



# Quick Reference Guide: District Level Educators with High Standards for English Learners

## Communicate Urgency About English Learner Success and Provide Feedback on Meeting High Expectations

The district's planning documents and professional learning opportunities communicate urgency about the need to support ELs to meet or exceed grade-level standards. District leaders provide regular feedback to school administrators that reinforces high expectations for ELs.



District leaders can support EL success by setting targets for English Learner (ELs) achievement and high expectations in the district's vision statement and related plans (improvement, professional development, and other [plans for success](#)). They can also ensure school-level plans include EL achievement goals and create alignment for high expectations and EL success across the system. In practice this means administrative teams actively review planning priorities at all levels for coherence and unity as it pertains to EL success and maintaining high standards for all students. It also involves setting mechanisms for tracking and monitoring progress towards established goals, giving feedback to school leaders and educators regarding their success in helping ELs achieve. In addition, effective district leaders engage teams of educators and EL families in planning committees at the school or district level to help develop strategies and plans for achieving established goals.

District leaders can demonstrate high expectations for EL success are a priority by:

- Regularly reviewing EL performance and [early warning indicator](#) data at the school and district level to identify focus areas for improvement and professional learning related to EL instruction to be addressed in plans
- Setting district plans and goals in collaboration with school administrators and reviewing school-level plans for alignment with district plans
- Developing processes for measuring EL success across instructional areas (ESL, content, bilingual, etc.) that include achievement and language development data and information about other indicators such as attendance and behavior patterns
- Adjusting professional learning plans as needed based on district and school EL success goals, EL performance data, and educator growth plans
- Providing high quality professional learning across the board (for educators, staff, administrators, etc.) that is focused [research-based strategies for supporting EL content learning and language development](#)

## Monitor English Learners' Engagement with Complex Academic Discourse

District administrators monitor schools to ensure that ELs participate in complex academic discourse at the same rates as their non-EL peers.

Districts that promote EL success ensure they engage with the type of complex academic discourse needed to achieve academically and develop language proficiency. District leaders set up district and school-level mechanisms to establish this expectation and monitor how it is being accomplished. They collaborate with school leaders to gather and review relevant EL data related to engagement with complex academic discourse regularly and at the same rate as their non-EL peers. This can involve making sure all types of educators (ESL, content area, bilingual, special education) are collaborating to figure out ways to engage ELs in complex academic discourse across the school day, not just in one set of classes. Effective, culturally responsive educators of ELs can be a valuable resource for identifying ways in which instructional practices can support this expectation across the district, and for establishing common high expectations for EL success. Ensuring ELs participate in complex academic discourse also involves developing metrics and targets for measuring participation in complex academic discourse and setting up monitoring and feedback mechanisms related to targets. These elements communicate urgency about implementation of effective instruction for ELs, and opportunities to provide additional support for improvement when necessary.

District leaders can support EL participation in complex academic discourse by:

- Participating in educator observations, instructional rounds, and [effective school walk-throughs](#) to gather data about whether ELs are participating in complex academic discourse at the same rate as their non-EL peers
- Using EL-specific walk-through and observation tools such as the [SEI Smart card](#)

- Providing professional learning opportunities for school leaders so they can identify evidence of high standards for ELs and rates of EL participation in complex academic discourse
- Engaging educators and school leaders in developing a list of common instructional practices for supporting EL participation in complex academic discourse across the district so high expectations are widespread
- Gathering local data about effective practices for helping ELs participate in complex academic discourse and disseminating it across the district
- Using problems-of-practice [protocols](#) to lead administrative teams to identify issues related to EL participation in complex academic discourse and developing action plans for addressing them collaboratively

### Systematically Implement Collaboration Structures

- Co-planning curriculum
- Peer observations
- [EL Shadows](#)
- Co-assessment
- Co-teaching
- Walk-throughs
- Collaborative Inquiry
- Cross-disciplinary PLCs

## Actions-at-a-Glance: Educators with High Standards for ELs

High Standards: What can educators at the district level do?

- Set rigorous target for EL achievement, especially in relationship to participation in complex academic discourse
- Provide professional learning about instructional practices that support reaching of chosen EL achievement targets
- Create opportunities for the district leadership team to gather and analyze EL performance and classroom practices that support EL achievement
- Create collaborative opportunities for EL educators (ESL, content area, bilingual, specialists, etc.) to identify and implement instructional practices that promote EL achievement
- Look for evidence of EL participation in complex academic discourse in educator evaluations, walk-throughs and instructional rounds; discuss findings with educators and school leaders and set shared improvement goals
- Give educators feedback regarding observed EL instructional practices and strategies
- Review school improvement plans to make sure they incorporate EL achievement goals aligned to the district's improvement plan goals and strategies related to EL success

## Planning Resources

### DESE Practical Tools and Resources

[The District Planning Process: Create-Align-Implement](#) outlines the three phases of *Planning for Success*, a districtwide planning process that is designed to strengthen coherence and support district and school success.

[SEI Smart Card](#) provides a roadmap for what to look for in a successful Sheltered English Instruction classroom.

[The Collaboration Tool](#) provides a protocol for educators to work together to examine standards, unpack academic language expectations, and identify opportunities for instruction and scaffolds to support ELs.

[Next Generation ESL: Model Curriculum Units](#) illustrate curriculum with high standards and grade-level expectations for ELs.

[Next Generation ESL Project: Curriculum Resource Guide](#) provides a process and templates for developing curriculum for ELs that is rigorous, grade-level appropriate, aligned to frameworks, and culturally responsive (see Supporting PLCs, p. 169 - 174).

[District Data Team Toolkit](#) outlines a data inquiry and action cycle using student data to decide on targeted instruction to improve student achievement (see Module 2: Inquiry, Module 3: Information, Module 4: Knowledge, and Module 5: Action, and Module 6: Results).

### DESE Guidance

[Educator Evaluation](#) provides a framework and performance rubrics for educators and other school personnel with guidelines for effective educator and practice, including indicators for culturally responsive teaching and ways to promote educator practice improvement (see the 5-Step Cycle).

[Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching Practice](#) provide guidance regarding expectations for effective educators; Standard 1 speaks directly to planning for rigorous, grade-level instruction for all students.

[State Seal of Biliteracy](#) explains rigorous standards that students must meet to qualify for the Seal (see p. 4-5).

## **Federal Resources**

[English Learner Toolkit](#) provides tools and suggestions for providing ELs equal access to curricular and extracurricular programs in keeping with high expectations (see p. 47 – 70).

[Teaching academic content and literacy to English Learners in elementary and middle school](#) presents evidence-based strategies for effective EL instruction.

## **Other Featured Resources**

[A framework for raising expectations and instructional rigor for English Language Learners](#) provides suggestions for instructional models, and guidance on selecting high-quality, rigorous, grade and level appropriate instructional materials that promote language acquisition and EL success.

[Describing Student Work](#) provides a protocol for describing student work as a way to figuring out that student’s way of knowing.

[ELL “Shadowing” Shows Promise](#) describes the practice of EL ‘shadowing’ by educators and/or school leaders to analyze EL participation in complex academic discourse.