Quick Reference Guide: School Level Academic and Linguistic Supports

Master Schedules

School administrators ensure that ELs have equitable access to effective educators (e.g., using DESE's Student Learning Experience report).

School schedules that support EL success provide meaningful, equitable access to high-quality core instruction and tailored supports and services that build on EL's assets and address their needs. Strategic master scheduling begins with the characteristics and needs of ELs in mind rather than trying to fit EL supports and services within current structures that may not be flexible enough to accommodate them. At times this may include

Considerations for Strategic Master Scheduling for ELs

- Features that make the school's chosen language program (bilingual, Sheltered English Immersion SEI, etc.) effective for the types of ELs (newcomers, ELs with disabilities, long-term ELs, etc.) served by the school
- Specific linguistic and academic needs of the ELs served by the school
- How ELs' needs can be best met by supports and programs available at the school

developing additional programs and services beyond the school's current offering to meet newly identified needs of ELs, or the needs of a new group of ELs attending the school. For example, a school that starts to see increasing enrollment of newcomer ELs because of consistent demographic changes in its community may need to consider developing a newcomer program.

Allocating Resources to Support ELs

School administrators conduct recruitment efforts focused on hiring and retaining educators who are well prepared (e.g., by education, training, and experience) to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students.
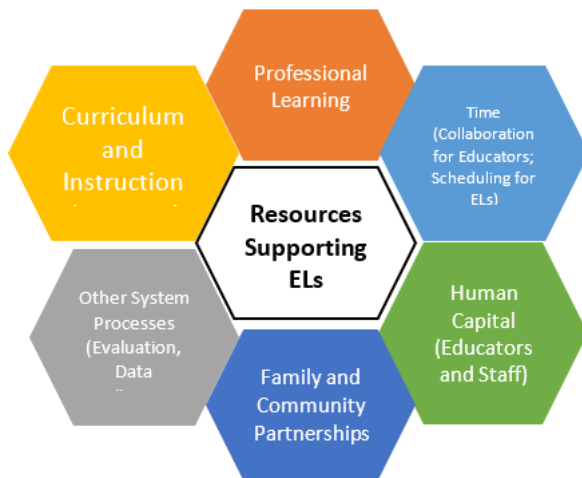
School leaders can allocate resources to support tailored linguistic and academic supports to leverage the strengths and address the needs of ELs. In practice this requires school leaders, educators, and staff to develop a clear picture of the population of ELs the school serves, how it plans to serve them (specific programming and instructional model and what they look like on the ground), and the related supports and resources needed to serve ELs well in that particular context. For example, schools serving a majority newcomer EL population will need programs that focus on language development and content learning while also helping students get used to a new culture and schooling system. In contrast, schools with mostly long-term ELs may need programs that maximize targeted language support with opportunities to engage with native and proficient English speakers. For any type of school-based program to be successful, all aspects of the school must be coordinated and aligned, implemented coherently through strategically allocated resources.

Tracking Student Progress Towards Benchmarks

School administrators ensure that all educators have access to curricular materials, professional learning opportunities and other resources that support them in delivering culturally responsive instruction.

Tracking EL student progress towards state [established English language proficiency benchmarks](#) and content learning standards is essential for ensuring the quality of instruction and effectiveness of supports. It requires establishing protocols, mechanisms, and processes to ensure ELs are on track to achieve English language proficiency and [grade-level content expectation](#)s. Effective monitoring of EL student progress requires thinking about all aspects of programming (schedules, effective

Processes that Support Monitoring EL Progress Towards English Proficiency Bechmarks				
Reviewing required benchmarks and how they apply to ELs served by the school	Identifying areas in which ELs need improvement and how those relate to required benchmarks	Identifying supports and services ELs need to meet benchmarks	Establishing personalized goals for ELs to attain English proficiency, incorporating input from ELs' parents and guardians	Developing ways to track and assess the progress of all ELs, especially those who do not meet benchmarks and related requirements

educators and staff, services available, etc.) and instruction (curriculum, instructional practice, assessment, etc.) to ensure they support ELs in achieving established benchmarks. It also involves teams of educators and administrators collaborating to look at these pieces together and make coherent decisions that address a student's varied needs.

🎬 **Actions-at-a-Glance: Academic and Linguistic Supports**

Academic and Linguistic Supports: What can educators at the school level do?

- Use internal and external (district, community, state, federal) resources to provide supports and services ELs may need that are not available at the school (for example, starting a newcomer program to address growing numbers of recent yet stable immigrant EL families in the school's community)
- Collaborate with educators, staff, ELs, and EL families to develop effective tailored supports and services
- Establish regular ways to gather and analyze EL performance data
- Ensure EL performance data includes information about ELs' language development and content area learning
- Ensure assessments used to evaluate EL progress are appropriate to the purpose of the assessment (to measure language or content learning; diagnostic, formative or summative, etc.) and individual EL characteristics (grade-level, age, language proficiency level, EL s group – newcomers, ELs with disabilities, etc.)
- Become familiar with required English language proficiency benchmarks for specific EL groups they serve and other [appropriate school and district accountability](#) indicators
- Become familiar with EL assessment tools ([ACCESS for ELs](#), etc.) used at the school and what educators must know and be able to do with them and their results to improve instruction for ELs
- Develop protocols and processes for educators to analyze and evaluate EL assessment and learning data
- Provide professional learning opportunities for educators to build their assessment literacy skills and ability to use EL language and content area assessment data for a variety of instructional purposes (provide student feedback, develop curriculum, plan instruction and supports, adjust learning goals as needed, etc.)
- Hold educators accountable for EL progress towards required benchmarks through [educator evaluation processes](#) (goal-setting, classroom observations, feedback, etc.)

Planning Resources

DESE Practical Tools and Resources

[Extended Learning Opportunities](#) provides information about types of extended learning and related funding opportunities for flexible, strategic scheduling that supports educator collaboration.

[Massachusetts Tools for Schools](#) provides resources for developing system structures and supports to meet the academic and non-academic needs of all students.

[MTSS Self-Assessment](#) provides a tool for schools to gauge where its current strengths and gaps are relative to the MTSS model.

[Master Schedule Review](#) tool from the Inclusive Practice Guidebook provides administrators and school-based leadership teams can use this tool to review master schedules for alignment with best practices for inclusion.

DESE Guidance

[Summary of Massachusetts' Accountability System](#) provides information about DESE's system of district and school accountability, including indicators used to make annual performance determinations (such as the English language proficiency indicator) and indicators are calculated (p. 2), weighted (p. 3), and reported for schools (p. 3-6).

CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

EDUCATOR EFFECTIVENESS

English Learner Education Programs provides information about different programs for ELs, including needs of different groups of ELs. These include the Guidance for Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Programs; the Guidance for Defining and Implementing Two-Way Immersion Programs; and the Massachusetts Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) Definition and Guidance.

Guidelines for the Use of Benchmarks Toward Attaining English Proficiency outlines what English language proficiency benchmarks are and why they were established. It also provides information about expectations for districts and schools to monitor EL process towards attaining benchmarks and ideas of how to meet expectations.

Identification, Assessment, Placement, and Reclassification of English Language Learners provides information about specific English Language Education programs and a discussion of the importance of appropriately resourcing programs for success.

MTSS Blueprint provides guidance for establishing a system that provides high-quality core educational experiences for all students and targeted interventions/supports for students who experience academic and/or behavioral difficulties and students who have already demonstrated mastery of the concept and skills being taught (see p. 3-9).

Next Generation ESL Project: Model Curriculum Units and related videos showcase high-quality instruction and appropriate linguistic and academic supports for ELs.

Supporting English Learners and ELs with Disabilities provides resources for learning more about ways to support and plan responsive curriculum, instruction, and assessment for ELs with disabilities.

Federal Resources

Academic Supports for Newcomers provides information about district and school-wide structures for academic support and examples of classroom instructional supports for newcomers.

English Learner Toolkit Chapter 4 includes policy recommendations for identifying and serving ELs who are gifted and talented (see Tool #4: Serving Gifted English Learners, p. 13-14).

Newcomer Toolkit provides information and resources for educators, principals, and other school staff who work directly with immigrant students—including asylees and refugees—and their families, including information about high-quality instruction for newcomers in Chapter 3.

Other Featured Resources

Beyond the Bell: Options for Increased Learning Time provides ideas for master scheduling to support collaborative planning time and meeting student needs.

Issue in Brief: Increased Learning Time Summary contain extended school day research and resources.

Data-Driven Implementation of Tiered Interventions with ELs engages educators in understanding how to effectively implement response to intervention (RTI) with ELs (Session 1 provides background on Response to Intervention (RTI) and ELs, and offers examples and strategies for implementing Tier 1 supports; Session 2 discusses how educators can collaboratively look at data to identify ELs difficulties and modifications for screening and monitoring progress appropriate for ELs, and Session 3 discusses how to make decisions about interventions for ELs using data, and potential modifications to Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for ELs).

Elementary School Scheduling: Enhancing Instruction for Student Achievement presents strategies and options for designing elementary school schedules.

Finding Time for Collaborative Planning provides detailed descriptions and examples of six strategies for scheduling collaboration time.

MTSS: Toward a Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Model for English Learners presents strategies for ensuring multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) that deliver high-quality, research-based instruction and interventions can support ELs in general and in special education.

School Scheduling Tools (Education Resource Strategies, 2017) provides recommendations and tools for school teams to make the most of their time and build a strategic schedule.

Supporting Long-Term English Learner Students in Mastering Academic English: A Framework for Success presents promising practices and strategies to support long-term EL students as they build their knowledge and use of academic English in a webinar and relevant resources (see Summary of research and resources on long-term English learner students).

Identifying ELLs with Specific Learning Disabilities provides facts, advice, and resources for school teams including Considerations for Improving School Team Processes, Innovative Ways to Think About Student Data, and Supporting Evidence Gathering About Students

Essential Actions Handbook provides a common ground for discussing issues related to academic language learning and guide curriculum, instruction, and school-based assessment for ELs (Essential Actions 3 and 12 address differentiating instruction and examples of instructional supports for ELs).