**Pillar 1**

**Shared Responsibility and Aligned Policy, Practices and Structures**

* Ensuring all educators share the responsibility of educating ELs is essential because teacher quality has been consistently identified as the most important school-based factor in student achievement (McCaffrey, Lockwood, Koretz, & Hamilton, 2003; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Rowan, Correnti, & Miller, 2002; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997).
* Collaborative practices among teachers and school leadership benefits ELs (Lacina, New Levine, & Sowa, 2006; Pawan & Sietman, 2007; Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2008; York-Barr, Ghere, & Sommerness, 2007; Haager & Windmueller, 2001; Ruíz, Rueda, Figueroa, & Boothroyd, 1995).
* It is important for teachers to have an understanding of language and its use across content areas, and to work together to share this expertise (Wong Fillmore & Snow, 2002; Egbert & Ernst-Slavit, 2010; Gibbons, 2008; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Eckert, 2006; Yedlin, 2007; Verplaetse, 2008; Davison, 2006; Haager & Windmueller, 2001; Ruíz, Rueda, Figueroa, & Boothroyd, 1995).
* Substantial research evidence supports the need to build coherence and consistency in the key organizational elements of school and district systems (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010; Bryk, Gomez, Grunow, & LeMathieu, 2015; Rhim & Redding, 2014).
* In particular, empirical studies on school districts and schools that are more effective in educating ELs (e.g., Parrish et al., 2006; Williams, Hakuta, & Haertel, 2007; Horwitz et al., 2009) stress the central importance of coherence of the larger system of policies and support structures that simultaneously address ELs’ linguistic and academic development.
* This coherence includes policies and practices for consistently defining the EL population (Linquanti & Cook, 2013); ensuring an integrated pedagogical approach to developing ELs’ content knowledge, analytical skills, and subject-specific uses of language (Heritage, Walqui, & Linquanti, 2015); and ensuring more balanced and nuanced assessment and accountability systems for ELs (e.g., Hopkins, Thompson, Linquanti, Hakuta, & August, 2013; Saunders & Marcelletti, 2013; Linquanti & Hakuta, 2012; Working Group on EL Policy, 2011, 2016).
* In effect, aligning policies, systems, and support structures is a necessary condition for sustaining any systemic change effort, particularly efforts to improve the teaching and learning of ELs.

**Family Engagement**

* Research has shown that when families are engaged in their children’s education, the students are more likely to earn higher grades, attend school regularly, take rigorous courses, and graduate college- and career-ready (National Family and Community Engagement Framework Toolkit, 2015).
* Effective family engagement programs are also inextricably linked to learning (Mapp & Kuttner, 2013).
* By empowering parents with knowledge and skills to academically support their children, school systems can maximize learning outside of school hours, where students spend the majority of their time (Paredes, 2013).

**Linguistic and Cultural Assets**

* EL students bring a wealth of knowledge with them to school, and their languages, cultures, and prior experiences are assets to learning that must be built upon. Effective EL instruction connects students’ prior learning and experiences to serve as a bridge to new learning. One of the fundamental principles of EL instruction is that home language and culture are assets and are used to bridge prior knowledge to new knowledge and make content meaningful and comprehensible (Understanding Language, 2013).
* Recognizing that students’ languages and cultures are valuable resources and incorporating these resources into classroom instruction provides a rich curriculum and positive, affirming school environment for ELs (Escamilla & Hopewell, 2010; Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010; Garcia, 2005; Freeman, Freeman, & Mercuri, 2002; González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Scarcella, 1990).
* Positive school climate and conditions for learning contribute to improved test scores, attendance, grade promotion, and graduation rates (AIR, 2014). In addition, a growing body of evidence supports school climate and culture as major contributors to school success (Voight, Austin, & Hanson, 2013).

**Pillar 2**

**Effective Well Prepared Educators**

* Enacting a coherent and sustained approach to professional learning and implementation of effective pedagogy for developing content and language learning for ELs increases the likelihood of closing the achievement gap (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Heritage, Walqui, & Linquanti, 2015; Lee, 2012; Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007).
* Research confirms the need to provide teachers with professional development that is situated in the context of teaching (Yoon et al., 2007; Walqui, 2002). Professional development and classroom support tailored to subject area content and content-specific practices to integrate English language and literacy development are more likely to change long-held, and often detrimental, beliefs about language and literacy learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009).
* When educators who have expertise in teaching the same content are involved in the joint work of collegial observation and planning that is problem-focused, the knowledge and skills learned in professional development are more likely to be implemented and sustained (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009).
* Nine research studies conducted by Yoon, et al., (2007) found that teachers can increase student achievement by about 21 percentile points if the teachers have participated in substantial professional development for an average of 49 hours. Guskey and Yoon (2009) argue that considerable time is needed for effective professional development. The time must be well organized, structured, purposefully directed, and focused on pedagogy and content (Birman, Desimone, Porter, & Garet, 2000; Garet et al., 2001; Guskey, 1999). The professional content must be research based, involve active learning experiences, provide participants with opportunities to adapt learning to their classroom situations, and include structured and sustained follow-up (Guskey & Yoon, 2009).
* Assessment researchers and experts have converged in recent years in a call for balanced and comprehensive assessment systems that educators actively participate in shaping to ensure timeliness and responsiveness of evidence for teaching and learning (Perie, Marion, & Gong, 2009; Heritage, 2010; Brookhart, 2013; Herman, 2013; Linquanti, 2014). Directly related to this, researchers and policy experts have also called for strengthening educator assessment literacy in using various forms of assessment evidence, particularly formative assessment practices in the education of ELs (e.g., Linquanti & Hakuta, 2012; Heritage, Walqui, & Linquanti, 2013, 2015; Heritage, 2013; MacDonald et al., 2015; California Department of Education, 2014; Linquanti, 2014).
* The formative assessment process strengthens the capacity of educators to assess ELs’ academic content knowledge, analytical skills, and uses of associated language (Linquanti, 2011; Heritage, Walqui, & Linquanti, 2013). The proper use of formative assessment to guide instruction has the potential to increase student learning (Black & Williams, 1998, in Herman, Osmundson, & Dietel, 2010).
* Developing teachers’ capacity to use formative assessment practices to increase EL students’ opportunities for academic and language learning is integral to realizing a vision of excellence for ELs (Alvarez, Ananda, Walqui, Sato, & Rabinowitz, 2014; Heritage, Walqui, & Linquanti, 2015).

**Culturally Responsive Instruction**

* The Department strongly recommends sustained professional development and collaborative learning around issues of cultural responsiveness and Social and Emotional Learning. Developing students' social emotional competencies can provide an opportunity to develop a sense of positive self-worth in connection to a student's race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, and sexual orientation. Educators are encouraged to develop examples and illustrations of these competencies that are congruent with the social and cultural experiences of their students. In addition to contributing to academic success, SEL programs can also support the development of students' sense of autonomy, agency, and social justice.
* The importance of a culturally responsive approach to SEL has been a recurrent theme in conversations with Massachusetts educators and with colleagues across the country. Department staff had heard the caution that SEL instruction that is not culturally responsive can risk becoming a source of acculturative stress for students who are not members of the dominant group. On a more optimistic note, Massachusetts educators have described the power of leveraging a culturally responsive SEL pedagogy to better engage and develop students from all backgrounds. In response to this theme, the Department is pleased to present the guidance and reflective tools found in **Social and Emotional Learning for All: Access, Cultural Proficiency, and Cultural Responsiveness** [Download Word Document](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/sel/sel-all.docx).

**High Standards and Expectations for ELs**

* ***Integrated Language and Content Standards and Instruction***
* For EL students to be academically successful, they need to develop conceptual understandings of academic content, analytical practices, and sophisticated uses of English *at the same time*. When this happens in an integrated, simultaneous way during instruction, ELs will be able to develop and perform at the same level as their English-speaking peers. Developing ELs’ academic content knowledge and English proficiency simultaneously means that curriculum is designed and learning opportunities are structured so thatas students develop deeper content understanding, they concurrently use novel and increasingly sophisticated ways to comprehend and communicate subject-area concepts through language. This approach also implies that any effort in teaching and learning in ESL, Bilingual or SEI classrooms focused explicitly on language form and function must serve to make meaning and realize purposeful actions in academic content.
* EL students can develop conceptual knowledge in a subject area, engage in subject-specific analytical practices (e.g., ways to argue or explain in English language arts, mathematics, and science), and gain proficiency-related language uses *simultaneously* (Heritage, Walqui, & Linquanti, 2015). This means that instruction in English language development is not distinct from content. Content standards and concepts, and practices are the context for ESL instruction and language development is part of content instruction.
* It is important to note that ELs can engage in rigorous academic learning required by the MA Frameworks “without manifesting native-like control of conventions and vocabulary” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012). For example, when supported appropriately, ELs can learn science through their emerging language and can comprehend and carry out sophisticated language functions (e.g., arguing from evidence, providing explanations, developing models) using their developing English. By engaging in such practices, moreover, they simultaneously build on their understanding of science and their language proficiency (i.e., capacity to do more with language) (NGSS, 2013, see Appendix F).
* A second, equally important component of instruction are scaffolds that provide ELs with opportunities to engage in rigorous grade-level content and more advanced academic uses of English. Scaffolding provides ELs with the support to accomplish high-challenge learning tasks that they cannot yet do independently. While ELs enter the learning experience with the academic concepts, analytic skills, and language resources they command, it is the teacher’s responsibility to design learning experiences that help students develop more sophisticated and precise ways to engage in learning and communicate their ideas.
* It is important for teachers to have an understanding of language and its use across content areas, and to work together to share this expertise (Wong Fillmore & Snow, 2002; Egbert & Ernst-Slavit, 2010; Gibbons, 2008; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Eckert, 2006; Yedlin, 2007; Verplaetse, 2008; Davison, 2006; Haager & Windmueller, 2001; Ruíz, Rueda, Figueroa, & Boothroyd, 1995).
* As the leader in standards-based education nationally, Massachusetts was one of the first states to address new mechanisms to integrate rigorous learning standards for ELs in the MA Frameworks and our Massachusetts language standards (WIDA). Local working groups convened for over three years, reviewing various standards models and frameworks, first for consideration of whether to develop a new set of standards or benchmarks specifically for ESL, and later to operationalize how to integrate these standards for both content instruction and ESL instruction. The group reviewed similarities and differences in ESL versus content instruction, and key considerations for how this standards integration can serve all educators in Massachusetts. The working group made up of content and ESL educators, researchers, local and national standards-developers, WIDA researchers, former MA ELPBO development committee members, and curriculum experts developed updated resources to assist educators in alignment of and integration of standards for supporting effective instruction in content and ESL classrooms. (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Next Generation ESL MCU Resource Guide, 2016)

***The following are key components educators consider, and collaborate on, as they plan standards-driven instruction, with integrated sets of standards for ELs:***

#### Connection between the Grade Level academic content and corresponding language of that content found in the WIDA Standard(s).

* Key Uses of Academic Language that typify ways in which students are expected to use language recurrently in and across academic and social contexts. WIDA defines *Key Uses of Language*as overarching ‘big idea’ academic purposes.   They occur in every discipline, and are essential for language learners to participate meaningfully in the classroom and access the content of the Massachusetts Frameworks.

Focus on the critical language and skills embedded in MA Frameworks standards also known as *micro-functions*. Micro-functions align to the key academic practices (described below), and highlight language expectations within the key shifts identified in the content standards. Massachusetts has created useful language progressions derived from these micro-functions to support educators in this integration and their instructional planning. (Bunch, Kibler, & Pimentel (2013).

* Focus on students’ English language development continuum and in Bilingual program models, partner language development. In addition to *WIDA performance definitions*, identifying students’ performance on the continuum of language development, educators also use *continuous formative assessment practices*, contingent pedagogy, and a nuanced approaches to *scaffolding* language to identify and flexibly respond to students’ needs in their planning for integrated standards. (Heritage, Linquanti, & Walqui, 2013, 2015).
* As ESL, Bilingual and SEI educators are asked to integrate various sets of standards when planning language curricula and content instruction, they may also work in inter-disciplinary ways with colleagues to identify what students are expected to do across the disciplines in general education classrooms. Highlighting these common student practices helps educators prioritize high-leverage language that will support students in a variety of classrooms. *Key academic practices* are strong starting points for developing units, lessons, and activities that leverage correspondences between language development and academic standards. (Cheuk, 2014.)

**Pillar 3**

**Academic, linguistic, social and emotional supports**

* Students designated as ELs comprise a diverse group with diverse needs. Recent research suggests that particular, and in many cases, distinct strategies and services are called for to improve achievement among the various EL subgroups. For example, long-term ELs benefit from courses on academic language development, placement in rigorous grade-level content courses, primary language literacy development, and systems for monitoring progress and triggering support, among other program components (Olsen, 2014).
* ELs with disabilities require services that address their English and home language learning needs, as well as their special and general education needs (Hamayan, Marler, Sanchez-Lopez, & Damico, 2013).
* Newcomer ELs are best served when they receive content-based language and literacy instruction and academic language instruction, along with targeted reading and writing instruction (Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, Kieffer, & Rivera, 2006), as well as programmatic services such as flexible scheduling, extended time for instruction and support, and connections with families and social services (Short & Boyson, 2012; Walqui, 2000).
* Research on Dual Language Programs consistently shows positive outcomes for students and communities in several areas, including academic achievement and literacy in English for ELs and transforming the experience of teachers, administrators, and parents into an inclusive and supportive school community (Francis et al., 2006; Slavin & Cheung, 2005).
* It is important that the programs are designed carefully and implemented with fidelity (Valdés, 1997; Lindholm-Leary, 2012).
* Instructional Models that address the needs of ELs must take into consideration the educational, linguistic, and social resources these students bring to the classroom and provide them — along with all students — opportunities to engage with the content and with each other to develop the understandings and practices key to each content area, including English language arts (Bunch, Kibler & Pimentel, 2012), mathematics (Moschkovich, 2012), and science (Quinn, Lee, & Valdes, 2012).
* A strong focus on academic uses of language is of critical importance (Van Lier & Walqui, 2012; Hull & Moje, 2012; Wong Fillmore & Fillmore, 2012).Schools will be most successful in their educational mission when they integrate efforts to promote children's academic, social, and emotional learning (Elias et al., 1997; Zins, J.E., Bloodworth, M.R., Weissberg, R.P., & Walberg, H.J. , 2007).

**Socio-Emotional Learning**

* There is general agreement that it is important for schools to foster children's social-emotional development, but all too often educators think about this focus in a fragmented manner, either as an important end in itself or as a contributor to enhancing children's health (e.g., drug prevention), safety (e.g., violence prevention), or citizenship (e.g., service learning). Although social and emotional learning (SEL) plays important roles in influencing these nonacademic outcomes, SEL also has a critical role in improving children's academic performance and lifelong learning. SEL is linked intrinsically to improved school attitudes, behavior, and performance. Schools are social places and learning is a social process. Students do not learn alone but rather in collaboration with their teachers, in the company of their peers, and with the support of their families. Emotions can facilitate or hamper their learning and their ultimate success in school. Because social and emotional factors play such an important role, schools must attend to this aspect of the educational process for the benefit of all students. Researchers have found that prosocial behavior in the classroom is linked with positive intellectual outcomes (e.g., DiPerna & Elliott, 1999; Feshbach & Feshbach, 1987; Zins, J.E., Bloodworth, M.R., Weissberg, R.P., & Walberg, H.J. , 2007.)
* Research has shown that social-emotional competencies predict high school and college completion, and that students with strong skills in social-emotional areas have greater academic achievement within K-12 and college. (e.g., Gabrieli, Ansel and Bartolino Krachman, 2015) Source: Transforminglearning.org
* Employer surveys show that modern organizations are seeking job applicants with stronger social-emotional and relational competencies, such as communication skills and the ability to work productively in groups. (Mass INC., 2016; Casner-Lotto, J. & Barrington, L., 2006; Northeastern University, 2014.) Source: Transforminglearning.org
* Further, studies have demonstrated that stronger social-emotional skills are correlated with such long-term life outcomes as higher employment rates and wages, and lower rates of substance abuse, obesity, and criminal activity. (e.g., Heckman, Stixrud, Urzua (2006); Moffit, et al. (2011); Jones, Greenberg, & Crowley (2015); Farrington et al. (2012) American Journal of Public Health; Consortium on Chicago School Research; Dweck, Walton & Cohen (2011) Source: transforminglearning.org
* Ultimately, social-emotional competencies matter not only for individual success in school and work, but also for our ability to be good citizens and neighbors, to contribute to our communities, and to sustain a flourishing democracy. (Zins, J.E., Bloodworth, M.R., Weissberg, R.P., & Walberg, H.J. The Scienti c Base Linking Social and Emotional Learning to School Success. In J.E. Zins, R.P. Weissberg, M.C. Wang, & H.J. Walberg (Eds.), *Building Academic Success on Social and Emotional Learning: What Does The Research Say?* (pp. 3-22). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.)

**Pillar 4**

**ELs in HS**

* Instruction helps ELs recognize when and how to use their prior cultural, academic, and language experiences as they learn new content and language to become independent learners. [Six Principles of Effective EL Instruction](http://ell.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/Key%20Principles%20for%20ELL%20Instruction%20with%20references_0.pdf) ([Understanding Language](http://ell.stanford.edu/), 2013)
* The Department strongly recommends sustained professional development and collaborative learning around issues of cultural responsiveness and Social and Emotional Learning. Developing students' social emotional competencies can provide an opportunity to develop a sense of positive self-worth in connection to a student's race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, and sexual orientation. Educators are encouraged to develop examples and illustrations of these competencies that are congruent with the social and cultural experiences of their students. In addition to contributing to academic success, SEL programs can also support the development of students' sense of autonomy, agency, and social justice.
* ( <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/sel/>)
* Developing a range of metacognitive strategies for learning is a key aspect of becoming an independent learner, one that is essential for ELs’ academic success (Anderson, 2002; Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012).
* ELs need strategies to construct meaning from academic, oral, and written texts; negotiate meaning when interacting with others; and communicate using oral, written, and visual literacies across a variety of academic situations (Understanding Language, 2013).

**Graduating College and Career Ready**

For many decades, researchers have been documenting the characteristics of school environments and external pressures that contribute to students dropping out of high school. Whereas this research has helped educators understand some signs of drop out risk for the general population, less is understood about the particular experience of EL students that contributes to leaving school early. Currently, the literature increasingly points to two leading contributing factors to the EL drop out rate: a) the shortage of well-trained educators, and b) equity opportunity and access gaps precluding ELs from regularly engaging with rigorous, grade-level curriculum. (DESE, 2017a, 2017b; National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2016; U.S. Department of Education [USED], 2016.)

* In the past decade, policymakers and educators have initiated systems changes including improvements in school climate and cultural competence, enhancements to curriculum and instruction, and have provided additional resources to both students at risk and teachers. ( Freudenberg N, Ruglis J. Reframing school dropout as a public health issue. Prev Chronic Dis 2007;3,9 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17875251>)
* The EL dropout rate is staggeringly high and worrisome, as it has been inversely correlated with higher income, better housing, healthier food, mental/emotional/ physical health, social support, prestige, power, etc., and has been directly linked to substance abuse, pregnancy, poverty, welfare, and lack of employment.

( Freudenberg N, Ruglis J. Reframing school dropout as a public health issue. Prev Chronic Dis 2007;3,9 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17875251>)

* Systems use data to identify specific characteristics of students that graduate in more than four years (i.e, some students with limited formal education and some ELs with disabilities). This information in turn can help districts and schools adjust the instructional programming and planning for particular groups of students to increase fairness while maintaining an equity-focused accountability system.
* Systems use longitudinal data to better understand the long-term outcomes for those who do not complete high school. This data can inform the development of graduation policies. (Sugarman, J. (2019). [The Unintended Consequences for English Learners of Using the Four-Year Graduation Rate for School Accountability](https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/english-learners-four-year-graduation-rate-school-accountability). A report from the Migration Policy Institute’s National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy examines why high-school age English-learners drop out of school, how graduation rates are calculated, and the effects of these rates on students and instructional models.)