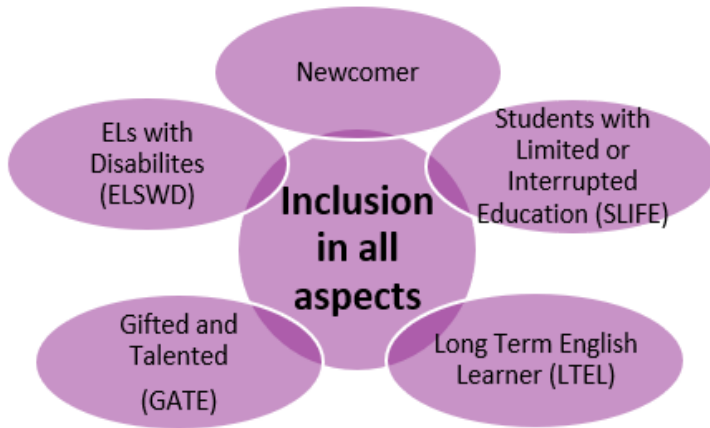# Quick Reference Guide: State Level. Thriving in High School

Strategies and Monitoring of EL Inclusion

The Department provides strategies for including ELs in all aspects of school life and monitors districts' success in this area.

Newcomer

ELs with Disabilites (ELSWD)

Students with Limited or Interrupted Education (SLIFE)

Inclusion in all aspects

Gifted and Talented (GATE)

Long Term English Learner (LTEL)

Inclusion begins with understanding that not all ELs have the same needs. Therefore high school climate, curriculum, instruction, and other practices must respond to the diversity among ELs. In a critical strategy for inclusion, the Department seizes opportunities to increase and monitor equitable access in districts for all ELs and centers its policies on supporting the academic non-academic success of ELs.

In order for ELs to thrive in high school, scaffolding and differentiation happen daily within inclusive, equitable, safe, and responsive learning environments. It is of crucial importance for ELs in high school feel welcome and respected.

Strategies to make sure that ELs are included in all aspects to thrive in high school include:

| ELE programs are developed for acceleration rather than remediation | ELs have options to have a longer day, week, or additional year(s) to complete graduation requirements | Tutoring and drop-in homework clubs with EL supports are regularly available | Credit recovery is available to ELs | Flexible options are available for ELs with different strengths and needs | School teams monitor the progress of EL subgroups and develop individualized plans to ensure all ELs are thriving | Actively engaging ELs in extra-curricular activities |

To optimally support ELs to thrive in high school, Department staff ensures all educators are highly skilled and responsive to the strengths and needs of ELs and their communities. For example:

- Coordinators, school leaders, teacher leaders and coaches can support classroom teachers of ELs
- EL specialists are invited into leadership teams to ensure a coherent and consistent approach to English Language Development (ELD) pedagogy and curriculum across grade levels
- Intake personnel, guidance counselors, and other staff – in their different areas of expertise – are knowledgeable and dedicated to ELs and immigrants to ensure equitable access to the best educational opportunities and supports available (e.g., EL placement is based on providing full access and on college and career goals of students and their families, so that advanced courses, support, and preparation opportunities are available and appropriate for all ELs).

CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

EDUCATOR EFFECTIVENESS

Forums for Promising Practices: Removing Barriers to EL Inclusion
The Department convenes forums for district leaders to share best practices for removing linguistic, economic, and social barriers to ELs' participation in school life.

The Department engages in a comprehensive set of capacity-building efforts to help ensure that all ELs thrive in high school, including by leading networks and forums that consider the inclusive operationalization of curriculum frameworks, instruction, assessment, accountability/school improvement, educator quality and capacity, and social and family support services.

Such networks, convenings, professional learning offerings, leadership coalitions, and other communications strategies have the potential to facilitate the removal of linguistic, economic, and social barriers to inclusion in aspects of all aspects of school life. They are an important step to …

- ensure that all high school educators see themselves as educators of ELs
- build greater language/content collaboration at the high school level
- make sure that ELs feel like they have a voice (e.g., one way for the Department to increase EL voice is by making the VOCAL survey available in languages other than English)
- improve family and community engagement
- foster the respect and celebration of the diversity of educational communities (cultural, religious, linguistic, economic, ability, gender identity, family structure, sexual orientation, etc.).

🎬 Actions-at-a-Glance : Thriving in High School

Thriving in High School: What can educators at the state level do?
- Monitor equitable access for ELs in all aspects of school life   - Set the tone for educational leaders to establish clear goals and commitments for EL growth toward English proficiency and academic achievement, and to maintain a systemic focus on progress toward EL success in high school   - Guide districts to…   - present well-articulated and aligned practices and pathways across grade levels through reclassification, graduation, and ELs' college, career, and civic lives   - have clear guidelines about program models and expectations for ELs in their strategic and continuous improvement plans, and explicitly state an asset-based vision for EL education   - Make sure that ELs and their families feel consistently supported and understand how pathways to success are delivered across systems

Planning Resources

DESE Practical Tools and Resources
The Collaboration Tool A practical tool to guide 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 This interactive guide introduces curriculum developers to the Collaboration Tool and its role in curriculum development, starting with unit-level Focus Language Goals.
Information Services: statistical Reports Information on topics such as graduation and dropout rates, grade retention reports, enrollment in institutions of higher education, plans of high school graduates, etc.
Massachusetts Report Card These reports show parents and community members how the state is doing in different areas, highlighting strengths as well as any challenges that need to be addressed in order to make sure the needs of all students are being met.

DESE Guidance
Guidance for Supporting English Learners with Disabilities This guidance contains Quick Reference Guides emphasizing the intersection of federal and state requirements regarding ELs eligible for special education and related services, offers guidance to assist districts and schools in their decision-making, and provides resources for meeting the general curriculum, English learning, and special education needs of eligible students. The guides align with Department initiatives

and resources and include frequently asked questions (FAQs), evidence-based recommendations, and stories from district/school-based educators.

[Guidelines for the Use of Benchmarks Toward Attaining English Proficiency](#) The Department has developed these guidelines and an English Learning Success Template (Appendix A) to support districts in understanding sufficient EL progress toward English proficiency.

[Guidance for Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Programs](#) The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for district and school leaders to strengthen SEI programs and improve education for ELs. The goal is to increase capacity, program quality, and systematic, sustained excellence in SEI programs. This guidance compels and supports equity and continuous improvements for ELs to match the academic success of all Massachusetts students.

[Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks](#) The frameworks provide 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.

[Massachusetts Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) Definition and Guidance](#) This document provides Massachusetts educators and stakeholders with guidance on practice and procedures to meet the language and academic needs of SLIFE. It also addresses the definition, identification, and initial placement of SLIFE

[Next Generation ESL Project: Curriculum Resource Guide](#) This comprehensive document 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.

[603 CMR 26.00: M.G.L. c. 76, § 5. {603 CMR 26.00: Access to Equal Educational Opportunity; 26.06: Extra-Curricular Activities](#) Review the law as it pertains to ensuring equal opportunity and access to extra-curricular activities.

Federal Resources

[English Learner Toolkit](#) Each chapter 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. All tools and resources are free and accessible via the Internet. See chapter 4: [Providing English Learners Equal Access to Curricular and Extra Curricular Programs](#) and Chapter 15: [Creating an Inclusive Environment for and Avoiding the Unnecessary Segregation of English Learners.](#)

Other Featured Resources

[Exploring the Long-term English Learner Population Across 15 WIDA States](#) This report builds greater knowledge about the population of students referred to as LTELs by exploring the size and characteristics of this subgroup of ELs across 15 states. The results shed light on factors, including students' initial English proficiency, state reclassification criteria, and student mobility, that shape the LTEL population in different ways across states. The results also suggest differences in the likelihood of being identified as an LTEL according to student race/ethnicity, native language, and Individualized Education Program (IEP) status.

[Understanding and Supporting the Educational Needs of Recently Arrived Immigrant English Learner Students](#) This report explores 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.