



English Language Learner Master Plan

2018-2019

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Equitas Academy provides a structured, achievement-based community that prepares K-8 students to graduate from college-preparatory high schools, four-year colleges and universities. In order to achieve this mission at Equitas Academy, we must ensure that all English Language Learners (EL) become fluent readers, speakers, and writers of the English language as quickly as possible. Serving families in the Pico-Union neighborhood of Los Angeles, we have an EL populations of 75% or more. Our Educational Program was specifically built to meet the needs of our EL population. Through our intensive focus on literacy and academic supports, we believe that our students will move toward mastery of the English language at a rapid pace.

Equitas has structured its curriculum and instructional program to meet the needs of a significant EL population with respect to language development. EL scholars respond well to a plan of instruction in which each aspect of the language builds on another, with plenty of opportunities for practice. The goal is for EL scholars to gain fluency in English as quickly as possible in a non-threatening setting. Our EL program addresses the process for scholar identification, curriculum, assessments, reporting, and redesignation as well as professional development and teacher qualifications for working with our EL scholars.

Supporting our EL scholars, almost all of whom are Spanish speaking, requires that we take an approach that ensures the quickest acquisition of English. It also requires that we respect the culture and home language of our scholars. In order to reach the goal of strong English fluency and respect for the mother language of our native speakers, we provide a developmentally appropriate and highly structured approach to teaching English in our core academic classes. Equitas helps scholars identify that their bilingual capacity is an asset, an admirable and necessary skill. Equitas teachers and leadership communicate to parents in Spanish as needed—but use English instruction for the content areas in the classroom.

Based on research, we believe that the best approach to provide a comprehensive designated and integrated ELD instructional program for every EL scholar to meet the linguistic and academic goals at their grade level is through an inclusive structured English immersion (SEI) program. In an inclusive SEI program, EL scholars are fully included with their English-speaking peers. The program provides the extra support scholars need, while immersing them in the English language. The results from SEI have proven most successful in the elementary and middle school grades. In large-scale studies in California, Arizona, and Massachusetts, scholars have “consistently scored higher than those enrolled in traditional bilingual programs.”¹

Within our SEI program, we meet the needs of our significant English Learner population via specific supports and strategies across the curriculum and instructional day designed to foster their English Language proficiency. In addition to integrated ELD throughout core learning, during Guided Reading, scholars work in small groups based on their literacy levels; this time is used for designated ELD instruction for all English Learners, grouped by ability/proficiency level, e.g., ELD levels 1 and 2 are in the same group, Level 3 and 4 scholars are in the same group, and

¹ Arizona Department of Education, July 2004, “The Effects of Bilingual Education Programs and Structured English Immersion Programs on Student Achievement: A Large –Scale Comparison” found at <http://epsl.asu.edu/epru/articles/EPRU-0408-66-OWI.pdf> accessed on 11/6/08.

English proficient scholars (EOs) are grouped together. This targeted ELD instruction for up to 65-70 minutes each day enables targeted English Language instruction in the context of grade-level literacy development.

Our EL scholars are taught by teachers who have or are pursuing a Cross-cultural, Language and Academic Development (CLAD) Certificate or a Bilingual, Cross-cultural, Language and Academic Development (BCLAD) Certificate. Teachers have intimate knowledge of their scholars' varying abilities through formal test data, regular communication among teachers, and informal weekly assessments. Our teachers work closely with one another across all content areas to ensure the needs of EL scholars are met. ELD content is taught in classrooms.

Our explicit ELD and designated ELD take place each day during our ELA block and through the additional tutoring sessions. The program(s)/resources are used in both the core curriculum and ELD. These program(s)/resources were selected and meet the needs of ELs as evidences in the Doing What Works webpage established by the Federal Department of Education lists five specific strategies that have been proven to be highly effective for supporting EL scholars, and we are confident that our school incorporates these strategies during language arts, math, science, and social studies instruction:

1. Screen and monitor progress

The federal recommendation is that an effective program for ELs includes well- developed assessments for identifying scholar needs. This corresponds with Equitas' focus on data-driven instruction. We assess our scholars' progress frequently and use the results of the assessments to drive overall instruction as well as identify scholars in need of individual intervention. The School Director oversees this process while working closely with teaching staff.

2. Provide reading interventions

Recognizing that ELs are often at risk for reading problems, the strongest programs respond quickly to the results of formative assessments by offering small group reading intervention for struggling readers that augments the core- reading program. As outlined previously, a key element to Equitas' educational program is regular small-group tutoring for scholars who are struggling. The Department of Education recommends that the intervention "utilize fast-paced, engaging instruction." This aligns with our philosophy that instruction should be delivered at a brisk and deliberate pace.

3. Teach vocabulary

One of the most important components in language acquisition is vocabulary development. In the most effective schools, scholars are taught vocabulary through formal instruction and also learn words through use in language rich settings in and out of the classroom. Research² shows that effective vocabulary instruction:

- Teaches vocabulary in context.
- Gives scholars tools to expand work knowledge independently.

² William G. Brozo and Michelle L. Simpson. 2003. *Readers, Teachers, Learners: Expanding Literacy across the Content Areas*. Pearson Education: Upper Saddle River, NJ.

- Reinforces word learning with repeated exposures over time.
- Stimulate scholars' awareness and interest in words.
- Encourage scholars to read widely.

4. *Develop academic English*

For ELs to have academic success, it is essential that they develop cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), and not simply the basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) of social language. CALP includes not only the content area vocabulary specific to academic subjects, but also the sophisticated use of language necessary to carry out higher-order academic tasks such as comparing, synthesizing, and inferring. At Equitas Academy, vocabulary development will be part of all subjects—not only English Language Arts—and will include explicit scaffolding of higher-order academic tasks. Although language acquisition experts such as Jim Cummins³ predict that it could take ELs five years or longer to become truly proficient in CALP⁴, we expect that the extended school day and training our teachers on the use of academic English will accelerate this process through increased daily exposure to academic English.

5. *Schedule peer learning*

Scholars improve their mastery of language through use. The Department of Education's recommendation is that a minimum of 90 minutes a week should be dedicated to activities that allow scholars to work together to provide practice and extension of language skills.

We will implement the practice of “turn and chat” in which the class is given a question or prompt and instructed to discuss the topic with a partner. Although these interactions are brief, lasting from a few seconds to several minutes, when used frequently throughout the day, there is a significant cumulative increase in authentic language practice.

Instruction and Reclassification of ELs

As described above, EL scholars will have a tutorial course and will be monitored closely to gauge the progression of language acquisition skills. In accordance with the California English Language Development Standards, scholars will be assessed and monitored on the following domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. ELs will be reclassified based on ELPAC Assessments, SBAC/ELA scores and teacher judgment. The teacher assessment will be based on a culmination of evidence, indicating mastery of a given ELD level, which may include classroom-based informal and formal assessments, as well as interim and trimester exams, given over a school year.

Scholar Identification

Equitas will adhere to all applicable state and federal laws and regulations with regard to serving EL scholars. The staff of Equitas will adhere to the following plan with EL scholars:

³ Cummins, J. (1981a) Age on arrival and immigrant second language learning in Canada. A reassessment. *Applied Linguistics*, 2, 132-149.

⁴ Garcia, Eugene. 2002. *Student Cultural Diversity: Understanding and Meeting the Challenge*. Houghton Mifflin: New York.

- Families will complete a home-language survey upon enrollment in the school.
- Scholars whose primary language is not English and are entering a California school for the first time will be assessed over the summer and/or within the first 30 days of school using the Initial English Language Proficiency Assessment for California (ELPAC). We will notify all parents of the ELPAC results within 30 days of enrolling. The ELPAC will be used to fulfill the requirements for initial and annual English proficiency testing.
- As with all incoming scholars, additional assessments will be administered to determine the specific language learning needs of the scholar (i.e., phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary) in order to create a plan to best meet the scholar’s needs during both core classes and additional instructional times.
- EL scholars will be placed in mainstream classes for core academics and will receive additional English Language instruction as necessary, using the *English-Language Development Standards for California Public Schools* as a guide. Based on assessment results, the School Director will work with teachers to create a plan to meet the additional instructional needs of each scholar identified as an English Learner. This instruction may occur during specially-designed guided reading classes and/or RTI decoding and fluency groups and may also occur as specialized pull-out instruction during other classes during the day, as appropriate.
- EL scholars will be re-evaluated each spring until re-designated as English Language proficient. We will notify parents of the results within 30 days of receiving the Summative ELPAC results or within two weeks of the start of the next school year if the results are received after our last day of instruction.
- Scholars who have been identified as EL will be reclassified to fluent English proficient (RFEP) according to the following guidelines, based on the California Department of Education’s redesignation criteria:

Reclassification Criteria
Annual ELPAC Scores Overall performance level of 3 or 4 in all skill areas: listening, speaking, reading, and writing
CAASPP Results CAASPP results in ELA at Standard Nearly Met, Standard Met, or Standard Exceeded
Grades (K-2nd Grade) Marks of 3s and 4s in English Language Arts on report card
Teacher Recommendation Teacher judges the student sufficiently proficient in English to participate effectively in a curriculum designed for pupils of the same age whose native language is English through at least two formative or summative assessments.
Parent Opinion and Consultation Parents and teachers meet to discuss in a parent/teacher conference.

Scholars who are reclassified to RFEP will continue to be monitored for four years after their reclassification. During this monitoring period, ELPAC testing will not be required. Teachers will meet weekly for professional development, with many of the professional development topics helping teachers to meet the needs of scholars learning English.

Educational Program for English Language Acquisition

The Equitas model seeks to create a school where all scholars achieve academic success. We have a scholar population that includes a majority of scholars who are socioeconomically disadvantaged and may begin at our school performing below grade level. The Charter School is designed to include multiple supports for all learners, including subgroups that are historically underperforming.

We strive to include all of our scholars—scholars achieving below, at, and above grade level, inclusive of English Language Learners and scholars with special needs—in an environment that supports their continued academic and character development. Because the least restrictive environment is often a traditional classroom setting, we will work to include multiple supports for all learners within the classroom setting and at other opportunities throughout the school day and week.

Based on strategies proven effective at high-performing schools with similar scholar populations, the supports Equitas offers include:

- *Effective Classroom Management and Effective Teaching Techniques*

Teachers are experienced professionals, dedicated to minimizing scholar misbehavior and maximizing each scholar's involvement in class. Scholars are engaged in a meaningful way 100% of the time, whether by working independently or in a group, participating in a class discussion, or actively listening to a class lecture. Teachers provide constant opportunities for scholars to interact with the material and use frequent checks for understanding to ensure that no scholars fail to master the content. It is expected that scholars are actively involved, from listening attentively to a speaker, to taking notes, to using work time efficiently from the start to end of class.

- *Differentiated Instruction*

While our goal is mastery of the state common core content standards for all children in every subject, we recognize that not all children learn in exactly the same way and it is our responsibility to teach so that all children learn. The use of differentiated instructional strategies allows teachers to efficiently and effectively use class time to meet the varied learning styles and needs of scholars within a single class period.⁵

Teachers use assessment data, classroom observation, interest inventories, learning style surveys, and other tools to identify scholar's unique needs, strengths, and weaknesses. They meet the widespread learning needs of their scholars using such differentiation strategies⁶ as:

- tiered activities

⁵ Teachers will be trained to differentiate effectively during on-going professional development based on the research done by educational experts Carol Ann Tomlinson, author of *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners*, and Rick Wormeli, author of *Fair Isn't Always Equal*.

⁶ These strategies are representative of the differentiation techniques teachers will use. Additional detail on these strategies may be found in *The Differentiated Classroom: Meeting the Needs of All Learners* by Carol Ann Tomlinson.

- flexible ability groups
- leveled readings
- choice of tasks or topics
- learning centers
- problem-based learning
- varied time allotments or staggered due dates
- group or partner work
- learning logs or journals
- individualized practice sets

While the exact process or product that evidences mastery may vary from scholar to scholar, differentiated instruction allows for all scholars to achieve success with the same content standards.

- *Leveled Guided Reading Groups*

Our daily guided reading groups are the only classes where scholars are grouped by ability. These groupings allow the most struggling readers to work in the smallest possible groups and teachers to focus on remediating specific skill deficits in order to effectively and efficiently accelerate the fluency, decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension skills of all scholars. These groups also allow the most advanced readers to continue to excel, as they may reach beyond grade-level content into material that best meets their advanced needs. Scholars' reading achievement is assessed frequently, and scholars may be moved at six-week intervals in order to ensure they are being instructed with books at the appropriate level.

- *Homework Support*

Teachers assign 30-60 minutes of homework each night, including reading. Homework assignments are always practice of skills the scholars have already learned but are continuing to work with in order to achieve true mastery. This means that scholars are prepared to complete each assignment successfully, using their knowledge from lessons, notes from class, and determination. Scholars are supported in their efforts to complete homework by having an agenda of daily assignments and an after-school Homework Center (for scholars who volunteer to attend or who are assigned by teachers to receive additional help).

- *Frequent Assessment, Feedback, and Communication*

We believe that honest, systematic, and frequent feedback about scholar progress is critical to scholar success. As a result of this belief, scholars receive daily homework grades and behavior scores. Teachers quickly score assessments and return these tools in a timely manner so that scholars can immediately correct and learn from their mistakes. Progress is communicated to families each week through completed work packets (including scored homework, class assignments, tests and quizzes) and through formal progress reports or report cards.

- *Interventions*

We believe in providing support structures to ensure all scholars meet mastery. We are organized some support structure to facilitate scholar learning and include the following:

1. Fluency and Decoding Groups—These groups offer a systematic phonemic awareness and phonics instruction necessary to accelerate scholars to grade-

level appropriate fluency and decoding skills. Scholars initially are assigned to these groups based on assessment data and frequently are assessed to monitor progress and make changes as appropriate.

2. RTI—In addition to the fluency and decoding groups, scholars needing additional assistance in other areas may be assigned to RTI sessions based on a specific need and remain in the group until the deficiency is remediated. These groups may focus on a variety of specific skills/standards and will vary throughout the year and may also be offered before, during, or after the school day.
3. Homework Center—This group provides scholars struggling to complete homework assignments with a quiet, supportive place to do their work. Scholars may be assigned to this group based on teacher recommendation, or scholars and their families may request attendance.
4. Enrichment—Additional enrichment opportunities are offered after school throughout the year and made available to scholars.

- *Intense, Targeted Remediation and Acceleration*

Teachers spend extra time working with the most struggling scholars, regardless of EL or Special Education status, in small group settings in order to best accelerate their learning and catch them up to grade-level standards of performance. While the curricula used for this targeted intervention will vary based on scholars' needs, teachers use an even more frequent assessment regimen to ensure that scholar progress is monitored accurately and teaching methods are frequently adjusted to produce maximum results.

How The Program Will Meet The New State ELD Standards And Use The Results Of The ELPAC

Our programs to support English Learners are based on the 2012 California ELD Standards. Equitas will administer the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) system as the state's measure of ELP and for federal accountability under Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

The English language proficiency of all currently enrolled English Learners is assessed in accordance with the ELPAC test contractor's directions and California Education Code guidelines. Scholars with disabilities are permitted to take the test with the accommodations listed in the Education Code if they are specified in the scholar's IEP or Section 504 plan. An alternate assessment for English language proficiency is administered to scholars who are unable to participate in the ELPAC test, according to the guidelines set forth in the scholar's IEP. Equitas Academy notifies parents of the school's responsibility to conduct ELPAC testing and will inform parents of ELPAC testing results within 30 calendar days following receipt of test results from the test contractor. Scholars are monitored in conjunction with the California English Language Development Standards levels described below:

Level	Description
4	English learners at this level have well developed oral (listening and speaking) and written (reading and writing) skills. They can use English to learn and communicate in meaningful ways that are appropriate to different tasks, purposes, and audiences in a variety of social and academic contexts. They may need occasional linguistic support to engage in familiar social and academic contexts; they may need light support to communicate on less familiar tasks and topics. This test performance level corresponds to the upper range of the “Bridging” proficiency level as described in the 2012 California English Language Development Standards, Kindergarten Through Grade 12 (CA ELD Standards).
3	English learners at this level have moderately developed oral (listening and speaking) and written (reading and writing) skills. They can sometimes use English to learn and communicate in meaningful ways in a range of topics and content areas. They need light-to-minimal linguistic support to engage in familiar social and academic contexts; they need moderate support to communicate on less familiar tasks and topics. This test performance level corresponds to the upper range of the “Expanding” proficiency level through the lower range of the “Bridging” proficiency level as described in the CA ELD Standards.
2	English learners at this level have somewhat developed oral (listening and speaking) and written (reading and writing) skills. They can use English to meet immediate communication needs but often are not able to use English to learn and communicate on topics and content areas. They need moderate-to-light linguistic support to engage in familiar social and academic contexts; they need substantial-to-moderate support to communicate on less familiar tasks and topics. This test performance level corresponds to the low- to mid-range of the “Expanding” proficiency level as described in the CA ELD Standards.
1	English learners at this level have minimally developed oral (listening and speaking) and written (reading and writing) English skills. They tend to rely on learned words and phrases to communicate meaning at a basic level. They need substantial-to-moderate linguistic support to communicate in familiar social and academic contexts; they need substantial linguistic support to communicate on less familiar tasks and topics. This test performance level corresponds to the “Emerging” proficiency level as described in the CA ELD Standards.

EL instruction will be grounded in the best available research on supporting ELs in an English Immersion environment and guided by the CA ELD Standards. Scholars will be expected to advance at least 1 ELD level, or the equivalent ELPAC Proficiency Level Descriptor, annually as measured by the ELPAC.

If scholars are not making sufficient academic progress as indicated through ELPAC data, we will modify our EL program as needed.

Equitas will ensure that teachers are qualified and supported to meet the needs of ELs. We will hire teachers that are CLAD/BLAD certified, and will place a priority on hiring teacher(s) that

speak Spanish and English and can provide strong instruction within a structured immersion classroom. We also support teachers by providing professional development on structured immersion instruction, specially designed academic instruction in English (SDAIE) teaching strategies, language development, monitoring, and assessment of ELs. We commit to monthly professional development specifically addressing the instructional effectiveness, reviewing assessment data and revising curriculum to meet our EL scholars' needs.

Parents will be notified regarding their child's English Language Development along with ELPAC scores every progress report or every trimester and/or as often as needed.

Services And Supports For English Learners, Including Instructional Strategies And Intervention

Equitas will ensure all teachers receive comprehensive professional development in meeting the levels of rigor and depth required by the CA ELD Standards. Teacher professional development will focus developing reading and writing skills of EL scholars. Strategies to assist EL scholars in each classroom will include front loading content area vocabulary, using graphic organizers, pairing scholars with an English proficient scholar partner, and allowing for small group and 1:1 support with Instructional Aides.

Process For Annual Evaluation Of The School's English Learner Program

Teachers regularly evaluate scholar progress by reviewing EL data from formative and summative assessments. Teachers use the results of this data to change their instructional practices to better serve each scholar. The goal is for each scholar to progress by at least one level per year on the ELPAC until they are able to be reclassified. Every year, the teacher leaders, administration, and Board reviews the school's EL program, surveying teachers, scholars, and parents, analyzing reclassification rates, and examining assessment data to evaluate whether the Equitas Academy EL program is effectively meeting the needs of our scholars. If we find that we are not meeting the needs of our scholars, we will make the necessary modifications to the master plan to best meet the needs of our EL scholars.

Process For Monitoring Progress Of English Learners And Reclassified (RFEP) Students

Equitas uses a systematic process to monitor ELs' progress toward English proficiency. Teachers assess scholar progress, both formally and informally, throughout the year. Assessment data is used to determine individual proficiency levels and to modify instruction to meet scholars' needs.

The schools will also monitor the progress of scholars reclassified as RFEP four years following redesignation to ensure that they maintain English proficiency, will retest any scholars who appear to not maintain proficiency, and may reclassify these scholars as ELs once again if indicated by the school's criteria.

Process for monitoring progress and supports for Long Term English Learners (LTELs)

The schools will track student performance of both students currently classified as ELs, including LTELs, and those who are reclassified English Proficient. LTELs will receive dedicated ELD instruction in both intervention classes (offered twice weekly for 40 minutes each during ELA instructional block) and via online curriculum in order to develop specific academic vocabulary

and language structures. Because the needs of LTELs are varied, we will work with our English Language Coordinator to identify the reasons why a student has not acquired English at an expected rate and determine the best support system for that student moving forward. Students and their parents/guardians will be made aware of their LTEL status, the characteristics of LTEL students, and the risks associated with LTEL status, as well as students' specific barriers to reclassification and ways to address them.