



Quick Reference Guide: State Level Academic and Linguistic Supports

Access to All Available Academic and Linguistic Supports

The Department provides guidance on the implementation of Massachusetts Tiered System of Support and monitors ELs' access to all academic and linguistic supports available in the district.

The Department disseminates guidance prompting educators to use the appropriate academic, linguistic, cultural, and socio-emotional supports to provide opportunities for all ELs to engage in higher-order thinking, and to engage in rigorous grade-level curriculum (e.g., [Next Generation ESL Curriculum Resource Guide](#), [Guidance for Sheltered English Immersion](#), [Social and Emotional Learning in Massachusetts](#), the [Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks](#)). In order to provide equal opportunities for ELs to meaningfully engage in all curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular programs and activities, educational systems may need to consider:



- additional time focused on language development and acclimation to schools in the U.S. for newcomers
- separately scheduled special education services for ELs with severe disabilities
- focused attention to literacy in first and/or second language as well as opportunities for dealing with gaps in academic instruction for students with limited and interrupted formal education (SLIFE)
- specialized programming for gifted and talented ELs (GATE)

Through the [Massachusetts Tiered System of Support](#), the Department continues to promote high-quality core educational experiences (including language development) in a safe and supportive learning environment. This system enables educators to meet the academic and non-academic needs of all students including ELs, and to provide targeted interventions/supports for ELs who experience academic and/or other difficulties or who have already demonstrated mastery of the concept and skills being taught.

Best Instructional Practices

The Department provides guidance on best instructional practices for all ELs (including SLIFE, ELs with disabilities, and newcomers).

ELs bring a wealth of knowledge with them to school, and their languages, cultures, and prior experiences are assets that schools build upon. Instruction must provide ELs with opportunities to engage in grade-level curriculum designed to simultaneously build conceptual understandings, analytical practices, and language proficiency (For example, see the [Next Generation ESL Curriculum Resource Guide](#)).

The Department prompts districts to create language-rich academic environments with ample time for language use. Additionally, distinct strategies and services can improve achievement among the various EL subgroups. For example,

- Long-term ELs (LTELs) 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.
- ELs with disabilities require services that address their English and home language learning needs, as well as their special and general education needs.
- 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, as well as programmatic services such as flexible scheduling, extended time for instruction and support, and connections with families and social services.

Data-Informed Monitoring and Evidence-Based Resources

The Department provides data reports to assist districts in monitoring ELs' achievement in the content areas and progress in acquiring English; the Department also shares evidence-based resources designed specifically for teachers of ELs.

Using valid data collection and reporting systems, the Department creates a collection of accessible, accurate, and timely reports and actionable tools to highlight evidence-based practices and resources. Such tools and resources can support:



- the continuous improvement of instruction and outcomes for ELs
- decision-making on EL programs
- communication with families about student progress

The Department prompts districts to regularly convene EL stakeholders to:



- engage in data-driven inquiry cycles
- review and refine implementation of EL instructional programs
- foster shared accountability and accelerated outcomes for ELs

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

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

- Provide professional learning that supports leadership roles in the system that support best practices with ELs, including academic and linguistic supports
- Provide professional learning that supports collaborative practices of educators around ELs, such as Expeditions in Collaborative Practices: The Collaboration Tool and Multilingual Learners
- Share evidence-based resources for the education of ELs that are designed for teachers, such as the [Collaboration Tool](#), the [Next Generation ESL Curriculum Resource Guide](#), and [WIDA's assets-based instructional resources for ELs](#)
- Disseminate coaching model coursework with tools for school leaders to support pedagogical growth of educators around ELs in measurable and supported ways
- Hold districts accountable for ensuring that ELs are not excluded from rigorous and advanced academic programs because of their English Language Proficiency levels
- Monitor and report on the extent to which ELs and former ELs participate in GATE programs and Advanced Placement (AP), honors, and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses

Planning Resources

DESE Practical Tools and Resources

[The Collaboration Tool](#) provides guidance for content and language teachers in collaborative planning discussions. It draws on the expertise of each teacher and provides prompts for shared responsibility in planning of curriculum, instruction and assessment for their common English learners.

[The Interactive Collaboration Tool Guide](#) introduces curriculum developers to the Collaboration Tool and its role in curriculum development, starting with unit-level Focus Language Goals.

[ESL Model Curriculum Units \(MCUs\) in Action: Instructional Videos](#) provides exemplar units and videos that illustrate high-quality, rigorous curriculum units that educators can use and implement in the ESL classroom.

[District Analysis and Review Tool](#) (DART) is organized by the District Standards and can help district leaders see where similar districts in the state are showing progress in specific areas to identify possible best practice.

- [Statistical Reports](#) provides links to downloadable district-level reports on graduation rates, grade retention, dropout rates, educator evaluation data, enrollment, mobility, and other data
- [Student Growth Model](#) provides links to tutorials and documents that explain the Student Growth Model, along with research supporting the model, materials to help education leaders present the model, and links to student growth data.
- [District Data Team Toolkit](#) provides resources to help a district establish, grow, and maintain a culture of inquiry and data use through a District Data Team.

[Edwin Analytics](#) provides a reporting and data analysis tool that gives authorized districts and state level users access to new information, reports and perspectives on education and programs that specifically support improvements in teaching and learning. Edwin Analytics is unique because it integrates longitudinal data from pre-kindergarten through public post-secondary education. The available tools and reports for this data will help educators make informed decisions about how and where they can improve upon their teaching practices to provide an exceptional learning experience for their students. As part of the Department's continued commitment to improve the quality of education in Massachusetts, we highly recommend and encourage the use of these new Edwin Analytics tools.

[Resource Allocation and District Action Reports](#) (RADAR) provide districts with new ways to analyze use of their resources of people, time, and money. Compare a district to 10 others selected by the user. Five-year trends show the big picture of a district. Visual data makes data analysis more accessible.

[School and District Profiles](#) provides school and district profiles with a variety of data snapshots, including directories and data reports with statewide data for all schools and districts that can be sorted and/or exported.

DESE Guidance

['How Do We Know' initiative](#) guides educators to use, build, and share evidence to improve student outcomes and provides resources to help Massachusetts districts locate existing research and to support their ability to measure implementation and impact as part of their improvement strategy.

[Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks](#) provides teachers, students and families with clear and shared expectations for what all students should know and be able to do at the end of each year. They represent a promise of equitable education for all students. They formalize the expectation that all students in the Commonwealth have access to the same academic content, regardless of their zip code, background, or abilities.

[Next Generation ESL Project: Curriculum Resource Guide](#) provides guidance for developing standards-aligned, high quality ESL curriculum with a focus on the simultaneous development of content and language. It includes a curriculum design framework within a continuous improvement cycle; a collection of collaborative templates, tools, processes, protocols, and other resources used in the development of units; resources for professional learning communities (PLCs) to support collaborative ESL curriculum development; and information about other key topics such as text complexity, Universal Design for Learning, guidance related to instruction and assessment of dually identified students (ELs with a disability), critical stance, social justice, and other significant components of effective ESL curricula.

[Next Generation ESL: Model Curriculum Units](#) provides exemplar units and videos that illustrate high-quality, rigorous curriculum units that educators can use and implement in the ESL classroom.

Federal Resources

[English Learner Tool Kit](#) provides explanations of the civil rights and other legal obligations to ELs; checklists schools can use as self-monitoring tools; sample tools that may be used or adapted for use in schools to aid with compliance; and additional resources that may provide further relevant information and assistance (see Chapter 4: [Meaningful Access to Core Curricular and Extracurricular Programs](#) and Chapter 5: [Creating an Inclusive Environment for and Avoiding the Unnecessary Segregation of English Learners](#)).

[Newcomer Tool Kit](#) provides guidance for supporting newcomers for educators, principals, and other school staff who work directly with immigrant students—including asylees and refugees—and their families.

[Using student achievement data to support instructional decision making](#) discusses five recommendations that State Education Agencies can implement to increase their use of data.

[Spotlight on Data Use](#) provides resources to support the implementation and improvement of data use at all levels of the educational system, from state departments of education to classrooms.

Other Featured Resources

[Focus Bulletins](#) provides guidance and resources on topics of interest to educators of ELs, including differentiation, scaffolding, group work, supports and scaffolding in various content areas, etc.

[6 Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners](#) provides universal guidelines drawn from decades of research in language pedagogy and language acquisition theory. They are targets for teaching excellence and should undergird any program of English language instruction. Click on each principle to see examples of how to implement them.

[Understanding and Supporting the Educational Needs of Recently Arrived Immigrant English Learner Students](#) presents the answers to three critical questions: (1) Who are recently arrived immigrant EL students? (2) What are their educational needs? and (3) What school, district, and state-level policies and practices are being implemented to support them? The report offers information, support, and guidance for the work of both state departments of education and local education agencies as they design, implement, adapt, and evaluate their programs, policies, and services for this important group of students.

[Welcoming Newcomers](#) discusses strategies and practices that best support newcomer students and their families.

[Helping newcomer students succeed in secondary schools and beyond](#) presents the successes, challenges, and day-to-day implementation of newcomer programs.

[Enhancing Learning with Authentic Communication](#) provides resources that focus on the development of classroom instruction that fosters rich communication and productive academic conversations across disciplines and grade levels.

[A Guide to Finding and Understanding English Learner Data](#) provides information for understanding how to access and use data about ELs—be it student outcome data or information about the school.