

2017 English Learner Roadmap Policy

California English Learner Roadmap State Board of Education Policy: Educational Program and Services for English Learners.

This policy is intended to assist the California Department of Education in providing guidance to local educational agencies (LEAs) in welcoming, understanding, and educating the diverse population of students who are English learners attending California public schools. Many English learners represent the newest members of our society (including recently arrived immigrants and children of immigrants) who bring a rich diversity of cultural backgrounds and come from families with rich social and linguistic experiences. They also bring skills in their primary languages that contribute enormously to the state's economic and social strengths as a talented multilingual and multicultural population.

This policy explicitly focuses on English learners in the context of the state's efforts to improve the educational system, the quality of teaching and learning, and educational outcomes. It centers on standards, curriculum frameworks, assessment, accountability/school improvement, educator quality, early childhood/preschool, social and family support services, parent/community involvement, and higher education. Its purpose is to promote local capacity-building and continuous improvement in each of these areas and their interrelationship, based on evidence of effectiveness from local experience as well as the most current rigorous research evidence that speaks to the strengths and needs of the diverse population of English learners.

The impetus for this policy comes from a number of important related developments in California as well as nationally. If properly coordinated and articulated as part of a coherent California English Learner Roadmap, these developments can better serve the state's large population of English learners to attain college- and career-ready standards and to further promote the rich linguistic diversity of the state as it thrives in a global economy and culture of learning, innovation, and advanced technology.

The adopted academic State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards, and corresponding English Language Development (ELD) standards, signal an important shift toward emphasizing academic uses of language for all students, and student engagement with college- and career-ready curriculum using English and other languages. Taken together, these standards highlight the tightly interconnected nature of developing disciplinary content understandings, analytical practices, and academic uses of language for all students. This shift enables the educational system to move beyond remediating students' English language skills to simultaneously developing their language and literacy skills while engaging in the full range of academic content learning.

The State Seal of Biliteracy encourages districts to recognize students' biliterate proficiency. Developing assessments in languages other than English that are aligned to state academic standards (e.g., the California Spanish Assessment) are key to recognizing biliteracy and academic achievement in more than one language. The passage of the California Education for a Global Economy Initiative, known as Proposition 58 (amending Proposition 227), moves us beyond improvement efforts focused solely on language of instruction to programs and pathways that effectively develop academic content knowledge, discipline-specific practices and academic language uses, and bilingual-biliterate proficiency.

California's Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) is premised on local districts providing equitable learning conditions, pupil outcomes, and effective engagement of English learners. Districts are expected to set, with their parent and community partners, meaningful goals and outcomes that require full access to the curriculum, assure English learners' meaningful progress toward attaining academic English proficiency, and closing gaps in academic achievement for students entering as English learners.

LCFF provides districts additional resources to build local capacity to implement and support evidence-based practices. State-produced documents provide coherent guidance for districts on implementing more and better comprehensive, research evidence-based services for diverse groups of English learners via the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) process, and provides support for continuous improvement.

Our accountability system is state-determined, and is consistent with federal guidance provided for states to implement the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which supports our aligning federal and state policies to better integrate and leverage resources, services, assessment and accountability. Consonant with LCFF, ESSA elevates English language proficiency to a central indicator for Title I accountability. It values English language development, which California has identified as both, designated ELD equally with integrated ELD—as presaged in California’s English Language Arts (ELA)/ELD Curriculum Framework.

Given ESSA’s Title III provisions, California will re-examine standardized, statewide EL entrance and exit procedures and criteria, and report academic performance of key sub-categories of English learners, such as long-term English learners and students with disabilities. The broader federal stance on multiple indicators of performance also complements our system’s use of multiple state and locally-collected indicators on academic achievement, EL progress, high school graduation, chronic absenteeism and student suspension, school climate and parent engagement to advance a more complete picture of district program effectiveness.

This policy also reflects the current national research consensus on second language learning, bilingualism, program effectiveness, and policy research¹, much of which is consistent with earlier syntheses from the California Department of Education².

Findings include the following:

- English language proficiency development is a process that takes five to seven years for those entering with emerging English, benefits from coherent and aligned instruction across that time period, and can take place as an integrated process simultaneous with academic content learning in addition to designated ELD and the development of bilingualism/biliteracy.
- Bilingualism provides benefits from the capacity to communicate in more than one language and may enhance cognitive skills, as well as improve academic outcomes.
- Establishing proper and consistent procedures and criteria for identifying, monitoring, and exiting English learners using appropriate assessment procedures—while developing professional capacity to use assessment results—constitutes a key lever for effective system improvement.
- The diversity of the EL population (e.g., newcomers, long-term English learners, students with interrupted formal education, students with disabilities, gifted and talented students, and the expected continuous exiting of students from the EL category) necessitates pedagogy and educational support services that are differentiated and responsive.
- Brain development research reinforces the crucial period of birth through early childhood in the areas of cognitive, social, and language development. There is great need for coherent, aligned support for dual language learners across the preschool and primary grade systems to begin developing their bilingual and biliterate capacities.

The current research evidence base also supports the need to attend to the following instructional factors:

- Explicit literacy instruction especially in the early grades
- Peer-assisted and small-group learning opportunities
- Providing academic language support during content area instruction, balanced with structured explicit opportunities for oral and written language skills development
- Appropriate assessment in various forms (e.g., formative, benchmark, summative) to understand and support student learning
- Processes related to social emotional development and identity formation

California is a state that welcomes newcomers and their families, and that addresses their linguistic diversity with a positive, additive orientation. Our schools need to reflect this orientation by affirming, welcoming and responding to a diverse range of student strengths, needs, and identities, and prepare graduates with the linguistic, academic and social skills and competencies needed for college, career and civic participation in a global, diverse and multilingual world.

California’s Vision of Success for English Learners

English learners fully and meaningfully access and participate in a 21st century education from early childhood through grade twelve that results in their attaining high levels of English proficiency, mastery of grade level standards, and opportunities to develop proficiency in multiple languages.

Mission

California schools affirm, welcome and respond to a diverse range of EL strengths, needs and identities. California schools prepare graduates with the linguistic, academic and social skills and competencies they require for college, career and civic participation in a global, diverse and multilingual world, thus ensuring a thriving future for California.

Four Principles

Four principles support our vision and provide the foundation of California’s English Learner Roadmap. These principles are intended to guide all levels of the system towards a coherent and aligned set of practices, services, relationships, and approaches to teaching and learning that together create a powerful, effective, 21st century education for our English learners. Underlying this systemic application of the Principles is the foundational understanding that simultaneously developing English learners’ linguistic and academic capacities is a shared responsibility of all educators, and that all levels of the schooling system have a role to play in ensuring the access and achievement of the 1.3 million English learners who attend our schools.

Principle #1: Assets-Oriented and Needs-Responsive Schools

Pre-schools and schools are responsive to different EL strengths, needs and identities, and support the socio-emotional health and development of English learners. Programs value and build upon the cultural and linguistic assets students bring to their education in safe and affirming school climates. Educators value and build strong family, community, and school partnerships.

Principle #2: Intellectual Quality of Instruction and Meaningful Access

English learners engage in intellectually rich, developmentally appropriate learning experiences that foster high levels of English proficiency. These experiences integrate language development, literacy, and content learning as well as provide access for comprehension and participation through native language instruction and scaffolding. English learners have meaningful access to a full standards-based and relevant curriculum and the opportunity to develop proficiency in English and other languages.

Principle #3: System Conditions that Support Effectiveness

Each level of the school system (state, county, district, school, pre-school) has leaders and educators who are knowledgeable of and responsive to the strengths and needs of English learners and their communities, and utilize valid assessment and other data systems that inform instruction and continuous improvement; resources and tiered support is provided to ensure strong programs and build the capacity of teachers and staff to build on the strengths and meet the needs of English learners.

Principle #4: Alignment and Articulation Within and Across Systems

English learners experience a coherent, articulated and aligned set of practices and pathways across grade levels and educational segments beginning with a strong foundation in early childhood and continuing through to reclassification, graduation and higher education. These pathways foster the skills, language(s), literacy and knowledge students need for college- and career-readiness and participation in a global, diverse multilingual 21st century world.

The California State Board of Education will direct the California Department of Education to provide guidance to districts and intermediary support organizations (e.g., county offices of education, California Collaborative for Educational Excellence) on how districts and schools can implement and strengthen comprehensive, research-based programs and services for all profiles of English learners via the LCAP, and provide support for establishing continuous improvement strategies and expectations that enable access to college- and career-ready learning as well as opportunities to attain the State Seal of Biliteracy.

The guidance will invest in and build educators' professional capacity; emphasize collaborative efforts; support effective pedagogy; and develop systemic solutions to create a coherent and positive education system. The guidance will encourage innovative district and school implementation of evidence-based practices for curricula, materials adoption and development, instruction, professional development and leadership that are responsive to the differentiated strengths and needs of English learners, and strengthening appropriate assessment tools and practices. The guidance will be consistent with the requirements set forth in state and federal laws addressing English learners.

Adopted by the California State Board of Education (SBE) on July 12, 2017. To obtain the posted SBE agenda and item, please visit the California Department of Education [SBE Agenda for July 2017](#) Web page.

1 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2017). *Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English: Promising Futures*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. DOI: 10.17226/24677

2 CDE (1984) Schooling and Language Minority Students: A Theoretical Framework; CDE (1986) Beyond Language: Social and Cultural Factors in Schooling Language Minority Students; and CDE (2010) Improving Education for English Learners: Research-Based Approaches.

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/rm/elroadmappolicy.asp>