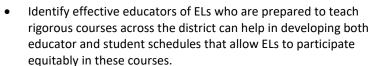# Quick Reference Guide: District Level Meaningful and Rigorous Learning Opportunities that Build on English Learners' Assets

Remove Barriers that Prevent Equal Participation in Rigorous Courses

District leaders monitor ELs' course-taking patterns and remove barriers that prevent equal participation of ELs in rigorous, grade-appropriate courses, including advanced courses such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, early college, and dual enrollment courses.

Systematic review of English Learners' (EL) course-taking patterns, staffing patterns, and course or program enrollment data can help identify barriers for qual participation in rigorous academic coursework. For example, scheduling patterns and policies may prevent ELs from enrolling in certain courses. Staffing patterns where educators who teach advanced coursework are not well-prepared to support ELs can interfere with EL participation and success in these courses. These barriers could be removed by reviewing data and streamlining processes to ensure ELs have access to rigorous courses taught by a well-prepared educator. District leaders can:

* Identify effective educators of ELs who are prepared to teach rigorous courses across the district can help in developing both educator and student schedules that allow ELs to participate equitably in these courses.
* Provide training about the needs of ELs and expectations for equal participation in rigorous coursework to guidance counselors, data managers and other staff responsible for advising, scheduling, data collection and analysis.
* Review application and enrollment processes for programs such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and Gifted and Talented from an EL and EL family point of view and ensure materials, deadlines, and communication mechanisms are available, understandable, and easy to navigate for ELs and their families.
* Establish policies that actively promote EL participation, rather than leaving it up to ELs and their families to find out how to participate.
* Examine EL student data to trace patterns of success in prerequisite courses and review curriculum coherence to identify areas for improvement and support for ELs.

Minimize Disruption to Core Content Instruction

The district leader responsible for EL programming (e.g., EL Director) collaborates with school leaders to develop policies and scheduling procedures to ensure that ESL, academic services, and programs provided to ELs cause minimal disruption to core content instruction.

District leaders regularly work with principals, educators, and other relevant staff to effectively develop EL schedules that allow for enough instruction to promote language development and content area learning. District leaders intentionally prioritize practices in scheduling for ELs to ensure that they have access to grade-level, rigorous curriculum as well as sufficient ESL instruction to meet differing EL backgrounds and English language proficiency levels. Systematizing this priority for strategic scheduling of ELs, across the district programs supports the mandated program goals for all ELE programs for ensuring both grade-level academic achievement and language development. These goals happen simultaneously for ELs in their programs. District leaders and school administrators collaborate to ensure ELs do not miss core content instruction to participate in other programs and services they need. In practice this means district leaders communicate these expectations to staff and administrators responsible for developing master schedules. It also requires district leaders review policies, procedures, and master schedules to ensure these do not systematically disrupt ELs access to core content instruction. When issues of disruption are identified, district leaders develop scheduling mechanisms to ensure ELs can participate in core content instruction even when that may mean making changes to current and past practice. District leaders also remain flexible in accommodating school-level scheduling needs and support school leaders in

pursuing staffing and scheduling options that prioritize ELs having access to core content instruction and language development instruction (ESL).

Use Assessment Data to Evaluate Program Effectiveness and Support Improvement

District leaders use assessment data to evaluate the effectiveness of the district's English learner education programs and make appropriate adjustments.

Districts assess the effectiveness of their English Language Education (ELE) programs regularly, beyond scheduled state Program Compliance Reviews. In Massachusetts, ELE programs must meet Castañeda's Three-Pronged Test, which includes demonstrable academic outcomes for ELs. There is a wide variety of data to consider when discussing EL outcomes. District leaders can use data points published in the District Analysis Review Tools (DART) to evaluate EL outcomes. They can also use Access for ELLs reports to evaluate EL progress in attaining academic English language proficiency and Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) scores for assessing achievement of grade-level content expectations. To support effective evaluation and action planning for improvement, district leaders can also develop ways for educator and administrator teams to interact with EL outcomes data. They can establish Language Assessment Teams made up of educators of ELs (ESL, bilingual, content area, special education, etc.) and other relevant administrators and staff. They can also develop district policies that prioritize providing educators weekly collaboration time to review EL data and plan instruction accordingly. In addition, district leaders can establish program evaluation teams representing a range of important stakeholders (district-level EL leaders and content area coordinators, school principals, educators of ELs, ELs and EL parents) to review data and make recommendations for improvement that are later adopted and implemented. These types of discussions around ELE programming and EL language development and academic achievement data can be essential for planning responsive instructional moves and improving ELE programs on a regular basis.

> **Castañeda's Three-Pronged Test for ELE Program Evaluation**
> An ELE program may be determined as sound if the district's academic program for ELs:
> - is based on a sound educational theory or research
> - is implemented with adequate and appropriate resources, and
> - resulted in demonstrable academic outcomes for ELs.
>
> *Guidance on English Learner Education Program Development and Evaluation*, p. 2

🎬 Actions-at-a-Glance: Meaningful and Rigorous Instruction

Meaningful and Rigorous Instruction: What can educators at the district level do?
• Review current scheduling policies and procedures to ensure they allow ELs to participate in rigorous coursework without sacrificing access to ESL or other language learning services and programs • Establish regular procedures for identifying and including ELs in rigorous programs and coursework (Gifted and Talented, Advanced Placement and College Preparatory coursework, career vocational technical programming, etc.) • Identify and assign highly qualified, effective educators to all courses, programs and services for ELs • Partner with school leaders to build schedules that maximize rigorous offerings while providing ESL supports • Prioritize scheduling that provides time for teams of educators, school leaders, and district leaders to review EL progress and plan for improvement • Establish mechanisms for regularly evaluating the quality of ELE programs across the district, developing related action plans, tracking progress, and adjusting plans based on EL performance data analysis

Planning Resources

DESE Practical Tools and Resources

Master Schedule Review provides a tool administrators and school-based leadership teams can use to review master schedules for alignment with best practices for inclusion.

English Learner Education Program Monitoring explains the need for ELE program monitoring, provides evaluation criteria, and describes guidance state-required district Tiered Focus Monitoring.

SEI Smartcard offers examples of how asset-based teaching and learning practices for ELs can be embedded in lessons focused on developing content knowledge and academic language development.

CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

EDUCATOR EFFECTIVENESS

Quick Reference Guide: The Case for Curricular Coherence describes three types of curricular coherence that support student learning: vertical coherence, aligned tiers of instruction, and cross-subject coherence.

Edwin Analytics provides reporting and data analysis tools that gives authorized users access to new information, reports, and perspectives on education and programs that specifically support improvements in teaching and learning. Several Edwin Reports can be used to learn about educator effectiveness and student access to effective teachers, such as EV319: Educator Evaluation, Student Learning Experience Reports (SE 321 and SE 322), EL 637: Performance of Students in ACCESS (EL 627).

Equity Roadmap: Potential Next Steps after the Student Learning Experience Report presents a process and tools for examining teacher assignment practices and offers suggestions for recruiting, retaining, and supporting effective, culturally proficient educators.

Teacher Equity Gaps in Massachusetts provides information about why effective teachers matter, strategies for supporting access to quality teachers, and school policies that show evidence of increasing teachers' effectiveness or increasing equitable access to effective educators (see p.5 - 8, 13).

Massachusetts Tiered System of Support Blueprint (MTSS) provides information about supporting the success of all students, including ELs, rigorous coursework.

DESE Guidance

Massachusetts State Equity Plan Update 2018 communicates data on teacher performance and assignment, highlighting inequities in teacher placement. Statistics on the placement of inexperienced, unlicensed, and low performing educators are highlighted (see p. 5).

Cultural Proficiency: A Strategy to Address Equity Gaps in Students' Achievement and Learning Experiences discusses three ways different communities developed a districtwide understanding of cultural proficiency and how it shifted their professional learning focus.

ELE Program Compliance Criteria provides information about program expectations for ELs, including components and assessment requirements.

Guidance for Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Programs provides information about SEI programs, including collaboration examples (see Appendix E) and scenarios showcasing scheduling strategies (see Scenarios 1, 3, 4, 5, and 7).

Guidance on the Placement, Progress Monitoring, and Reclassification Procedures of English Learners outlines regulations and guidance to assist district personnel in building and sustaining successful programs for ELs, including assessment considerations for ELs and how these can guide placement, monitoring and reclassification of ELs (p. 24-25) and how school-based Language Assessment Teams (LATs) can support monitoring EL progress and making reclassification decisions (p. 26 – 28).

Federal Resources

Dear Colleague English Learner Letter provides guidance about federal expectations for ELs, including information about basic requirements for language programs, staffing, scheduling, and meeting the needs of ELs who opt out of language programs (see p. 12-32).

English Learner Tool Kit provides information about federal expectations for effective programs and services for ELs, including information about meaningful access (Chapter 4: Meaningful Access to Core Curricular, Extra Curricular Programs) and scheduling (Chapter 5: Creating an Inclusive Environment and Avoiding Unnecessary Segregation – see Tool #3 for a sample self-monitoring aid that can help schools monitor the extent to which ELs are segregated in order to address any potential issues).

Exploratory Study on the Identification of English Learners for Gifted and Talented Programs provides information about EL underrepresentation in Gifted and Talented programs and recommendations to address it.