who is physically present in the United States, regardless of his/her legal status, is "within the jurisdiction of the state" and is, therefore, protected under the 14th amendment.

This ruling set a precedent that educational agencies are responsible for the education of all students and cannot discriminate on the basis of immigration status. Furthermore, PDE prohibits an LEA from inquiring about a student's legal status. If this information gets disclosed to the LEA, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) prohibits school personnel from disclosing information in a student's file, including the student's immigration status.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act: Every Student Succeeds Act (2015)

In December 2015, former U.S. President Barack Obama reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), previously reauthorized as No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Under new ESSA regulations, SEAs and LEAs are still required to provide equitable educational opportunities to ELs through the design and delivery of a theoretically-sound LIEP.

Under ESSA, LEAs must continue to implement instructional programs that incorporate English language proficiency standards, annually assess ELs to determine their English proficiency levels, and provide instructional accommodations and supports that afford ELs equitable access to rigorous grade-level content and instruction that prepares them for college and career success. Additionally, ELs' progress towards attaining English proficiency must be a heavily weighted factor in new state accountability plans developed under ESSA.

For more detailed information regarding federal obligations, and guidelines for how LEAs can comply with them, refer to the United States Department of Education's English Learner Toolkit.

Designing an EL Educational Program: Program Components and Checklists

Component 1: Understanding and Complying with State Regulations

The Pennsylvania Code is the Commonwealth's official publication of the rules and regulations of the Pennsylvania Government. PDE oversees education at the state level and is responsible for administering policies and procedures that maintain an effective and high-quality system of education for Pennsylvania residents.

Specific to the education of ELs, Pennsylvania Code states "Every school district shall provide a program for each student whose dominant language is not English for the purpose of facilitating the student's achievement of English proficiency and the academic standards under § 4.12 (relating to academic standards). Programs under this section shall include appropriate bilingual-bicultural or English as a second language (ESL) instruction" (22 Pa. Code §4.26).

A Basic Education Circular (BEC) provides guidance from PDE on the implementation of state and federal laws and regulations. The BEC on Educating English Learners (ELs) offers more explicit interpretations and applications of the laws and regulations that govern the education of ELs. This section will provide overviews of various sections of the BEC.

Section 1: Screening, Identification and Placement of ELs

The first step in providing a high-quality education for ELs is identifying EL students.

Visit PDE website for details and resource documents.

Federal regulations require that LEAs identify students who may be in need of language assistance services by administering a Home Language Survey within 30 days of the beginning of the school year or 14 calendar days if the identification process begins after the school year is underway. The steps to identification include:

Step 1: Administering the Home Language Survey
Administer the home language survey (HLS) to parents and students who are newly enrolling students or students without previous EL records from other educational entities.

NOTE: Students and parents must receive the HLS in a language they understand. Pennsylvania provides a standardized, translated HLS in various languages.

If the HLS indicates a language other than English for any question on the HLS, proceed to STEP 2: Family Interview.

If the HLS indicates a language other than English for all questions on the HLS, the family interview becomes optional and you may skip to STEP 4: Review of Academic Records.

NOTE: Pidgin and creole variations of English (e.g., English spoken in Liberia) constitute a language other than English for identification purposes.

Step 2: Conducting the Family Interview
The purpose of the family interview is to gather additional information to determine if the student is an EL. The family interview must be conducted by district-trained enrollment personnel in an interview format. The district-trained interviewer may use an interpreter to assist in conducting the interview if necessary.

Plan a parent interview to discuss the HLS and obtain additional information about the student and family. This meeting may also serve as an opportunity to discuss what happens next if the student is identified as an EL. For example, district personnel may choose to use this time to discuss the parent's right to refuse some or all of the ELD services if their child is identified as an EL.

The interview protocol is included in the English Learner Identification Procedure.

During the interview, district personnel will solicit information such as demographic information, school enrollment history and academic records, and the frequency that the child hears and speaks a language other than English for a variety of purposes and with various conversational partners.

Special Education Consideration
If the student is identified as a potential EL via HLS and has an individualized education plan (IEP) or is suspected of having a disability (e.g. the parent states that the child has a disability), enrollment personnel must consult with special education personnel before proceeding to STEP 3: Reviewing the Family Interview Data. If the student does not arrive with an IEP and is not suspected of having a disability, you may skip this section and continue to STEP 3.

Step 3: Reviewing the Family Interview Data
Review of the family interview data must be conducted by a certified ESL specialist. Analyze the interview responses to determine whether or not there is reasonable evidence that the student's primary home language is a language other than English (PHLOTE).

If it is determined that the information from the family interview indicates that the student is not identified as PHLOTE, the EL identification process ends here.

If it is determined that the information from the family interview indicates that English is not the student's primary home language or that exposure to another language may have had a significant impact on the student's English language development, then proceed to STEP 4: Reviewing Academic Records.

Step 4: Reviewing Academic Records
Conduct a review of the student's academic records from previous schooling, if available. If the academic records are not available, proceed to STEP 5: Administering the WIDA Screener. If records are available, analyze the records to locate evidence that the student has sufficient English proficiency to benefit from instruction in English without specialized supports or accommodations. Acceptable evidence might include:

• Proficient scores from standardized summative or interim tests administered in English.

• Passing grades for core content classes where the primary language of instruction was English.

• Student work samples written in English.

If a student's file includes ACCESS for ELLs® scores from the previous school year and these scores indicate that he/she is an EL, the student could be screened to determine his/her current proficiency level. Proceed to STEP 5: Administering the WIDA Screener.

If the review of the academic records does not indicate enough evidence to reasonably determine that the student has sufficient English proficiency to benefit from instruction in English without support services, proceed to STEP 5: Administering the WIDA Screener.

Step 5: Administering the WIDA Screener
A WIDA assessment administrator should screen the student to measure his/her English proficiency using either the Kindergarten Screener, K MODEL, WIDA screener (online or paper), or WIDA MODEL screener. Use the screener criteria for identification as an EL to determine whether or not the student should be identified as an EL based on his/her screener scores.

The screener scores serve as initial or baseline English proficiency levels. If identified as an EL, the student will take the annual WIDA ACCESS for ELLs® assessment. Scores from the initial ACCESS for ELLs® will be used to calculate the student's progression to proficiency by setting the initial annual growth target and the proficiency attainment target.

If the student's scores do not meet the criteria for identification as an EL based on the scoring criteria, the student should not be identified as an EL and the identification process ends here.

If the student's scores meet the criteria for identification as an EL based on the scoring criteria, proceed to STEP 6: Assessing Native Language Proficiency (optional step).

NOTE: If a student is unable to complete the full screener (e.g. because of a disability or refusal), the determination of EL status must be made based on the remaining available evidence gathered from the HLS, parent interview, and academic

records review. If reasonable evidence of English proficiency cannot be established based on those sources along with the incomplete screener results, if any, then the student should be identified as an EL.

Special Education Consideration
If the student arrives with an IEP, English language proficiency screening must be completed with appropriate accommodations and the test results must be interpreted in consultation with special education (SPED) personnel.

If the student is suspected of having a disability but a determination cannot be made prior to completing the EL identification procedure, English language proficiency screening must be completed with any administrative considerations, universal tools or accommodations that the ESL and SPED educators deem necessary. This procedure must be completed in accordance with the outlined guidelines and the student must be placed in the appropriate LIEP based on the information available at the conclusion of the identification procedure. A student who arrives with an IEP or is suspected of having a disability should not be excluded from the EL identification process nor should the process be deferred until a later special education determination can be made.

If, after the student is placed in the LIEP, the student is determined to have a disability that may have affected the screening results (e.g., the student requires a testing accommodation that was not offered), the student must be re- screened using the appropriate accommodations. If the student does not meet the criteria for identification as an EL based on this subsequent screening, then the district must contact PDE to remove the EL identifier and the student should be removed from the LIEP.

Step 6: Assessing Native Language Proficiency (optional)
Screen the student for native language proficiency if a screening instrument is available. Skip this step if no screening instrument is available.

Step 7: Determining Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (LIFE) Status
Determine if the student has limited or interrupted formal education using the following criteria:

*   Is enrolling after second grade AND

*   Has a literacy score of less than 3.5 on the KW-APT, K MODEL screener, WIDA screener or WIDA MODEL AND

*   Has at least two fewer years of age-appropriate schooling than peers or has unenrolled from U.S. schools to enroll in schools in other countries (including Puerto Rico) more than two times in the past four years AND

*   Has limited encoding/decoding skills in native language (as indicated by family interview and/or native language measures and/or review of academic records and/or local measures)

Step 8: Determining an Appropriate Language Instruction Educational Program
Use all data collected throughout the identification process to determine the most appropriate LIEP based on the student's English language proficiency and native language proficiency, if available.

If the student has an IEP, certified ESL and SPED personnel must collaborate to determine the appropriate program and academic placement for the student.

Step 9: Communicating Identification Results to Parents/Guardians
Parents have a legal right to be included in educational decisions for their child. The LEA must provide the parent with a detailed description of the LIEP and explain the identification and placement decision-making process in a language that the parent can understand within 30 days of the beginning of the school year or 14 calendar days if the identification process begins after school year is underway.

The LEA should inform the parent of the advantages of having their child receive support through the LIEP in terms of their child's English language acquisition and academic success. The LEA should also inform parents of their right to decline ELD programs or services in whole or in part, and supply the parents with the state required ELD Program Parental Refusal Waiver.

To refuse placement in the LIEP, a parent must submit a signed waiver indicating their informed and voluntary decision not to place their child in the LIEP. A signed "waiver" indicates the parent's desire to waive the child from participation in all or some of the ELD programs or services offered by the school.

LEAs must ensure that parents do not opt their children out of any ELD programs or services based on schedule conflicts with other educational programs (such as special education programs); insufficient space in the available ELD programs; or insufficient offerings within the ELD program. LEAs must not recommend that a parent opt a child out of ELD programs or services for any reason. Additionally, there is no mechanism to opt a child out of taking the annual ACCESS for ELLs® language proficiency assessment, even if the parents choose to opt the child out of all or some ELD support services.

Serving ELs Who Have Been Opted-Out of ELD Services
If a parent chooses to decline all or some ELD support services, the LEA is still responsible for the following:

•   Annually test opt-out ELs with the state required WIDA ACCESS for ELs® assessment until the student attains English proficiency by meeting the state exit criteria and is reclassified non-EL status.

•   Maintain the student's EL status on all reporting even though the student's parents declined services.

•   Provide ELD instruction within the general education content area instruction to meet the needs of the opt-out EL students.

•   Notify parents if their child is struggling in general education classes and recommend the ELD program and services again.

•   Present the ELD Program Reinstatement Request Form to parents who wish to opt their child back into the school's ELD programs and services.

Guidance for Parent Right to Refuse – including parent refusal waiver, ELD reinstatement request form, and guidance for parent refusal of LIEP.

Step 10: Securing Parent Acceptance or Refusal of ELD Services
Once the LEA has reviewed the identification process and the ELD recommended support services with the parent, the parent accepts or refuses their child's placement in the LIEP. If, after the district notifies the parent of their option to refuse specialized LIEP services for their child, the parent does not respond, the district should proceed with the recommended program placement.

Step 11: Notifying the Receiving School
Once an EL has been identified, the LEA should notify the receiving school of the student's identification and placement information.

Step 12: Initiating the Service Record in Student Information System (SIS)
The LEA should initiate an active service record in the district SIS. If the student has limited or interrupted formal education, ensure that LIFE is identified in the record.

Step 13: Generating the Student's Schedule
The final step is to generate a course schedule for the student based on program placement and English language proficiency. The school is responsible for ensuring that all teachers (specialists and general content teachers) with whom an EL is scheduled for class have English language proficiency information for each EL on their roster.

This completes the identification and placement process. The original HLS and parent refusal waiver (if completed) should be attached to the completed English Learner Identification Procedure document and filed in the student's academic record. Copies of all forms should be given to the ESL specialist and general content teachers who will be working with the EL student.

> Developing a culturally responsive staff through training about cultural differences that may be connected to ELs' unique academic journeys is essential for all faculty, staff, and administrators.

The HLS and family interview, and the process for completing them, can be intimidating to many parents and their children. To create a positive and welcoming environment, do not assume that parents should already know the processes for enrollment and completing the HLS.

Treat this as an experience that may be new for them while also offering them opportunities to make connections between their experiences elsewhere (either in the United States or abroad) and their experience at your district. Helping them to see those connections can help facilitate a sense of familiarity and comfort, while also affirming that you recognize their prior experiences and knowledge as valuable to this process. The family interview can also be conducted in a home visit setting.

While research indicates that most ELs in the United States are U.S. citizens by birthright, many families experience mixed-status arrangements regarding immigration status. For some, the enrollment and HLS process may create additional anxiety around immigration concerns. It is imperative that the enrollment specialist who conducts the HLS and family interview assure families that the resulting documents and information obtained in them are not legal documents and will not be used for determining immigration status for the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

LEA personnel are prohibited from asking questions regarding immigration status. Should any information regarding documentation be disclosed, that information is protected by FERPA and will not be reported to any government agency. Therefore, neither the HLS nor the family interview has any legal ramifications to parents or students.

Remind parents and families that the purpose of these procedures is to assist school districts in identifying students who will benefit from targeted language assistance through the LIEP in order to provide them the best possible education. The purpose of the LIEP is to assist EL students in developing the skills they need to be successful socially, culturally, and academically as members of the school community and society.

> Treat the enrollment process as an experience that may be new for families and help them make connections between their experiences elsewhere. Helping them to see those connections can facilitate a sense of familiarity and comfort, while also affirming that you recognize their prior experiences and knowledge as valuable to this process.

Section 2: Designing the Language Instruction Educational Program

As stated in Pennsylvania Code, every school district is required to provide an LIEP for any student whose primary language is not English. LEAs are required to thoughtfully and deliberately plan, resource and evaluate their LIEP. The plan and evaluation results must be made available to all staff who work with ELs as well as parents/families of ELs.

Every LIEP must attend to:

- English language development to promote the attainment of both social and academic English proficiency AND
- The achievement of grade-level academic standards.

Attending to both of these components in daily instruction is the responsibility of all educators, including content- area teachers and ESL program specialists. Like federal regulations, PDE does not prescribe or endorse any particular instructional program model. LEAs have the autonomy to design and implement the program model that they determine to be most appropriate for their local context. State regulations do, however, mandate two specific components that are required to be incorporated into any LIEP. The LIEP is required to include:

Instruction delivered by an ESL specialist
English language development (ELD) instruction that is delivered by a certified ESL specialist is considered its own content area. Language instruction in this context is content- based or content-driven, meaning that the grade-level content of general education classes provides the context in which ESL specialists implement a language curriculum that specifically and intentionally attends to students' development of general and academic language structures and functions. The ELD component of the LIEP that is taught by a certified ESL specialist may be delivered in a separate classroom, as is common in what's known as a Pull-Out ESL model, or integrated into general content classrooms, as is common in what's known as a Push-In ESL model. Other program models include various forms of bilingual education.

Appropriately modified instruction and assessment for ELs delivered by content-area teachers
Appropriate accommodations and modifications are required in all content-area classes in which ELs are enrolled to ensure that ELs at all proficiency levels have equitable access to the same rigorous grade-level content. Content-area teachers, including those who are not certified ESL specialists, are responsible for intentionally planning and implementing instruction that incorporates appropriate and necessary supports, modifications, and accommodations that allow ELs to overcome language barriers and access instruction and assessment on par with their native English-speaking peers.

These two components can be incorporated into a variety of different program models. Program models range in their use of languages other than English from English-only to developmental bilingual.

The following two lists outline the broad categories of the most common program models for ELs:

Uses English and another language
- Two-way immersion.
- Transitional bilingual.
- Dual language.
- Developmental bilingual.
- Heritage language.

Uses English only
- Structured English immersion.
- Sheltered English instruction.
- Specially designed academic instruction in English (SDAIE).
- Pull-out/push-in ESL.

Although research indicates that high-quality developmental bilingual education is the most effective model for long-term student success,[2-4] the implementation of a bilingual program may not always be feasible. Thus, there are many factors to consider when choosing or designing a LIEP. In addition to the requirement that any program be based on sound educational theory, factors to consider include but are not limited to: (a) the sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students and their instructional needs, (b) available resources that would be necessary to implement the program model with fidelity, (c) necessary knowledge and skills among faculty and staff who will have lead responsibility in designing and implementing curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and (d) the effectiveness of the program model as determined by annual program review and evaluation.

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Regardless of how you design your LIEP, PDE requires that LEAs classify their program into one of the following categories:

- EL-Specific Bilingual.
- Mixed Classes Bilingual.
- EL-Specific Transitional Instruction.
- Mixed Classes With Native Language Support.
- EL-Specific English-Only Instruction.
- Mixed Classes With English-Only Support.

The main distinctions between these program models are (a) whether the class includes only EL students or both EL and non-EL students and (b) whether the intended program outcome is proficiency in English and the EL's primary language or proficiency in English only.

For more detailed information on the difference between program models and to view flowcharts to assist you in determining the correct classification for your LEA's current program, consult the document, Classifying Language Instruction Educational Programs (2017), on the PDE LIEP page.

Regardless of the program model(s) employed, ELs must have equitable access to academic content for all courses in which they are enrolled. ELD is a required component of all LIEPs and is delivered daily by ESL specialists and general classroom teachers. The LIEP must, at a minimum:

- Be aligned to state academic content standards for the appropriate grade level of the ELs.
- Include adaptations/modifications in the delivery of content instruction and assessment by all teachers based on students' language proficiency levels.
- Include ELD instruction delivered by properly certified teachers who hold an ESL program specialist certificate.
- Incorporate the use of the Pennsylvania English Language Development Standards.
- Provide equitable access to grade-level content for ELs at all language proficiency levels.
- Not limit the enrollment of ELs in any course or academic program for which they would otherwise be eligible.

Once an LEA determines what their LIEP will be, effective implementation becomes the daily responsibility of all administrators, faculty, and staff.

Designing and Classifying the LIEP

Section 3: Reclassification, Monitoring, and Redesignation of ELs

Districts must employ uniform procedures in accordance with state requirements for reclassifying ELs as former ELs (FELs) when they attain proficiency. Districts are also responsible for identifying ELs who have been enrolled in a U.S. school for six or more years and have not been reclassified as English proficient as long-term English learners (LTELs).

To be eligible for reclassification, an EL must demonstrate the ability to access challenging academic content and interact with other students and teachers both academically and socially in an English language setting. Evidence of this ability is demonstrated by the student on the annual English language proficiency assessment, ACCESS for ELLs® and gathered by teachers using two standardized language use inventories. The scores from the two language use inventories are added together and then combined with the points assigned based on the ACCESS for ELLs® proficiency level (PL) score. The total possible combined points from the language use inventories is 7.6. The possible points based on the PL scores are 3.6, 4.5, 5.8 or 8.4, respectively (the points assigned correspond to the student's PL score). The minimum threshold for reclassification is 10.5.

PDE's Reclassification Tool is available as a resource for LEAs to utilize during the reclassification evaluation process. Here, educators can access a training resource that includes video examples of an educator completing the inventories and generate individual student coversheets.

Completing the Reclassification Process

The two language use inventories (Rubrics 1 and 2) are completed by both the ESL specialist and a content teacher for every EL. The English language arts teacher is the recommended content teacher for completing the inventories due to the nature of the content that the inventory asks the teacher to assess.

The two rubrics should be used to evaluate a student's use of language as part of the reclassification process. The evaluation must consist of multiple observations. Based upon the observations, the teacher determines the most appropriate proficiency definition for the student's language use (low, moderate, or high) for each item in the inventories. It is recommended that the teachers who complete the inventories be well-trained in the use of the rubrics and begin to make notes of each EL's language use in enough time to develop a firm evaluation before completing the inventories.

The Reclassification Tool allows evaluators (ESL specialists and content teachers) to complete the two inventories online and either print or save data to their local computer. The following information will provide step-by-step instructions for completing the Reclassification Tool.

Step 1. Click on "Begin the Tool." On the first page, enter the student's information. Click next.

Step 2. Enter the evaluator's information. Click next.

NOTE: ESL specialists and content teachers will be required to complete the inventories separately.

Step 3. You will be asked to complete Rubric 1: Interaction, Listening, Speaking, and Reading Language Use Inventory based upon your recent observations of the student's language use. Select the appropriate proficiency definition for each assessed item. Click next.

Step 4. The page displays the completed Rubric 1 with your selections highlighted and the total combined score. You have the option to print this page and add the completed rubric to the student's academic file or save it to your computer. Click Save/Print PDF if you would like to save or print the file and the PDF will open in a new browser window. Once saved or printed, you can close that browser window and navigate back to the Reclassification Tool. Click next.

Step 5. You will be asked to complete Rubric 2: Written Expression Language Use Inventory based upon your recent observations of the student's language use. Select the appropriate proficiency definition for each assessed item. Click next.

Step 6. The page displays the completed Rubric 2 with your selections highlighted and the total combined score. You have the option to print this page and add the completed rubric to the student's academic file and/or save it to your computer. Click Save/Print PDF if you would like to save and/or print the file and the PDF will open in a new browser window. Once saved and/or printed, you can close that browser window and navigate back to the Reclassification Tool.

Step 7. You have the option to add this student's information to an Excel file, where you can keep a running record of all students' completed inventories data. This feature allows you to download the Excel file, save it to your computer, copy and paste the second evaluator's (content teacher) inventories data for the students listed, and later add assigned points based on the student's ACCESS for ELLS® scores when they become available. Then, you can upload the master Excel file to the Reclassification Tool to generate one completed cover sheet per EL on your roster. If you would like to generate the Excel file, click Add to Spreadsheet.

Step 8. You will see a summary of the information you entered for the student. More rows of student data will appear as you add more students. At this point, you can choose to download and save the Excel document (which will contain the information for the one student you just entered) or you can add another student. If you are finished, click download spreadsheet and save it to your local computer as the master file. Once the Excel sheet is saved, you may exit the Reclassification Tool by closing your browser window.

NOTE: Once you close the browser window, all data is erased from the online tool. If you would like to add another student, click add another student and begin the data entry process again by referring back to Step 1.

Step 9. Gather the inventories data from the content teacher and copy and paste his/her data into your master Excel file.

NOTE: In order to use the Generate Coversheet option in the Reclassification Tool, you may not alter the form fields in the Excel file. At this point, you should have complete data for the language use inventories (i.e. for each EL, you should have Rubrics 1 and 2 scores from the ESL specialist plus Rubrics 1 and 2 scores from the content teacher).

Step 10. When ACCESS for ELLs® scores become available, manually enter the appropriate assigned points based on each student's PL score into the spreadsheet in the respective cell. After all point values from the ACCESS scores are entered, your reclassification data should be complete. For each EL, you should have:

- Total point value assigned by the ESL specialist who completed rubrics 1 and 2 of the language use inventories AND

- Total point value assigned by the content teacher who completed rubrics 1 and 2 of the language use inventories AND

- Total point value assigned based on the student's ACCESS for ELLs® PL score.

These scores are added together to determine the student's total combined reclassification score. To be eligible for reclassification, a student must meet the minimum threshold score of 10.5. From here, you can navigate back to the Reclassification Tool to generate an individual cover sheet for each EL's academic file. To do this, continue to Step 11.

Step 11. Navigate back to the Reclassification Tool webpage. Click on Generate Coversheets. Select Choose File and navigate to your master Excel file that includes all the completed reclassification data for your ELs. After you have selected your Excel file, click Generate Coversheets. A PDF will open in a new window that includes one coversheet for each student in your Excel file. You can now print and/or save the individual coversheets.

Step 12. The coversheet will indicate the total combined score for the EL. If the student's total score does not meet the minimum threshold for reclassification, the coversheet will state that the student is not eligible for reclassification. If the student's total score meets the minimum threshold for reclassification, the coversheet will state that the student is eligible for reclassification. If a student meets the minimum threshold score and is eligible for reclassification but is not recommended for reclassification by the faculty, provide a detailed explanation of evidence that the student should remain identified as an EL in the designated section on the coversheet.

CHECKLIST 1: Complying with State Regulations

General Knowledge of State Regulations

MEASURE 1: **School staff (administrators, teachers, support staff) are knowledgeable about the current state regulations that govern EL education.**

Assessment　　All　　　　Some　　　　Few　　　　None

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 2: **Our school leadership disseminates new information about EL education when it becomes available from PDE.**

Assessment　　Regularly　　　Sometimes　　　Rarely　　　Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

Identification Procedures

MEASURE 3: **Our ESL specialist is involved in the enrollment process for new ELs who will attend our school.**

Assessment　　All　　　　Some　　　　Few　　　　None

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 4: **When new ELs are assigned to our school, all teachers and specialists receive detailed English proficiency information about each of their ELs.**

Assessment　　Always　　　Sometimes　　　Rarely　　　Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

Identification Procedures *continued*

MEASURE 5: **Parents are informed about the ELD program, including the schedule and curriculum, within the required timeframe for notifying parents and in a language they understand.**

Assessment   Always   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 6: **Parents are informed about their right to refuse some or all ELD support services as well as their right to reinstate ELD support services.**

Assessment   Always   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

LIEP Design and Implementation

MEASURE 7: **ELs at all proficiency levels 1-5 receive daily ELD instruction.**

Assessment   All   Some   Few   None

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 8: **Our teachers and staff are knowledgeable about our LIEP, the theory it is based on, and what actions and resources are required to implement it effectively.**

Assessment   Always   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

LIEP Design and Implementation *continued*

MEASURE 9: Instruction in the LIEP attends to both ELD and the development of grade-level academic content knowledge.

Assessment   Always   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 10: Content teachers modify or differentiate content classroom instruction to be accessible to ELs at all proficiency levels.

Assessment   Always   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 11: Our teachers meet to discuss the processes and criteria in place to monitor ELs in both their mastery of grade-level academic content and English language development.

Assessment   Always   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 12: Content teachers and ESL Specialists collaborate to complete the reclassification rubrics for ELs.

Assessment   Always   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

Designing an EL Educational Program: Program Components and Checklists

Component 2: Family and Community Engagement

Under ESSA, family engagement is shifting from a recommendation to a high-priority integral part of educational reform. A longstanding body of research indicates that parent engagement is strongly linked to student success.[5-10] Research in EL education further suggests that parent engagement is even more important for minority students and ELs, whose cultural, linguistic, and familial backgrounds often represent different kinds of knowledge and educational assets from those traditionally represented in U.S. schools.[11-13]

> When parents and teachers work together in collaborative and sustained ways, both stakeholder groups learn and grow from the partnership.

High-impact parent engagement, as defined by the United States Department of Education (ED), focuses on collaboration between parents and teachers to co-design educational experiences and to share the responsibility for student achievement in concrete, explicitly defined ways. This kind of collaborative parent engagement requires sustained two-way communication and interaction that challenges traditional parent involvement programs that are often characterized by stand-alone, one-day, and often one-way "parent nights."

ESSA challenges traditional notions of parent engagement plans, which have often been characterized by a series or checklist of activities. Instead, ESSA requires that districts design a parent and family engagement framework that demonstrates a comprehensive systemic plan to foster sustained and meaningful educational partnerships between families and school personnel. A policy statement released on May 5, 2016 by ED in conjunction with the Department of Health and Human Services states, "Family engagement refers to the systematic inclusion of families in activities and programs that promote children's development, learning, and wellness, including in the planning, development, and evaluation of such activities, programs, and systems." ED refers to this kind of parent/family engagement program as a dual-capacity building framework because, when parents and teachers work together in these collaborative and sustained ways, both stakeholder groups learn and grow from the partnership. With such cross-cultural exchanges, greater collaboration and support can ensue.[14]

High-impact parent engagement is an important aspect of schooling for all students but is essential for the academic success of our most vulnerable student groups. For this reason, LEAs who receive Title I and Title III funds are governed by specific regulations for parent/family engagement, including, but not limited to, the following:

Communication. All LEAs have language assistance obligations to communicate with parents in a language they understand. This obligation pertains to all communications that are specifically related to ELs but also extends to include communication about any program, service, or activity of an LEA that is communicated to parents/families of non-ELs.

Written Policy. Each school district that receives Title I funds shall author a written parent engagement policy that outlines the LEA's expectations and objectives for meaningful parent/family engagement that is developed in collaboration, and agreed upon, with parents and family members of participating children. The policy should be incorporated into the district's plan.

Opportunities for Interaction. Title I regulations require that each LEA receiving a Title I subgrant implement an effective means of outreach to parents of ELs. As part of this outreach, LEAs must hold regular meetings, and send out appropriate invitations to attend the meetings to parents in a language they understand, for the purpose of soliciting and responding to recommendations from parents of ELs. Additionally, any LEA receiving a Title III formula subgrant must also conduct regular parent, family, and community engagement.

Title I LEA and School Parent and Family Engagement Policy Checklist

This checklist, designed by PDE, assists Title I staff in designing the parent engagement policy.

Every Student Succeeds Act: Pennsylvania Consolidated State Plan

This state plan provides more comprehensive information regarding regulations related to parent and family engagement.

Key Considerations

Many educators can recite experiences in which they have tried to design parent/family engagement events but often leave with feelings that the events were not as successful as they had hoped. School leaders often express their feelings that "nothing works." Achieving high levels of high-quality parent/family engagement is not necessarily easy and it does not necessarily happen naturally. It takes sustained commitment from all school personnel and requires collaboration with parents and families.

There are many known reasons as to why parent/family engagement is challenging, particularly for parents/families of ELs – demanding and varying schedules and family commitments; limited access to reliable transportation; emerging technology skills or limited access to the kinds of technology used by schools; cultural differences in expectations about parent/family engagement and school procedures; and/or overcoming language barriers that limit teachers' and parents'/families' abilities to communicate directly, among others. None of the challenges faced, however, should be perceived as the parent or guardian not caring for their child's education or academic achievement. Engaging in inquiry when these challenges arise requires us to ask why things are not working and make decisions about how to overcome barriers. This process allows us to develop a deeper and more thorough understanding of the challenges and to adapt our parent/family engagement programs and initiatives to be responsive to the local realities of teachers and families to, ultimately, be more successful.

There are many factors and resources to consider when designing and implementing a high-quality parent/family engagement program. In this section, we outline some ideas and resources that LEAs may consider when creating opportunities for families to engage with teachers, classes, and school activities.

Speaking from the Walls

School walls "talk" through the posters, signs, and bulletin boards that are posted on them. School leaders should regularly conduct self-assessments by doing "school walk-throughs," starting in the front of the building and moving into the main lobby and main office before continuing into hallways, classrooms, and co-curricular spaces.

Ensuring that parents/families know where to park, how to enter the building, and procedures for signing in and requesting assistance are all part of creating a welcoming family-friendly school environment that facilitates parent/family engagement. Be sure that school signage, outside and inside the building, is posted in languages that parents can understand.

Posters that articulate school rules, mottos, and other displays should be accessible to all students, parents, and family members. Materials that are displayed on school walls are all part of the school's symbolic curriculum and send important implicit messages about what is valued. Having these materials posted in the languages of students and families creates a sense of welcoming and belonging for those who represent other cultures and/or whose primary language(s) are not English.

> School walls "talk" through the posters, signs, and bulletin boards that are posted on them. Materials that are displayed on school walls are all part of the school's symbolic curriculum and send important implicit messages about what is valued.

Interpretation and Translation Services

Parents/families of ELs whose primary language is not English may have challenges with one or more of the domains of English language (speaking, listening, reading, and writing). Therefore, they may require language assistance in order to access educational information and participate in the educational program of their child(ren).

In an ED Dear Colleague letter released on January 7, 2015, English Learner Students and Limited English Proficient Parents, the Department outlines procedures for LEAs to determine who their EL parents are and what kinds of language assistance are required for their meaningful participation in their child's education.

One element critical to effective family outreach is the provision of interpretation and translation services, as mandated federally and articulated in PDE's BEC published July 2017 entitled Educating English Learners and in 22 Pa. Code §4.26. Language assistance must be provided to parents/families at no cost to the parent/family.

One resource to support LEAs in meeting the translation requirement is the PDE Translation Library, which provides general and Pennsylvania-specific documents for parents in multiple languages. Schools should have qualified staff members who are able to provide language assistance to parents/families whose primary language is not English. When hiring these paid or volunteer staff members, school leadership should consider the extent to which the prospective liaison or paraprofessional is fully bilingual. Also consider the extent to which the prospective staff member is skilled and trained as an interpreter to engage in consecutive or simultaneous interpreting (orally) as well as skilled in translating a variety of written documents.

Care and Understanding Begin at the Main Office

Ensuring that your school has qualified interpreters and translators present is the first step in providing equitable access to parents/families. Make sure your office support staff has the training and tools available to them to assist parents and students who may arrive with questions about particular events, activities, school policies, and/or procedures.

It might be helpful to create resource documents that can serve as quick-reference guides for bilingual liaisons or paraprofessionals that include topics such as enrollment procedures (including students' right to free public education that prohibits LEAs from requesting information about immigration documentation status), ELD programs and services, special education and other support services, grading and report cards, dress code, school discipline procedures, field trips/special programs, extracurricular activities, parent organizations, state testing procedures and interpreting scores (ACCESS for ELs®, PSSAs and Keystone Exams), and local community resources and services, among many other possible topics.

Bilingual liaisons or paraprofessionals should have a quick-reference list of who to contact in the school, district, or community to obtain more information about various topics if needed. The standard best practice is to not turn away a family or student without thorough explanation and assurance of their understanding of the situation or need.

Accommodating Parents' and Families' Schedules

One of the most commonly stated challenges that affects attendance and participation at parent/family engagement events is scheduling conflicts. Parents' work schedules will vary and may represent a variety of possible work arrangements, including regular daytime hours, shift rotations, 12-hour shifts, and occasional or regular nights and weekends. In addition to work schedules, parents and families balance medical appointments, extracurricular activities, religious activities, community obligations, etc., much in the same way as educators do. Transportation and childcare can pose other challenges for parents and families who want to participate but do not have access to reliable services.

It is unlikely that a single parent/family engagement event will accommodate every parent's/family member's schedule. For this reason, announcements about upcoming events should be sent out with ample advance notice to allow parents/families to make necessary arrangements to ensure their attendance, and reminders should be sent as the event date is approaching.

LEAs may want to think about creating more, not less, opportunities for parents and families to engage with school staff. Large-scale school-wide or district-wide events are beneficial, but can create challenges for participation (e.g., if a teacher teaches at one building but has a child who attends another; if a parent has children in different grade levels within the same building or in different buildings). Hosting school-wide events might also pose a challenge for staffing should the school wish to hold multiple events throughout the year.

Dividing staff into smaller teams to host and lead various events might prove more beneficial than hosting a fewer number of "all-hands-on-deck" largescale events. Hosting smaller-scale events, such as a monthly series of informational forums organized around topics, may allow a few teachers with the respective expertise to staff each event.

Regardless of how a school decides to organize its parent/family engagement programs, best practice is to vary the days of the week, and times of day to try to accommodate as many different schedules as possible. Having a way to disseminate information to those parents/families who were not able to attend is also an important way to ensure that everyone has access to current information.

Partner with Community Organizations

Community organizations can be great resources for schools. Partnering with a community organization, such as a community center that is centrally located in the community, offers educational programs, and has a multilingual staff may add valuable resources to your program and facilitate increased attendance.

In partnership with one or more of these organizations, you might have access to the additional resources needed to host a parent-teacher professional development workshop, monthly forum, or even run a parent/family resource center that can be co-staffed on nights and weekends by educators and community leaders.

These organizations serve as a bridge between home and school, and they might offer a greater sense of familiarity and comfort to parents/families of ELs who may be initially intimated to enter the school. The location, if centrally located in the community, may offer transportation solutions if a local public transit runs a regular route nearby or the facility is in walking distance to many families' homes.

Design Assignments that Encourage Parent/Family Participation

Homework assignments are often intended to bridge school and home, yet many assignments are inaccessible to parents/families of ELs. Whether due to a language barrier, educational gap, mismatch in cultural knowledge, or other factor, many homework assignments effectively foreclose parents/families of ELs from participating. Think of ways to reorganize assignments to design real-life applications that invite parents' funds of knowledge into the process.

For example, you might have students conduct oral interviews about a time when parents or family members experienced something related to a particular topic of study (e.g. weather, travel and transportation, life cycle of a plant or animal, supply and demand, force and motion, erosion, etc.) or have students practice math by gathering real- world examples from parents or family members and solving them (e.g. "Tell me about a time when you had to use multiplication to accomplish something" – like buying enough packs of paper plates for the number of guests attending a party or determining the final price for an item that is on sale).

Bring the Outside In

Help make ELs and their rich cultural, linguistic, and familial backgrounds visible in your classroom by finding ways to bring elements of home and out-of-school experiences into school. Consider inviting parents and family members to come into the classroom to be guest speakers or co-presenters during an instructional unit. Ask ELs to bring in artifacts that relate to a particular topic of study – a photo they take near their house, a clipping from a magazine or newspaper, a picture book, a family photo, a souvenir from somewhere special, sayings/idioms their family uses in the primary language, song lyrics, a game, an award they received outside of school, etc. Try to include but go deeper than the surface-level cultural artifacts such as clothing, food, and holidays.

> Help make ELs and their rich cultural, linguistic, and familial backgrounds visible in your classroom by finding ways to bring elements of home and out-of-school experiences into school.

Host Adult and/or Family Classes

Whenever possible, host adult ESL classes, family literacy, GED and/or U.S. citizenship classes at your school. Consider partnering with local community organizations or universities who can conduct or co-conduct the classes. Think about ways to design "learning encounters" in which parents/families and students engage in problem-solving activities related to a content area together with the facilitation of a classroom teacher (e.g., family discovery nights that involves a STEM investigation or literacy project).

CHECKLIST 2: Facilitating Family and Community Engagement

MEASURE 1: **School staff (administrators, teachers, support staff) receive ongoing diversity training to develop knowledge about other cultures and cross-cultural.**

Assessment   Regularly   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 2: **School staff communicate with parents and families in a language they understand about student progress and school-based programs.**

Assessment   Regularly   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 3: **Signs, posters, bulletin boards and other displays in the school's office, hallways, and other informal learning spaces are culturally sensitive and represent the languages of ELs.**

Assessment   Regularly   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 4: **Our school is prepared to provide language assistance to parents and families when they contact the school (in person or via phone or electronic communications).**

Assessment   Always   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

CHECKLIST 2: Facilitating Family and Community Engagement *continued*

MEASURE 5: Office staff, including bilingual staff, are prepared to answer questions about a vast array of educational topics that parents/families may ask.

Assessment   Always   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 6: Our school offers a variety of parent engagement programs throughout the year that are offered at varying times and days of the week to try to accommodate parents'/families' diverse work and family schedules.

Assessment   Regularly   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 7: Parents and families are invited visit classrooms to share their knowledge and experiences and collaborate with teachers.

Assessment   Always   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 8: Teachers design instruction that encourages students to draw upon their cultural and linguistic assets by including a variety of culturally relevant materials and/or asking students to bring in materials from home.

Assessment   Always   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 9: Our school partners with local community organizations to offer additional support services to parents/families (e.g. parent engagement programs, adult ESL/GED/citizenship classes, etc.).

Assessment   Always   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 10: Our school leadership is knowledgeable about strategies to facilitate a positive and welcoming school environment for ELs and their parents/families.

Assessment   Always   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

Designing an EL Educational Program: Program Components and Checklists

Component 3: Recruiting and Training Qualified Teachers and Staff

Teachers are responsible for designing and delivering instruction and assessment for ELs, and their training and qualifications are critical to student success. ELs represent a unique subgroup of students whose educational needs differ from other population on for ELs.

Teachers of ELs include:

Content teachers. Content teachers teach academic content through language, content teachers are responsible for modifying instruction and assessment to ensure that ELs at all proficiency levels have equitable access to the same rigorous grade-level academic content and academic standards as non-ELs. To accomplish this, content teachers need training in ELD strategies, including teaching strategies for making content accessible and instruction comprehensible, and learning strategies that they can model for ELs to assist them in acquiring both content knowledge and language simultaneously.

ESL specialists. ESL specialists are responsible for implementing the ELD curriculum, which follows a language-centered instructional progression to facilitate an EL's English language development. The ELD curriculum is driven by the teaching of discreet linguistic points, but those linguistic points should be contextualized in the appropriate grade-level academic content. Thus, the ELD curriculum focuses on teaching language through content.

Support services specialists. An EL student may be eligible to receive support services in addition to ELD (e.g., reading support, special education). Support specialists who teach ELs also need specialized training to ensure that the support services they offer are appropriately modified to meet the needs of ELs.

All teachers need opportunities to develop knowledge about appropriately modifying and differentiating instruction and assessment, fostering academic language development, teaching academic vocabulary, and valuing cultural diversity.[15] Although PDE mandates that all pre-service teachers complete three credits on the topic of instruction for ELs during their university coursework, this amount of training may be insufficient given the complexity of second language acquisition.[16] Thus, all teachers require ongoing professional learning opportunities to continue meeting the needs of ELs.

> All teachers require ongoing professional learning opportunities to continue meeting the needs of ELs.

Pennsylvania Program Specialist: ESL Certificate

To be eligible for the Pennsylvania ESL Program Specialist Certificate, candidates must hold a Pennsylvania Instructional I or Instructional II Certification. Teachers may pursue the coursework to add the ESL certificate to their credentials. Graduate coursework includes 15 credits as well as required field experiences.

It is important to note that, in Pennsylvania, a master's degree or coursework in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) is not sufficient to receive the ESL certificate. However, it may be credited towards the required coursework.

ESL Program Specialist Certification

To recruit and retain qualified teachers for ELs, LEAs must develop a commitment to serving all members of their school community and facilitate increased awareness of the different cultures represented in their schools. In their examination of successful implementation of EL instruction, researchers found that "…district and school leaders strive[d] for alignment and coherence between their goals for EL instruction and support provided to classroom teachers".[17] Recruiting and training qualified teachers of ELs requires three main types of activities:

- Actively recruiting educators and administrators who possess knowledge and skills related to designing and implementing educational programs for ELs.
- Supporting teachers' participation in ongoing professional learning opportunities.
- Providing curricular and instructional resources and support for teachers to continue advancing their instructional competencies aligned with current knowledge and research in the field.

Key Considerations

Recruiting Educators
Recruiting educators who possess knowledge and skills related to the education of ELs is a great starting point for building district and school capacity for supporting the academic success of ELs. Things to consider when recruiting new educators:

Relevant coursework. Review the formal coursework that candidates have completed in obtaining their education degree and certification(s).

Fieldwork and experience. Review candidates' college fieldwork or job experiences (paid and/or volunteer) and note any that may have provided them with opportunities to work with ELs and/or teachers of ELs.

Interview. Ask candidates to describe their formal and informal training and experiences that relate to the education of ELs. Provide a few real-life scenarios of challenges that your district/school might be facing and ask them to share their ideas about how to navigate those challenges. Finally, you might ask what professional learning opportunities the candidates would like to be offered in order to further develop their professional knowledge and skills related to teaching ELs.

Designing Professional Learning Opportunities
School-Wide Professional Development Plan/Act 48
Incorporate required and optional choices for trainings related to the education of ELs. Training should consider culturally appropriate instructional practices, diversity, parent/family communication and engagement, instructional strategies, and other relevant topics based on your district's or school's student population and experiences. Consider tiered professional development that will relate and be of interest to faculty and staff with varying levels of experience in working with ELs.

For professional teaching staff, training should include both educators with LIEP implementation experience and content-area teachers. Also consider including paraprofessionals, support staff, and other members of the school team such as lunchroom and maintenance/custodial staff.

[English Learner Tool Kit for State and Local Education Agencies](#)
This helpful resource by OELA, provides a set of criteria to judge the quality of effective professional development for teachers of ELs.

"Continuous Instructional Improvement" and Collaborative Action Research
Program implementation works best when schools can collect timely information, or data, about instructional practices and then use it to guide decisions throughout the implementation process. The same approach holds true when implementing the LEA's LIEP.

Educators, and most individuals, may learn the best when they are active in developing their own knowledge. NCELA's 2008 report on building teacher capacity for EL instruction emphasizes this point, stating, effective programs have a "strong focus on the critical analysis and interpretation of research and data by educators themselves".[18]

Principals can convene teachers to help them collaborate and share teaching methods on a regular basis. Consider Action Research as a possibility for school-wide or team-based collaboration, and/or individual teacher growth.

Other professional learning opportunities related to action research and data-driven decision-making that are available annually through PDE in partnership with Center for Schools and Communities include the PDE Data Summit and the Facilitating English Learner Success through Action Research workshop.

Information about these and other professional learning opportunities can be found at [eldportalpa.org](#)

Providing Educational Resources and Designing Instruction and Assessment

Providing professional learning opportunities is not enough. In fact, teachers will likely struggle to implement their learning from professional development workshops if they lack the necessary resources or administrator support to do so. Providing professional learning is only the first step; assisting educators to take up that learning and "put it into practice" after completing the professional development is often the harder and more intensive component of professional development.

Elfers et al.[17] found that schools were successful with ELs when the district sought integrated and systematic ways to support their teachers. This kind of coordinated leadership facilitates a shared vision and fosters a culture of collaboration and shared responsibility for professional learning.

Foster Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

Create a school process for how professional learning gets shared among colleagues and administrators. PLCs offer educators an opportunity to support each other while they are implementing new instructional practices. Celebrate the work of educators who take up their learning and design innovative practices in their classrooms. Consider starting each faculty meeting by highlighting the work of a teacher. Introduce the teacher by providing some context as to what innovative work the teachers is undertaking and then ask that teacher to share what he/she is doing and what he/she is learning as a result. You might also consider creating a list of faculty and staff at your school and/or in the local community who have advanced knowledge and skills in various topics (e.g., technology, differentiation, linguistics, social-emotional learning, bilingual education) so that other educators know who to reach out to for support.

Requesting Resources and Support

As new knowledge is introduced in the field, new instructional approaches that require different resources come to our attention. Provide educators with a process for requesting resources and support when they want to try out new approaches or strategies in their classrooms. Ask them to periodically report on what they are doing, how it is going, and what they are learning.

Assessing Your Instructional Materials

ELs need equitable access to the same challenging curricula as non-ELs.[19] Review your textbook series in each content area to evaluate the extent to which their content includes scaffolds and modifications for ELs at different proficiency levels and provides resources for teachers of ELs. Closely analyze the texts for cultural relevancy and sensitivity. Also consider your teachers' access to high-quality linguistically and culturally relevant supplemental materials in their classrooms for use in everyday instruction.

See that the school library has a bilingual section as well as a selection of high-quality culturally diverse books (Lee & Low Books is the largest multicultural book publisher in the United States). Check to see that the art room has a diverse representation of artists and artwork from around the world. Think critically about pictures, posters, bulletin board designs, and banners that are posted in formal and informal learning spaces, such as the gymnasium, auditorium, hallways, bathrooms, and other staff offices to ensure that the messages are culturally affirming and that the language and content are representative of your student body.

Creating a Resource Inventory

Compile a list of instructional materials and resources that are dispersed among classrooms and learning spaces throughout the building. This allows teachers to look up what materials and resources the school already has and share resources with one another.

Incorporating Technology

Recent software and apps may be beneficial to teachers as they plan and adapt lessons for ELs. For example, one study found that teachers' linguistic knowledge and awareness increased using a professional development software application.[20] Principals should explore different software options to aid their instructional staff in providing instruction to ELs. Technology is a learning tool as well as teaching tool. Utilize apps and online platforms that allow students to engage in interactive virtual learning spaces while providing appropriate instruction and access to ELs to develop technology skills necessary for success in the 21st century.

CHECKLIST 3: Recruiting and Training Qualified Faculty and Staff

MEASURE 1: **Content teachers receive formal professional development related to differentiating instruction and assessment for ELs.**

Assessment   Regularly   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 2: **Our school-based professional development programs include specific topics related to the education of ELs.**

Assessment   Always   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 3: **Our hiring committee considers prospective teachers' relevant coursework and fieldwork/employment experiences related to teaching ELs in hiring decisions.**

Assessment   Always   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 4: **We ask questions that are specifically related to the education of ELs when we interview prospective administrators, teachers, and support staff.**

Assessment   Always   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 5: **The education of ELs is a topic that is included in the professional development programs for school administrators.**

Assessment   Always   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 6: **Teachers are able to access new materials and resources necessary for implementing new instructional practices.**

Assessment   Regularly   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 7: **Teachers engage in action research in their classrooms and in collaboration with one another to continue their own professional learning and development.**

Assessment   Regularly   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 8: **Our teachers know who on staff and in the community can serve as a knowledgeable resource for them on a variety of topics related to EL education, and our teachers reach out to these colleagues for support.**

Assessment   Regularly   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 9: Faculty and staff review instructional materials and resources to ensure they are aligned to current research, culturally relevant, and adequate for ELs at all proficiency levels.

Assessment   Regularly   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 10: Content teachers review their plans for instruction and assessment to ensure that they include appropriate and necessary scaffolds and modifications for ELs at all proficiency levels.

Assessment   Regularly   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 11: Classroom instruction and assessment is designed with multiple modalities and incorporates educational technology.

Assessment   Always   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

Designing an EL Educational Program: Program Components and Checklists

Component 4: Facilitating Collaboration

The teachers on staff in your building collectively represent an enormous amount of knowledge and experience. Collaborative environments capitalize on this knowledge and build staff capacity by facilitating a culture of knowledge and resource sharing. Research indicates that positive gains in student achievement result when teachers engage in collaborative teams, particularly when collaboration about assessment occurs.[21]

EL students benefit from the improved dynamics that collaboration offers when teachers pair together to develop and deliver curriculum and instruction. For instance, co-teaching partners can identify aspects of curriculum and instruction that might prove challenging for ELs and why. Then, teachers work together to design modifications and introduce appropriate scaffolds, such as deciding which grouping practices are best in a particular classroom.[22]

> Teachers collectively represent an enormous amount of knowledge and experience, and collaborative environments capitalize on this and build staff capacity by facilitating a culture of knowledge and resource sharing.

It is important to make a distinction between "working together" and collaboration. In "working together" scenarios, teachers will often hand off materials, such as vocabulary lists, or share overviews of topics and instructional activities. In collaboration, teachers design instruction together by engaging in discussion and decision-making around instructional activities, materials, assessments, and supports and modifications.

ESL specialists have advanced and specialized knowledge of language systems and language functions while content teachers have advanced and specialized knowledge of their academic content. In collaborative models, content teachers gain access to the expertise of ESL specialists and utilize that expertise to inform instructional design and vice versa. The goal is not that content teachers assume the role of ESL specialists or vice versa, but that instruction by both teachers is informed by the other.

Collaboration can take many forms, and choosing a particular collaborative model for your school is a decision that has to take into account your unique contextual factors; what "works" in one school may not "work" in another.

Research indicates that collaborative models range from one teach, one assist where one teacher assumes the lead role and the other acts more like a classroom aide[23] to co-teaching in which both teachers are equal partners in the instructional design and delivery of content.[24] Research also indicates that the one teach, one assist model is the least effective and offers further guidance on the characteristics of successful models.[25]

For collaboration and co-teaching to be effective, both ESL specialists and content teachers must be deliberate about their practice and share the responsibility of student learning.[26] Davison[27] argues that collaborating teachers must first negotiate a shared understanding of each other's work, clearly define roles and expertise, and commit to a co-planning structure before they can successfully co-design instruction.

Administrator support for this work is essential. Co-planning requires a time and effort commitment on behalf of the collaborating teachers and is less likely to be sustained without ongoing administrator support.[28]

> It is important to make a distinction between "working together" and collaboration. In collaboration, teachers design instruction together by engaging in discussion and decision-making around instructional activities, materials, assessments, and supports and modifications.

Key Considerations

Factors to consider when designing collaborative teams include:

Provide time for co-planning.
The schedules in elementary and secondary schools are incredibly complex, so making time for collaboration is challenging and may require some creative problem-solving. Nonetheless, time is essential for effective collaboration. When administrators make time for collaboration, they also demonstrate their commitment to high-quality ELD program implementation.[16]

Make collaborative roles clear.
Collaboration is not common sense, and teachers are often uncertain about where to start and how to define roles, especially if they are new to co-planning and/or co-teaching. Principals can lead the work by helping to define roles, facilitate an understanding of each other's individual work, and help the group articulate a shared vision for what collaboration will look like in practice and how they will get there.

Set clear goals.
Like any other program, support, or intervention, making goals clear to stakeholders is essential. The planning process requires the team to define timely, practical, measurable, and attainable outcome measures and be specific about the kinds of supports and activities that will facilitate achieving those goals. Consider writing a logic model to guide planning and implementation. (For example, see The Use of Logic Models by Community-Based Initiatives – Evaluation and Program Planning.[29]) When goals are written carefully, and co-developed with stakeholders, success is more likely.

Honor teacher autonomy.
Teachers are the critical implementers of any school reform. Teachers possess rich and detailed knowledge informed by the theories they have formally studied during teacher preparation and their practical experience working with students in classrooms. The work they do directly impacts ELs, and principals can empower teachers to spearhead instructional solutions by providing ongoing encouragement, guidance, and support as teachers engage in innovative instructional practices.

Finally, Dove and Honigsfeld[28](p95) provide a framework to organize different elements of collaboration. By identifying participants, making the purpose of collaboration clear, clarifying deadlines and logistics, and identifying resources, administrators can effectively orchestrate collaboration.

Framework for Ongoing Collaboration

Step 1: Identify Participants
- Grade level teams
- Content area teams
- Interdisciplinary teams

Step 2: Set the Purpose
- Data review
- Lesson planning
- Material adaptation
- Reflection
- Student learning
- Study of specific content
- Sharing strategies and best practices

Step 3: Establish Required Time Frame and Scheduling Logistics
- Before or after school.
- Scheduled congruence period.
- Lunchtime.
- Online.

Step 4: Determine Needed Resources
- Shared values.
- Supported leadership.
- Protocols for conversation.

CHECKLIST 4: Facilitating Collaboration

MEASURE 1: Our current model of collaboration looks most like:

Assessment Co-teaching. Regular co-designing of instruction and assessment.

One teach, one assist. Exchange of some content, mostly vocabulary.

Content teachers and ESL specialists rarely or never collaborate.

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 2: Teachers are given dedicated time for co-planning.

Assessment Regularly Sometimes Rarely Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 3: Content teachers and ESL specialists meet to design instructional supports, modifications, and accommodations for their ELs.

Assessment Regularly Sometimes Rarely Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 4: Our administrators set clear guidelines for collaboration and assist faculty in defining clear roles and expectations.

Assessment Always Sometimes Rarely Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 5: Our collaborative efforts are guided by clear goals.

Assessment   Always   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 6: Teachers are given the professional autonomy to engage in innovative instructional practices and are supported through the process by administrators.

Assessment   Always   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

MEASURE 7: Our collaborative teams collect and analyze data to make decisions about instructional practices.

Assessment   Regularly   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Action Statements for Improvement

Action(s):

Staff:

Timeline:

Evaluating Principals' Plans for EL Learning

Meeting the needs of ELs to ensure that they achieve academic success on par with their non-EL peers is a priority, and program improvement is an ongoing process. As policies, programs, student demographics, and faculty and staff rosters continue to evolve, program design and implementation requires regular assessment and evaluation to determine ways to strengthen and improve efforts.

Evaluation helps schools understand the status and outcomes of their efforts. Formative evaluation helps provide monitoring data about program components, how frequently they are used, and how staff react to them. Summative evaluation measures outcomes directly related to interventions. Outcomes should be "SMART" – specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely. By collecting formative and summative data, principals can make more rapid and informed decisions about the efficacy of programs and initiatives designed to support ELs.

The strategies and checklists provided in this guide can serve as basic formative evaluations of a school's efforts to assist ELs. The checklists could be used every few months to gauge changes and improvements in how you are building processes to assist ELs and should initiate discussions among stakeholders about what you are finding and what changes could strengthen and improve the program. It is important to know that summative evaluation should occur only following a series of formative evaluation over an appropriate period of time so as to accurately capture the efficacy of instructional mechanisms that are in place through the educational program for ELs.

Conclusion

American schools have a strong history of innovation related to meeting the educational needs of the ever-evolving diverse populations that comprise our educational system. Like public schools in the 1920s that accepted thousands of immigrants from Europe, schools in Pennsylvania in the 21st century are receiving thousands of children from other parts of the world. ELs represent an important population in our state's and nation's future, and our educational commitment to ensure their academic and social success remains a top priority.

Effective educational programs for ELs are multifaceted and designing and implementing those programs can seem overwhelming. Intentionally focusing on the components and features of each of the various components of the program allows administrators to self-assess what pieces of the foundation are already in place and where there are opportunities to strengthen that foundation.

The points to consider and checklists throughout this guide are meant to help support administrators through an ongoing assessment, design, and implementation cycle in a way that focuses on individual components of the more comprehensive program. Strength in each component facilitates a more powerful and effective holistic program.

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Notes