# **Required Actions Relative to English Learners (EL) - Guidance for Schools with EL Populations**

[An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2010/Chapter12) lays out specific strategies for addressing achievement gaps in schools identified as underperforming. These schools are granted statutory flexibilities to enhance their efforts to implement the strategies. The Achievement Gap Act requires that as part of their turnaround plans, underperforming schools with English Learners (ELs) “shall develop alternative English Language learning programs for limited English proficient students, notwithstanding the requirements of Chapter 71A.” G.L. c. 69, § 1J(c). This allows districts/schools to implement programs other than Sheltered English Immersion (SEI), without having to meet the requirements outlined in [Chapter 71A, English Language Education in Public Schools](http://www.malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71A).[[1]](#footnote-1) This flexibility recognizes that SEI may not be meeting the needs of all ELs and that underperforming schools must have the flexibility to swiftly develop the program that best meets the needs of their EL population.

If as part of the turnaround planning process, a school would like to implement an alternative ELE program, the district should include the following information in the turnaround plan:

1. A short description of the proposed new ELE program, including the educational theory behind the program, plans for providing ESL and partner language instruction, information related to curriculum and educator professional development, and plans for the ongoing monitoring of the program.
2. The demographics of the student population to be served by the proposed new ELE program.
3. Confirmation that the district consulted with the English Learner Parent Advisory Council (ELPAC), if applicable.[[2]](#footnote-2)

**Examples of Alternative ELE Programs Include, but are not limited to:**

* **Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE):** a program designed to allow English learners to achieve long-term academic success through English-medium instruction in general education classrooms; provided, however, that the native language of the English learner is used to support the student’s development of English and content learning and is then gradually phased out of instruction as a student’s English proficiency increases; and provided further, that “transitional bilingual education” may be initiated at any level, including middle and high school, but shall not be intended as a method of instruction for a student’s entire academic career.
* **Dual Language Education/Two-way Immersion:** “Dual language education” or “2-way immersion”, a program designed to promote bilingualism and biliteracy, cross-cultural competency and high levels of academic achievement for both native English speakers and English learners from a single language background; provided, however, that students shall develop and maintain their first language while adding a second language and shall receive the same core curriculum as all students in the state; provided further, that the instruction for such students shall be provided in 2 languages throughout the program; and provided further, that “2-way immersion” programs may begin in the early grades, including pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, and may continue through the secondary level
* **A combination of programs, or other proposal,** to be reviewed and approved by ESE as part of the school’s Turnaround Plan submission. As with TBE and two-way immersion, this may include programs that incorporate native language supports and/or instruction.

**EL Parent Advisory Council (PACs)**

Underperforming schools that offer an EL program(s) must establish an EL PAC comprised of parents/guardians of students that are enrolled in EL program(s) in the school. The role of the EL PAC is to advise the school on matters that pertain to the education of these students, to meet regularly with the school to help plan and develop programs that will improve the education of ELs, and to participate in the review of the school’s turnaround plan. More guidance on establishing and implementing EL PACs can be found on the [Department’s website](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/guidance/default.html).

DESE offers a number of resources related to professional development for teachers of ELs, such as:

* [RETELL Extending the Learning](http://www.doe.mass.edu/retell/courses.html)
* [ESL Model Curriculum Unit Videos](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/curriculum/mcu-videos.html)
* [WIDA Implementation Guidance (2013)](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/wida/Guidance-p1.pdf)
* [ELE Leadership Networks](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/ele-leaders/)
* [Other EL Professional Development resources](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/profdev.html)

1. Chapter 71A was amended by the [LOOK Act](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/look-act.html). Under the LOOK Act, signed into law in November 2017, a district that intends to offer a new SEI program or an “alternative instructional English learner program” (a program other than SEI) for ELs must submit certain information for the Department’s review. The alternative instructional English learner program may be transitional bilingual (TBE), Two-Way Immersion (TWI)/Dual Language Education (DLE), or another program type. Programs must be research-based and include both subject matter content and an English language acquisition component, and must be based on the linguistic and educational needs of the ELs in the school district. By law, a district that intends to offer a new SEI or alternative instructional English learner program in the next academic year shall submit, not later than January 1 of the current academic year, to the department and the district’s parent advisory council, on a form prescribed by the department, a description of:

   (i) the new instructional program selected;

   (ii) how the new SEI or alternative instructional program meets the needs of the population to be served;

   (iii) the number and expected qualifications of the program’s educators; and

   (iv) the number, native language and English proficiency levels of students expected to be enrolled in the program. G.L. c. 71A, § 4; 603 CMR 14.04. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Any district that serves 100 or more ELs or in which ELs comprise at least 5% of the student population must establish an ELPAC. Any school designated as underperforming or chronically underperforming that operates an ELE program, must also establish an ELPAC. 603 CMR 14.09. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)