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CALIFORNIA ENGLISH LEARNER ROADMAP

On July 12, 2017, the California State Board of Education unanimously adopted a new policy for English Learners, the *California English Learner Roadmap: Educational Programs and Services for English Learners*. The Board also directed the California Department of Education to develop guidance to local educational agencies (LEAs) in welcoming, understanding, and educating the diverse population of students who are English learners attending California public schools.

The policy recognizes that 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, and parent/community involvement. 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.

In this guidance document, we describe the policy context, the research, the principles, and some examples from California districts that will build the tools, data, and knowledge to support the continuous improvement efforts in serving all of California's important English Learner population.

The primary intended audience are LEAs and the county offices of education as well as other agencies that provide them with technical assistance. But every agency responsible for the education of children, including early childhood educators, institutions of higher education, credentialing bodies, and professional and advocacy organizations are also part of the intended audience. As a state whose prosperity depends on the success of immigrants and their children, we hope that each Californian can adopt this vision and our educational mission:

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Vision

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 Inter-related Principles

Four principles support the vision and provide the foundation of California 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.

- Assets-Oriented and Needs-Responsive Schools
- Intellectual Quality of Instruction and Meaningful Access
- System Conditions to Support Effectiveness
- Alignment and Articulation within and across Systems

These principles, and elements that follow, are research and values-based, and build upon the *California ELA/ELD Framework, Blueprint for Great Schools 1.0 and 2.0*, and other state policy and guidance documents. It is important to stress that these principles and elements are not meant to serve as a checklist. Rather, they could be thought of as the keys of an instrument, from which harmony and music is created. In that sense, districts are the musicians and ultimately must take the responsibility for choices and implementation.

Principle #1: ASSETS-ORIENTED AND NEEDS-RESPONSIVE SCHOOLS

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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.

- A. The languages and cultures ELs bring to their education are **assets** for their own learning, and are important contributions to our learning communities. These assets are valued and built upon in culturally responsive curriculum and instruction and in programs that support, wherever possible, the development of proficiency in multiple languages.
- B. Recognizing that there is no single EL profile and no one-size approach that works for all, programs, curriculum and instruction are responsive to different EL student characteristics and experiences.
- C. **School climates** and campuses are affirming, inclusive and safe
- D. Schools value and build strong **family 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.

- A. Language development occurs in and through content and is **integrated** across the curriculum, including integrated ELD and designated content-based ELD (*per ELA/ELD Framework*).
- B. Students are provided a rigorous, intellectually rich, standards-based curriculum with instructional **scaffolding** for comprehension, participation and mastery.
- C. Teaching and learning emphasize engagement, interaction, discourse, inquiry, and critical thinking – with the same **high expectations** for ELs as for all.
- D. ELs are provided **access to the full curriculum** along with the provision of EL supports and services.

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E. Students' **home language** is (*where possible*) understood as a means to access curriculum content, as a foundation for developing English, and is developed to high levels of literacy and proficiency along with English.

F. Rigorous **instructional materials** support high levels of intellectual engagement and integrated language development and content learning, and provide opportunities for bilingual/biliterate engagement appropriate to the program model.

G. English Learners are provided choices of research-based language support/development **programs** (including options for developing skills in multiple languages) and are enrolled in programs designed to overcome the language barrier and provide access to the curriculum.

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.

A. **Leadership** establishes clear goals and commitments to English Learners access, growth toward English proficiency, academic achievement and participation, and maintains a focus across the system on progress towards these goals and continuous improvement.

B. The school system invests **adequate resources** to support the conditions required to address EL needs.

C. A system of culturally and linguistically valid and reliable **assessments** support instruction, continuous improvement, and accountability for attainment of English proficiency, biliteracy, and academic achievement.

D. **Capacity building** occurs at all levels of the system, including leadership development to understand and address the needs of ELs, **professional development** and collaboration time for teachers, and robust efforts to address the teaching shortage and build a **pipeline** (recruit and develop) of educators skilled in addressing the needs of ELs, including bilingual teachers.

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

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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.

- A. EL approaches and programs are designed for continuity, **alignment and articulation** across grade and systems segments beginning with a **strong foundation in early childhood** (preschool) and continuing through to reclassification, graduation and higher education.
- B. Schools plan schedules and resources to **provide extra time** in school (*as needed*) and build partnerships with afterschool and other entities to provide additional support for ELLs, to accommodate the extra challenge facing ELs of learning English and accessing/mastering all academic content,
- C. EL approaches and programs are designed to be **coherent** across schools within districts, across initiatives, and across the state.

These principles and elements are not meant to serve as a checklist, but rather as a set of research- and practice-based considerations that can be useful to local districts as they develop strategy and modify their plans in the process of continuous improvement. For example, as a guide, Table 1 shows a cross-walk of the principles and elements with the LCFF priorities. The more that these elements become part of the communication vehicle for systems, and the better able that we as a community of educators become to shape conversations about priorities with parents and community members as well as internally within districts, the better served our English Learner students will be.

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