

Teaming Up: Collaborating to Support ELs with Disabilities

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PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Carolyn Stanford Taylor, State Superintendent

ELs with Disabilities

- Students identified as ELs who are then identified as needing special education services.
- Students with disabilities, whose disabilities challenge us to determine if English language access is a barrier to learning.



ELs with Disabilities Discussion

Reshaping the conversations around ELs with disabilities.

- Collaborative systems of support for ELs with disabilities.
- Resources to explore in key presentation topics areas.



Myths/Perceptions

I should have my child identified for special education because at least my child will get the extra support they need. Isn't something better than nothing?

We apply the two year rule. We wait two years before we consider a referral.

"Not my problem."

If a student is identified as requiring special education services, language instruction is not required. Special Ed. trumps EL identification.

Since we use universal instructional practices for English learners, if the students aren't making progress, we know that something else is going on.

If the student has an IEP, we really don't need to administer the ACCESS test anymore. The student isn't an English language learner.





Over Identification

Nationwide, the majority of English learners (ELs) identified as having a disability are classified as having Specific Learning Disability (SLD)

While the identification rates for ELs in all disability categories were roughly consistent with the rates for the general population of students in 2013-14; the rate of identification of ELs for SLD (50%) is well above the rate for the general population of students identified as having SLD (39%) according to the IDEA Data Center in 2015.

Source: WIDA Focus Bulletin Identifying ELLs with Specific Learning Disabilities: Facts, Advice, and Resources for School Teams <https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/FocusOn-Identifying-ELLs-with-Specific-Learning-Disabilities.pdf>





Over Identification

“The EL group classified as having limited L1 and L2 proficiency tended to show greater vulnerability to being placed in a disability category. In primary school, this group was about four times as likely to be placed in speech/language impairment (SLI) elementary programs and more than twice as having likely to be identified as having SLD than ELs with limited L2 proficiency ([Artiles et al., 2005](#))*.”

*Source: Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English: Promising Futures (2017) National Academy of Science, Medicine and Engineering. <http://nap.edu/24677>.



Under Representation

Dual language learners (DLLs)/English learners (ELs) are less likely than their non-DLL/EL peers to be referred to early intervention and early special education programs, with potentially serious consequences.

Evidence indicates that early childhood education, home visiting, health, and other professionals are not identifying all DLLs/ELs with special needs—such as those with autism spectrum disorder and language impairment—who could benefit from such programs. (NASME, 2017*)

*Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English: Promising Futures (2017)

National Academy of Science, Medicine and Engineering, <http://nap.edu/24677>.

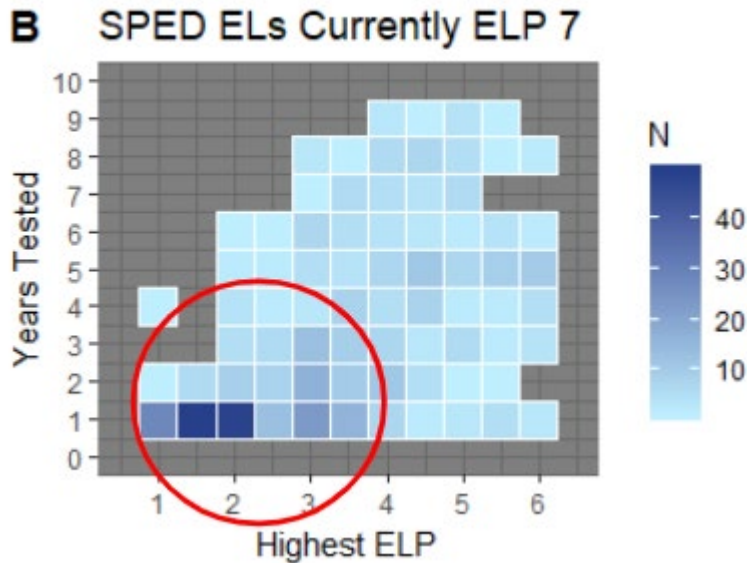


Accurate Identification

- A significant number of studies show that there is no great risk of student learning two languages as having Intellectual disabilities as monolingual students. Nor, do we have any evidence that bilingual student will not learn the same way as their monolingual peers. (NASME, 2017)
- Growing up with two languages does not place dual language learners/English learners at greater risk for having a language impairment or other disability or when they have a disability, for compromising their language or cognitive develop. (NASME, 2017)
- If there's a disability, there is evidence of this disability in a student's first and second language.



Loss of EL Status for students with IEPs



Students with disabilities that had EL status removed by about 1st grade.

- Potentially a real issue. Is this just hard to figure out? Was it determined that EL services should instead be replaced with special education services?



Rethinking the Conversation

- State and Local Education Agencies (LEAs), a.k.a. School districts, must ensure that all [English learner] students who may have a disability, like all other students who may have a disability and need services under IDEA or Section 504, are located, identified, and evaluated for special education and disability-related services in a timely manner” (CCSSO, 2017*)
- Expertise in second language acquisition and English language development is critical when aligning IEP goals with language objectives (CCSSO,2017).

Park, S., Martinez, M., Chou, F. (2017) CCSSO English Learners with Disabilities Guide. Washington DC: Council of Chief State School Officers.https://ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/CCSSO%20ELSWD%20Guide_Final%2011%2011%202017.pdf



Rethinking the Conversation: Assessments

- Many assessments used as district-based measures of student progress have been normed on native-English speaking students only.
- L1 (first/native language) assessments are likely normed to native first language speakers and not necessarily to simultaneous bilingual language learners. ELs represent a small segment (if any of the sample).
- Students may or may not have literacy in their first language, making the use of LI literacy assessments a challenge.



Opportunities

- Evaluate programs for disproportionality.
- Refine schools process and protocols for referring ELs to special education.
- Establish interdisciplinary teams.
- Provide supports and interventions that include language and content.
- Shore up universal classroom instruction and language instruction education programs.
- Use multiple valid reliable measures.
- Work with knowledgeable and informed parents
 - And informed interpreters and translators.



School District Evaluation

ELLs Referred for Special Education Evaluation and Diagnosed With a Disability*

Debbie Zacarian (2011) <http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/school-district-survey-evaluation-english-learners-special-education>

Significant Disproportionality in Special Education

<https://dpi.wi.gov/sped/significant-disproportionality-special-education>



What is English Language Proficiency and why does it matter?





Performance Definitions for the Levels of English Language Proficiency in Grades K-12

At the given level of English language proficiency, English language learners will process, understand, produce, or use:

6 Reaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• specialized or technical language reflective of the content areas at grade level• a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse as required by the specified grade level• oral or written communication in English comparable to English-proficient peers
5 Bridging	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• specialized or technical language of the content areas• a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse, including stories, essays, or reports• oral or written language approaching comparability to that of English-proficient peers when presented with grade-level material
4 Expanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• specific and some technical language of the content areas• a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in oral discourse or multiple, related sentences, or paragraphs• oral or written language with minimal phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that do not impede the overall meaning of the communication when presented with oral or written connected discourse with sensory, graphic, or interactive support
3 Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• general and some specific language of the content areas• expanded sentences in oral interaction or written paragraphs• oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that may impede the communication, but retain much of its meaning, when presented with oral or written, narrative, or expository descriptions with sensory, graphic, or interactive support
2 Beginning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• general language related to the content areas• phrases or short sentences• oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede the meaning of the communication when presented with one- to multiple-step commands, directions, questions, or a series of statements with sensory, graphic, or interactive support
1 Entering	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• pictorial or graphic representation of the language of the content areas• words, phrases, or chunks of language when presented with one-step commands, directions, WH-, choice, or yes/no questions, or statements with sensory, graphic, or interactive support• oral language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede meaning when presented with basic oral commands, direct questions, or simple statements with sensory, graphic, or interactive support

English Language Proficiency Coding

Students with ELP classifications of 1-5 are English Learners

1 = ELL/EL/LEP Beginning Preproduction. (WIDA label: Entering)

2 = ELL/EL/LEP Beginning Production. (WIDA label: Beginning)

3 = ELL/EL/LEP Intermediate. (WIDA label: Developing)

4 = ELL/EL/LEP Advanced Intermediate. (WIDA label: Expanding)

5 = ELL/EL/LEP Advanced. (WIDA label: Bridging)

6 = Formerly ELL/EL/LEP, now fully English proficient

7 = Fully English proficient, never ELL/EL/LEP



BICS/CALP

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills
Cognitively Undemanding
(1-2 Years)

Context Embedded

Context Reduced

Cognitively Demanding (CALP)
(5-7 years)

Meeting the Learners' Needs

English language learners communicate for social and instructional purposes within the school setting

ELP Level 1

Speaking & Writing

- Words, phrases, or chunks of language
- Single words used to represent ideas

Listening & Reading

- Single statements or questions
- An idea within words, phrases, or chunks of language

English Language Development Standard

Can Do

ELP Level 1 Entering:

Listening

Process arguments by

- Signaling agreement or disagreement of short oral statements or questions
- Identifying points of view (e.g., first or third person) from short statements

Oral Language

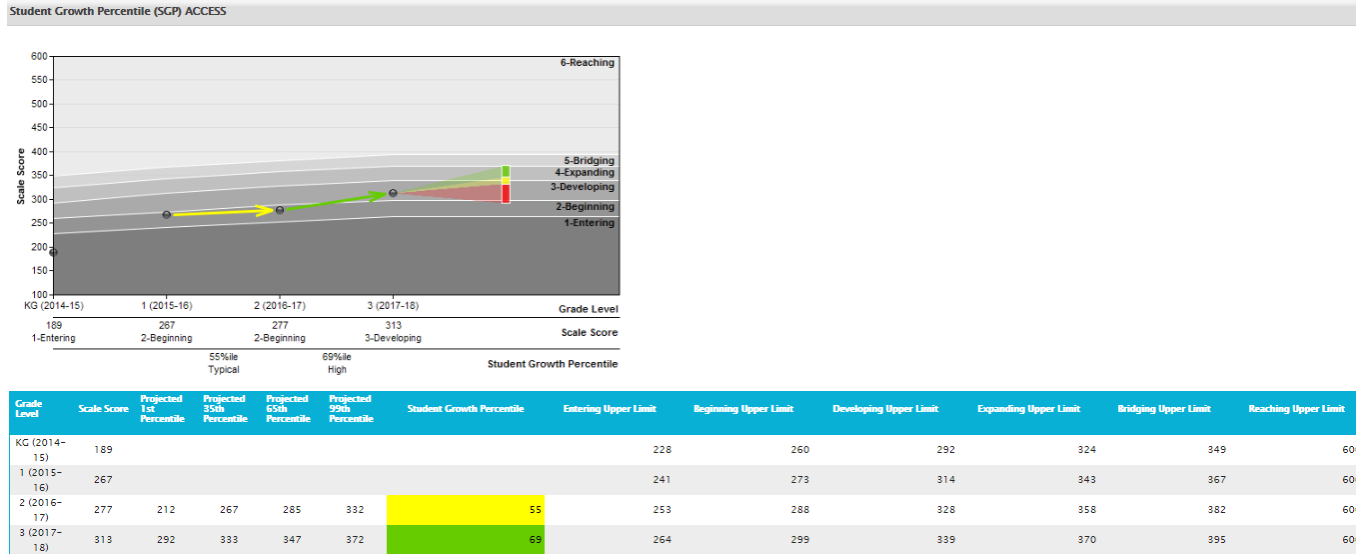
Discuss by

- Using appropriate nonverbal behaviors to show engagement and listening
- Contributing to conversations by sharing own work (e.g., pictures, posters, graphics)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

ACCESS - WISEdash



Student level SGP. SGPs from 2016-17 onward. All ACCESS scores graphed prior to 2016-17. SGP is based on students of the same ELP level in the same grade. The last 2 years of data go into each SGP. Predictive fan is based on similar students the prior year.

Creating Processes and Procedures

San Diego

https://www.sandiegounified.org/sites/default/files_link/district/files/dept/special_education/ParentServices/CEP-EL%20Manual.pdf

Michigan's Guidance Document ELs with Suspected Disabilities

https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/ELs_with_Suspected_Disabilities_Guidance_Handbook_-_2017_558692_7.pdf

English Learners with Disabilities Guide

<https://ccsso.org/resource-library/ccsso-english-learners-disabilities-guide>

Identifying ELLs with Specific Learning Disabilities: Facts, Advice, and Resources for School Teams

<https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/FocusOn-Identifying-ELLs-with-Specific-Learning-Disabilities.pdf>



Collaboration and Teams

Collaboration between general education teachers, special education teachers, English learner experts, families, cultural liaisons, and other members of the IEP team should also occur when monitoring special and general education instruction and services for students.

To facilitate collaboration with families, interpretation and timely translation of materials should be offered, as required by federal law (OSEP, 2016).

School staff must learn to engage with parents who don't speak English.



Common Characteristics of Successful School Based Teams

- Positive, open communication
- Ability to meet together regularly (even if only for 30 minutes weekly),
- Respect for one another
- Willingness to be flexible and open-minded
- Shared responsibility and accountability
- Expertise, competence, work ethic
- Site-level administrative support
- General agreement on mission or role of team,
- On site together one day per week.

*SDUSD Forming a
Transdisciplinary Team: A Process
Manual, p. 1-2)*



Advocating for Collaboration

- Ensure that there is English Language experts are at the table.
- Self advocate and advocate for others
- Build common understanding and foundational knowledge around language and difference for all team members.
- Recognize the professionalism of all individuals present
- Delineate the role of the EL expert and the interpreters.



Forming Transdisciplinary Teams

Sample Frameworks for Approaching Collaboration

San Diego Unified School District – Forming Transdisciplinary Teams: A Process Manual

https://www.sandi.net/staff/sites/default/files_link/staff/docs/special-education/Forms%20for%20Procedures%20Manual/transdisciplinary_manual.pdf

USED, Office of Special Education Programs – The Collaboration Continuum

[http://simplifymy.s3-website-us-east-](http://simplifymy.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com/c%2FtitleI%2Fsched%2Ffiles%2Fhandouts%2FOSEP-OESE%20Collaboration%20Continuum%207-18-1.pdf)

[1.amazonaws.com/c%2FtitleI%2Fsched%2Ffiles%2Fhandouts%2FOSEP-OESE%20Collaboration%20Continuum%207-18-1.pdf](http://simplifymy.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com/c%2FtitleI%2Fsched%2Ffiles%2Fhandouts%2FOSEP-OESE%20Collaboration%20Continuum%207-18-1.pdf)



Individuals and Experts Multidisciplinary Teams

Expertise

- Second language acquisition, multilingualism, and English language development
- Student's home language and culture
- Culturally and linguistically responsive practices relevant to the linguistic and cultural needs of the student in question
- Bilingual evaluation
- Special education
- Curriculum, general education content
- Family and community engagement
- Related services (as appropriate), such as speech-language pathology, occupational therapy, etc.

Individuals

- Parents/family members
- General education teachers
- Special education teachers
- English learner and bilingual education teachers/experts
- Intervention specialists
- Other service providers, especially speech language pathologists who have expertise in language development
- School administrators
- School psychologists
- Bilingual evaluators
- Trained and qualified interpreters
- Cultural liaisons
- Student (when appropriate)



Supporting ELs with Disabilities

Collaboration between general education teachers, special education teachers, English learner experts, families, cultural liaisons, and other members of the IEP team should also occur when monitoring special and general education instruction and services for students.

Recommendations:

- Integrate Language Standards and Contents Standards
- Draw on the expertise of language teachers and special education teachers
- Support culturally responsive practices

Evidence suggests that interventions tailored to an individual's patterns of strengths and weaknesses can have a greater impact than those that are standardized (Richards-Tutor et al., 2016). (NASME, 2017)





Universal Instruction

WIDA English Language Development Standards

<https://wida.wisc.edu/teach/standards/eld>

High Quality Instruction

<https://www.wisconsinrticenter.org/educators/understanding-rti-a-systems-view.html> - Include Culturally responsive practices

Understanding Your Students' Experiences

<https://www.shadowastudent.org/>

Universal Design for Learning

<http://www.cast.org/our-work/about-udl.html#.XGIMPDNKi70>

- Attend to the language needs of students





Meaningful Access to Content Instruction*

1. Integrate instructional support into the general design and delivery of a lesson or activity, rather than adding it on as an accommodation;
1. Provide language development instruction that focuses on using complex language in meaningful experiences, rather than only focusing on discrete parts of language
1. Provide explicit instruction on the genres associated with schooling.

Identifying ELLs with Specific Learning Disabilities: Facts, Advice, and Resources for School Teams
<https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/FocusOn-Identifying-ELLs-with-Specific-Learning-Disabilities.pdf>. p.9.





“Effective” Language Instruction Education Programs

LIEPs should demonstrably result in improved English language proficiency and academic achievement for ELs to be considered “effective” for purposes of the Title III requirement.

States are required to monitor LEAs implementing Title III and to take steps to further assist districts in reaching this goal.

According to [Consteñeda v Pickard \(1981\)](#)¹, language education program must be:

- Based on sound educational theory
- Implemented effectively with resources for personnel, instructional materials, and space
- Proven effective in overcoming language barriers

¹[Castañeda v. Pickard](#)



5 Key Components of Effective LIEP

Each EL must receive federally mandated ESL instruction This instruction is not an intervention but rather core instruction for eligible student includes gains in language proficiency.

- Language Development
- Literacy Development (L1 and/or L2)
- Academic Content Support
- Authentic Family Engagement
- Additive multilingual/bilingual environment





Professional Learning Resources

ELD Standards

www.WIDA.us

Teaching English Language Learners: Effective Instructional Practices

<https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/ell/>

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

<https://dpi.wi.gov/wiselearn/professional-learning>



Valid Reliable Measurements

Evaluators need to be trained to conduct the evaluation and interpret the results, including knowing how to differentiate between slow language development that is due to a lack of supporting conditions (e.g., too little exposure) and a disability?

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education (2015, Ch. 6).

The evaluation process needs to provide an accurate and detailed account of what a child knows and can do developmentally, academically, and functionally in both languages. (NASME)

Resource: Rtl-Based SLD Toolkit

<http://rtinetwork.org/getstarted/sld-identification-toolkit/ld-identification-toolkit-considerations-for-ell#Expertise>





Valid Reliable Classroom Based Measures

Appropriate use of CBMs with ELs:

- Use tools with demonstrated reliability and validity to identify and monitor students' need for instructional support in reading in both L1 and English (L2).
- Assess students' language skills in L1 and L2 to provide an appropriate context for evaluation of current levels of performance.
- Evaluate the potential effect of the process of L1 and L2 acquisition on current performance.
- Plan instruction based on what is known about students' current level of performance and their literacy experiences in L1 and L2. (NASME p. 377).





Connecting Families Resources

English Learner Family Toolkit

https://ncela.ed.gov/files/family_toolkit/EL-Family-Tool-Kit-All.pdf

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

<https://dpi.wi.gov/>

Family Engagement Resources

www.WIDA.us



Engaging Families and Interpreters (Paraprofessionals)

- Educate Interpreters and Translators about the rights of families for both special education and language education services. (USED EL Toolkit)
- Build families awareness of how supporting a students first language with help a student acquire a second language.
- Increase Interpreters awareness of the protected rights of language learners. (Ambassadors)
- Develop staff awareness of how to work with interpreters and translators.



Summary and Action Steps

- Explore trend. Do we over or under identify ELs for Special Education?
- Create systems that take into account the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students.
- Create truly equitable teams to make decisions about culturally and linguistically diverse students.



Summary and Action Steps

- Enhance instruction at the universal level and provide effective language instruction programs.
- Build interventions with language and content in mind.
- Have trained staff use valid reliable culturally appropriate measures (multiple).
- Work with knowledgeable and informed parents
 - And informed interpreters and translators.



Thank you!



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Tony Evers, PhD, State Superintendent