**Overview**

**Effective School Leaders Know How To:**

* Promote an asset-based approach and how it looks like in action
* Develop caring relationships and trust with educators, students, families, and the community
* Support and promote effective classroom instruction
* Effectively manage school resources and systems to maximize teaching and learning
* Engage in instructionally focused interactions with teachers
* Build a productive climate
* Facilitate collaboration and professional learning communities,
* Strategically manage staff and resources

*Adapted from* [*Grissom, Egalite & Lindsay, 2021*](https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/how-principals-affect-students-and-schools-a-systematic-synthesis-of-two-decades-of-research.aspx)

School leaders play an essential role in promoting equity for English learners. They shape learning environments as well as school culture and climate by influencing teacher retention, hiring, support, and improvement. They also have a direct impact on English learners’ experiences and outcomes by strategically deploying resources to support learning. School leaders best positioned to support English learners’ success apply research-based leadership skills, an asset-based approach, and behaviors to promote equity and academic excellence for all students. They align school resources, policies, and structures to reach this goal.



**Strategies and Best Practices**

The Massachusetts [Blueprint for English Learners Success](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/blueprint/default.html) outlines essential conditions and actions school leaders can take to support English learners (see [school level QRGs](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/blueprint/dashboard.html)). Leaders across contexts (in schools with low, mid, and high numbers of English learners) can also support equity and effective ESL instruction by:

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| **Magnifying glass with solid fill****Using equity as a lens to evaluate relationships, situations, and structures and guide decision making**  | * Engage in learning and reflection to identify ways in which cultural, linguistic, racial and other forms of inequity are upheld by local systems and the role school leaders play in sustaining or disrupting it to [promote equity](https://belenetwork.org/library_resources/the-bele-framework/).
* Commit to developing [culturally responsive leadership competencies](https://www.leadershipacademy.org/blog/culturally-responsive-leadership-matters-research-finds/) and practices to support equity in collaboration with other school and district leaders.
* Collaboratively develop a school instructional vision focused on the success of all students to guide decision making and assemble a team to identify equity issues, strategize, plan, and implement key actions to achieve it.
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| **Greek Pillar with solid fill****Learning about essential conditions that support English learners’ success** | * Explore the Massachusetts [Vision for English Learner Education](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/blueprint/) (ELE) and the [Blueprint for English Learners Success](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/blueprint/blueprint.docx), outlines these conditions and actions.
* Use Blueprint resources such as the [School Level Quick Reference Guides](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/blueprint/dashboard.html) and [Self-Assessment Tools](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/blueprint/plan/default.html) to evaluate practice and set goals for improvement.
* Learn about ways social and emotional learning and whole child education approaches can augment efforts to support English learners.

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| **Artificial Intelligence with solid fill****Developing expertise about ELE program models, ESL instruction, and best practices** | * Review relevant state guidance about [ELE programs](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/), key [processes](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/resources/id-assess-place-reclass.html) (identification, placement, identification, etc., language [standards](https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/WIDA-ELD-Standards-Framework-2020.pdf) and [benchmarks](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/resources/benchmarks/), and other programmatic considerations.
* Learn about [high-quality ESL instruction](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/default.html) and [curriculum](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/mcu/): what it looks like, how it can be implemented in different contexts, and effective practices and strategies.
* Collaborate with educators to select, implement, monitor effectiveness, and improve ESL instructional practices.
* Incorporate this understanding into educator observation and evaluation processes as well as school [continuous improvement](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?projectID=4591) and [strategic planning](https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/files/pelp/files/pel083p2.pdf).
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| **Meeting with solid fill****Collaborating with educators, families, and the community to better understand students** | * Learn about students’ cultural and linguistic assets, needs, academic performance, barriers that prevent their access to meaningful and rigorous opportunities to learn, goals and aspirations, and other relevant categories.
* Leverage this information to make decisions in key areas such as school improvement planning, ELE program development, ESL instruction, educator staffing and student placement, professional learning, and scheduling, etc.
* Provide authentic language supports (interpretation/translation services, using preferred method and language of communication, etc.) to promote collaboration.
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| **Connections with solid fill****Leveraging systems and resources to appropriately structure, staff, and support ESL instruction** | * Include English learners in the school’s vision and improvement plan.
* Clearly describe of your school’s program for English learners, how ESL instruction fits with other relevant program components, and educator roles and shared responsibility for promoting their success.
* Align logistics and resources (adequate instructional time, suitable physical space for ESL instruction, regular time and focus for sustained educator collaboration, sufficient licensed staff for ESL and all other courses and opportunities available, interventions and support systems, etc.) to support English learners.
* Consult ESL teachers about program decisions and resources needed and ensure they have a manageable caseload, high-quality curriculum and instructional materials, equipment, professional learning opportunities, access to information (student performance, families, available supports), etc.
* Design multi-tiered systems of support with English learners in mind.
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| **Building educator capacity to support English learners** | * Provide opportunities for ESL and other educators to learn about effective instructional practices and strategies for the students they serve such as job-embedded professional learning and coaching.
* Engage educators in exploring issues of social justice and equity related to English learners, such as issues of racism, discrimination, bias, xenophobia, etc.
* Establish collaborative structures (common planning time, professional learning communities, data inquiry cycles and protocols for jointly examining student work, peer observations, etc.) for shared responsibility on behalf of English learners.
* Differentiate feedback and support for ESL teachers based on the school’s ELE program (Sheltered English Immersion, dual language, etc.) and [ESL instructional delivery approach](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/esl-toolkit/fundamentals/delivery-approach/).
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| **Recruiting, supporting, retaining, and promoting diverse educators** | * Promote asset-based approaches and shared responsibility for English learners’ and diverse students’ success.
* Collaborate with higher education and teacher preparation programs to develop a diverse pipeline of educators.
* Identify highly effective educators and provide them with professional learning opportunities to grow their teaching practice and leadership skills.
* Regularly gather data about school climate for students, educators, and staff of color and diverse backgrounds through individual conversations or focus groups.
* Develop goals and implement change practices to address school culture and climate issues identified by educators and students from diverse backgrounds.
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**Special Considerations: Supporting ELs’ Social and Emotional Learning**

Building on what English learners bring (their strengths and assets) and attending to their needs includes supporting their social and emotional development alongside language and content learning. To do so, educators can:

* **Establish and maintaining** [**equitable learning environments**](https://edtrust.org/social-emotional-and-academic-development-through-an-equity-lens/) **where all students, including English learners, feel safe, secure, and like they can belong.** This requires school-wide integration of [social and emotional learning (SEL) efforts](https://schoolguide.casel.org/what-is-sel/equity-and-sel/) and initiatives to promote English learner success. This requires systemically identifying and building on English learners’ [linguistic and cultural diversity](https://tcf.org/content/commentary/meeting-social-emotional-learning-needs-english-learners/?session=1) in the design and implementation of SEL assessments and programs.
* **Develop social, cultural, and** [**academic**](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/culturally-responsive/) **aspects of English learners’ identity.** Highlight the value of specific aspects of students’ identity (their heritage language, specific ways they use language to bridge home, school, community, and professional environments, etc.). Provide opportunities for English learners to express their voice and act to promote change (exercise [agency](https://www.kqed.org/mindshift/43376/how-to-cultivate-student-agency-in-english-language-learners)) and succeed in academic tasks by building on what they [can do](https://wida.wisc.edu/teach/can-do/descriptors) and incorporating scaffolds and supports to challenge them. This can help students develop a view of themselves as active learners who are [intellectually capable, able to achieve at very high levels](https://www.nameorg.org/learn/positive_academic_identities.php) and [grow their skills over time](https://www.cambridge.org/elt/blog/2018/05/03/growth-mindset-efl-classroom/).

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| **Actions-at-a-Glance** |
| * Start with direction: ensure the school has a [vision for instruction](http://3fl71l2qoj4l3y6ep2tqpwra.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/PLE5.PreActivity.ELLVision.pdf) that includes high expectations for English learner success, and developing strategies, plans and mechanisms for bringing this vision to life.
* Build knowledge and skills for supporting English learners and ESL instruction, then focus on supporting educator growth focused on English learners and ways to promote student development.
* Develop processes to support [continuous improvement](https://www.edc.org/sites/default/files/uploads/primer_for_continuous_improvement.pdf) for English learners (a culture of trust and psychological safety conducive to exploring issues and new ideas; professional learning focused on teaching English learners; [short cycles of root cause exploration, strategizing, and trying out new practices](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?projectID=4591); tools for gathering evidence of teacher practice and data analysis processes to monitor effectiveness, etc.).
* Integrate school-wide efforts to improve teaching and learning for English learners with [social and emotional learning initiatives](https://schoolguide.casel.org/how-it-works/) to maximize English learners’ success.
* Gather, review, and disseminate data related to English learners’ progress in developing language and learning content by including English learners’ performance data from multiple sources ([ACCESS for ELLs](https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/access/), MCAS, results from diagnostic and formative assessments, progress towards [meeting English proficiency benchmarks](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/resources/benchmarks/), analysis of student work, etc.) in data chats, dashboards, professional learning communities (PLCs) [protocols](https://eleducation.org/resources/examining-data-protocol) and/or other relevant processes.
* Use disaggregated data about English learners’ from [state](https://app.powerbigov.us/view?r=eyJrIjoiZDcyMjUxYmUtOWFkYS00NWQ2LTllMjItMWE2Yjc4ZDQyYTY2IiwidCI6IjNlODYxZDE2LTQ4YjctNGEwZS05ODA2LThjMDRkODFiN2IyYSJ9), district, school and classroom sources as part of key processes such as school and district strategic and improvement planning and educator evaluation.
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**Instructional Planning Resources**

## **DESE Practical Tools and Resources**

[Acceleration Roadmap](https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/roadmap/) provides tools for teachers and leaders to support acceleration of student learning in the 2021–22 school year. It is designed to provide a focused and phased approach to supporting students as they return to school in the new academic year. One of the two versions available is designed specifically for building administrators.

[An Interactive Planning Guide for Distributed Leadership](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/leadership/distributed-leadership-ipg.pdf#search=%22school%20leadership%22) defines distributed leadership and provides a tool for determining readiness for distributed leadership and develop strategies for implementation.

[Conditions for School Effectiveness Self-Assessment](https://www.mass.gov/doc/school-effectiveness-self-assessment-0/download) articulate what schools need to have in place to educate their students well. They can be used as benchmarks against which schools can gauge their practice in key areas.

[Culturally Responsive Teaching & Leading](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/culturally-responsive/) provides resources that define cultural responsiveness and address its importance in our schools and classrooms, including professional development tools supporting culturally responsive teaching (such as the [Culturally Responsive Teaching Rubric](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/calibration/crt-rubric.docx)), sample [look fors](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/calibration/look-fors.docx), and a library of [classroom videos](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/prof-learning/crt-videos/) showcasing culturally responsive instruction.

[Creating and Sustaining Teacher Leadership Roles](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/leadership/create-sustain-roles.pdf) presents lessons learned from DESE's Teacher Leadership Professional Learning Network that can be used to develop ESL teacher leaders.

[District Data Team Toolkit](https://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/toolkit/) supports educators in establishing a team or cadre of staff who to who can help grow and maintain a culture of inquiry and data use to inform teaching and learning decisions and improve achievement of all students.

[Inclusive Practice Tool: WHAT TO LOOK FOR—School-Level Administrator](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/guidebook/8d-observationschadmin.pdf) is designed to identify, reinforce, and support leadership practice in inclusive school communities and serves as a guide for discussion and reflection.

[Inclusive Practice Tool: Staff Feedback Discussion Protocol](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/guidebook/8c-stafffeedbackdiscuss.pdf) can help facilitate administrator reflection and provides one approach for gathering staff feedback on an administrator’s practice through staff discussions.

[Inclusive Practice Tool: Master Schedule Review](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/guidebook/8b-masterschedreview.pdf) helps administrators review master schedules for alignment with best practices for inclusion.

**DESE Guidance**

Culturally Relevant Framework and Critical Consciousness Framework provide guidance for culturally relevant teaching and leading, including specific look fors related to supporting learners in the development of academic proficiency and academic identity in service of academic achievement as well as related student and teacher outcomes, actions, and dispositions.

[Equity Roadmap: Potential Next Steps after the Student Learning Experience Report](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/equitableaccess/resources/roadmap.html) provides starting points for addressing gaps identified through the [Student Learning Experience (SLE) Summary Report](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edwin/gateway/slereport-supp.html), including links to optional templates for planning and tracking the work of developing, implementing, and monitoring equity strategies as well as suggestions and resources tailored to specific types of equity gaps.

ESL Best Practices Quick Reference Guides provides guidance on a variety of key topics (formative assessment, racial equity and social justice, early literacy, etc.) as well as English learner student groups (students designated as long-term English learners, English learners with disabilities, etc.).

[Guidelines for the Preparation of Administrative Leaders - Professional Standards and Indicators for Administrative Leadership](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/prof-learning/leaders/educator-resources/guidelines.html?section=standard) provide guidance about what effective school leaders look like and reflect research confirming the important role of school leaders in disrupting racial inequity.

[Massachusetts Blueprint for English Learners Success](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/blueprint/default.html) outlines conditions and essential actions needed to support English learners at the classroom, school, district, and state levels. Related [Blueprint Dashboard Intro Video](https://youtu.be/VvZkjVvp6d8) and Blueprint for English Learner Success [School Level Quick Reference Guides](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/blueprint/dashboard.html) (QRGs) provides ideas for how school leaders can implement actions that support conditions for English learners’ success.

[Massachusetts Turnaround Practices Field Guide](https://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/howitworks/turnaround-practices-field-guide.pdf#search=%22school%20leaders%22) provides a guidance for supporting school improvement/turnaround efforts (see turnaround practices at a glance, p. 3; relationship between the Turnaround Practices and the Conditions for School Effectiveness, p. 4; cross practice themes p. 5-7).

[Principal Supervisor Resources](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/supervisor/) provide tools for conducting meaningful and effective school visits that can be used alongside the Massachusetts [Blueprint for English Learner Success](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/blueprint/blueprint.docx) to gather data about school culture and practice to plan for improvement.

**Federal Resources**

[English Learner Toolkit - Chapter 3: Staffing and Resourcing English Learner Programs](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap3.pdf) provides guiding questions for structuring and supporting programs for English learners and tools school for supporting the professional learning of teachers of English Learners.

[National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition](https://ncela.ed.gov/teacher-resources) offers a myriad of resources focused on teaching and leading to support English learners, including [Culturally Responsive School Practices to Promote the Success of Hispanic English Learners](https://ncela.ed.gov/files/webinars/20201019-CultPractices-OELA-508.pdf) and [Aligning Structural and Instructional Practices to Promote English Learner Success During the 2020–21 School Year](https://ncela.ed.gov/files/webinars/DistLearn2Webinar_FINAL_07222020_OELA.pdf).

**Other Featured Resources**

**Resources on effective school leadership to promote equity:**

[How Principals Affect Students and Schools: A Systematic Synthesis of Two Decades of Research](https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/how-principals-affect-students-and-schools-a-systematic-synthesis-of-two-decades-of-research.aspx) and [The Role of Assistant Principals: Evidence and Insights for Advancing School Leadership](https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/the-role-of-assistant-principals-evidence-insights-for-advancing-school-leadership.aspx) highlight the role of school leaders to promote equity/using equity as a lens for leadership

[Districts Advancing Racial Equity (DARE) tool](https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/reln-districts-advancing-racial-equity-tool) captures research-informed, high-leverage aspects of schooling that leaders must address to create systems that build on the strengths of and respond to the needs of students of color.

[Analysis of School Vision and ELLs](http://3fl71l2qoj4l3y6ep2tqpwra.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/PLE5.PreActivity.ELLVision.pdf) provides guiding questions to analyze the degree to which vision statements are inclusive of and reflect the unique experiences of English learners along with examples.

[Note on Racial Equity on School Systems](https://pelp.fas.harvard.edu/files/pelp/files/pel096p2.pdf) provides ideas to support leaders to develop and strengthen a critical lens for seeing the inequalities that exist within their organizations so they can address barriers to progress and their root causes more directly.

Resources from the Leadership Academy: [Culturally Responsive Leadership in K-12 Education](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BgYh2gfjlU) (webinar), [Portrait of a Culturally Responsive School](https://www.leadershipacademy.org/resources/portrait-of-a-culturally-responsive-school-2/), [Equity at Work](https://www.leadershipacademy.org/resources/equity-at-work-strategic-action-planning-guide/), and [Culturally Responsive Leadership: A Framework For School & School System Leaders](https://www.leadershipacademy.org/resources/culturally-responsive-leadership-a-framework-for-school-school-system-leaders/) (provides guidance for school and school system leaders to shift their practices and beliefs to create culturally responsive learning environments for their students and staff; it imbues culturally responsive actions across all levels of education leadership, clearly articulating the progression from aspiring principal to superintendent).

[BELE Framework](https://belenetwork.org/library_resources/the-bele-framework/) provides guidance for transforming student experiences and learning outcomes across educational levels (classroom, school, district, and state).

**Resources for integrating social and emotional learning (SEL):**

[CASEL Guide to School-wide SEL Essentials](https://schoolguide.casel.org/how-it-works/) leads school-based teams through a process for systemic SEL implementation, helping schools coordinate and build upon SEL practices and programs to create an environment that infuses SEL into every part of students’ educational experience and promotes equitable outcomes for all students.

[Emerging Insights on Advancing Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) as a Lever for Advancing Equity](https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/CASEL-Equity-Insights-Report.pdf) presents lessons learned from districts as they approach, understand, and seek to leverage systemic SEL to surface and examine inequities, and co-construct solutions that result in more equitable learning environments and outcomes for students.

[Navigating SEL from the Inside Out](https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Navigating-Social-and-Emotional-Learning-from-the-Inside-Out.pdf) presents background information on social and emotional learning (SEL), including a framework, and individual profiles for 25 programs that describe in detail the skill focus, instructional strategies, program components (see Program Components that Support Effectiveness and Address Challenges on p. 25-26 and descriptions of in-school, lesson-based curricula for promoting SEL on p. 42-210).

[Social, Emotional, and Academic Development Through an Equity Lens](https://edtrust.org/social-emotional-and-academic-development-through-an-equity-lens/) provides a framework and action items for school leaders to revisit what is already in place first, and ask whether they equitably foster belonging, give challenging opportunities for students to thrive, and provide the supports students need.

**Resources for evaluating and supporting teachers of English learners:**

[Enhancing Classroom Observations with Knowledge About Effective Practices for ELLs](https://old.coe.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/lopez_ua_jan10conf.pdf) and [Promoting Success for Teachers of English Learners Through Structured Observations](https://www.air.org/project/promoting-success-teachers-english-learners-through-structured-observations) are tools administrators can use to revamp classroom observations considering English learners needs.

[Site-Based Leadership for Improving Instruction](https://edpolicy.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publications/scope-site-based-leadership.pdf) analyzes the leadership of one principal as an example of how leaders can develop instructional capacity to improve teaching and learning and provides a conceptual framework to define instructional capacity and how to develop it.

**Resources featuring effective schools for English learners:**

[Administrators in Action: Four Steps for Strengthening your EL Program](https://www.colorincolorado.org/blog/administrators-action-four-steps-strengthening-your-el-program) features four recommended steps for administrators to strengthen their English language programs in the greater context of more rigorous academic standards.

[Creating Schools That Support Success for English Language Learners](https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED519412.pdf) provides ideas for how school administrators can mitigate barriers to the linguistic and academic achievement of English learners and how they can provide better support to teachers as they learn and implement evidence-based instructional practices for English learners.

[Community Schools Playbook](https://communityschools.futureforlearning.org/) provides tools for advancing community schools as a strategy to improve schools, provide more equitable opportunities, and prepare students for success in life and as citizen (community schools provide each student with the resources, opportunities, and support that make academic success possible and that create strong ties among families, students, schools, and community).

[Guidebook on Designing, Delivering and Evaluating Services for English Learners](https://www.cde.state.co.us/cde_english/guidebookoct16) presents promising practices for teaching English learners many corresponding to the Features of High-Quality ESL (see p. 42-54 for explanations of promising practices, Appendix M: Core ESL Instructional Practices Teacher Self-Assessment Guide, and Appendix W: Educating ELs at the High School Level).

[Internationals Network for Public Schools: A Deeper Learning Approach to Supporting English Learners](https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Deeper_Learning_Networks_CS_Internationals_REPORT.pdf) highlights how this network re-creates, sustains, and spreads its complex and equity-oriented model by describing it and how it designs schools with structures to bring its vision and commitments to life. It also identifies the systems and structures that have enabled Internationals to re-create its model in a high-quality manner (see the Executive Summary and p. 5-15).

[Principals Supporting Teachers in Providing Language Instruction to English Learners in Elementary School](https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1146817.pdf) examines systems of support that principals establish to support teachers with the academic achievement of English learners and offers recommendations.

[Schools to Learn From: How Six High Schools Graduate English Language Learners College and Career Ready](https://ell.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/Schools%20to%20Learn%20From%20.pdf) profiles six public high schools that have demonstrated extraordinary academic outcomes for English Learners (see the Executive Summary on p. 2-5).

 [**For additional resources you may wish to consult, click here.**](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/esl-toolkit/tools-resources/)