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Introduction

Purpose
The purpose of this resource is to support Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in their efforts to ensure a strong start to the 2020-2021 school year. Included here are essential practices for maintaining and enhancing bilingual education and English as a second language (ESL) program services for English learners. Additionally, this resource will prepare a range of educators to ensure English learners have safe and equitable learning experiences with authentic and purposeful opportunities that promote their continued language development and academic achievement.

Target Audiences
This resource document is aimed at the target audiences described below:

- **Administrative Leadership**, which includes superintendents, chief academic officers, directors/coordinates of bilingual/ESL programs, principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches, counselors, and lead teachers/department chairs.
- **Instructors**, which includes bilingual education teachers, ESL teachers, interventionists, paraprofessionals, content teachers of English learners, as well as other educators who provide instruction to ELs such as special education teachers and gifted and talented teachers.

Design

*Essential Practices* for the target audiences are provided to address the following five categories, which align to the [TEA English Learner Program Implementation Rubrics](#):

- Program Model Design
- Staffing and Professional Development
- Instructional Design: Lesson Planning and Curriculum
- Instructional Design: Methods and Resources
- Family and Community Engagement

First, the Program Model Design section communicates the *Essential Practices* for both target audiences. Then, the Administrative Leadership and Instructors sections that follow explain the *Essential Practices* for the remaining four categories above. Throughout, the *Essential Practices* target adjustments for on-campus and remote learning environments.

Resources

Embedded resources have been included to provide examples of the types of tools that can operationalize the *Essential Practices*.

- Embedded resource examples have free access (full or partial) and are already commonly used across Texas LEAs. Some resources may require registration if not currently utilized.
- These example resources are not endorsements by the TEA. In fact, LEAs are encouraged to leverage the familiarity of currently used resources and knowledge gained through springtime distance learning.
- Additionally, LEA examples have been provided to springboard ideas for other LEAs as they implement these essential practices. LEA examples may contain resources managed by third parties and are not endorsements by the TEA.

*For information regarding compliance for English Learner Program Services and Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) Procedures (including identification, reclassification, teacher certification, etc.), please see the continuously updated SY 20-21 English Learner Guidance Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on the [TEA COVID-19 Support: Special Populations](#) webpage.*
Program Model Design

Program Continuity

- Prioritize and implement bilingual education and ESL program goals for any learning environment.
  
  - Dual language immersion (DLI) one-way and two-way: Provide daily literacy opportunities in both the partner language (e.g. Spanish, Vietnamese) and in English.
    - Keep in mind that the partner language may be most vulnerable to language loss if a balanced linguistic environment was not maintained during the spring and summer and may need strategic emphasis for acceleration.
    - Prioritize partner language instruction in synchronous remote learning.
    - Leverage asynchronous remote learning for opportunities to practice partner language in oral and written responses to teacher prompts as well as other students’ responses.
  
  - Transitional bilingual education (TBE) early-exit and late-exit: Consider where students are in the transition from their primary language to English.
    - For remote learning environments, mirror the roles of language usage and access as implemented in the classroom.
    - Ensure partner language expectations are maintained and not phased out early due to remote learning environment.
    - Primary language levels may have stagnated; prioritize routines for primary language literacy development.
  
  - English as a second language (ESL) content-based and pull-out: Amplify linguistic supports typically used in the classroom to increase support through remote learning.
    - Intentionality and strategic adjustments may be needed to provide frequent, meaningful opportunities for student interaction during on-campus instruction due to social-distancing practices.
    - Coordination of content and language instruction may require strategic planning from multiple staff members for remote learning.

- Continuously include input from bilingual/ESL program leaders/specialists in LEA level and campus level decisions for teachers, students, and families.

- Provide targeted support for the specific needs of newcomers, refugee/asylee students, and students with interrupted formal education (SIFE), coordinating with local support organizations as needed. Explore the following resources:
  - Supporting Immigrants and Refugees During Remote Learning (Recorded webinar - running time 41:28; includes resources for family engagement @13:55 and methods for supporting families with no internet @25:42)
  - A Culturally Responsive Guide to Fostering the Inclusion of Immigrant-Origin Students (UCLA)
  - Newcomer Toolkit (USDE)

Collaboration

- Connect campuses and teachers within the LEA that provide similar programs to foster collaboration related to bilingual education and/or ESL program services. Provide expectations for regular coordination.
• Coordinate support for English learners who are also served by other special programs, such as special education, 504, response to intervention, dyslexia, gifted and talented, etc., by regularly facilitating collaboration among bilingual/ESL teachers and teachers of other special programs. Provide expectations for regular coordination and academic data sharing and analysis.

• Develop a system for planning, inventory gathering, and delivery to ensure that each campus has access to the same materials and resources, including equitable resources in the partner language of the bilingual education program (e.g. Spanish, Vietnamese).
Essential Practices for Administrative Leadership

Administrative Leadership may include superintendents, chief academic officers, directors/coordinators of bilingual/ESL, principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches, counselors, and lead teachers/department chairs.

Staffing and Professional Development

Human Capital

- Strategically assign bilingual/ESL program staff to provide equitable services for English learners in all learning environments.
- Maximize the expertise of bilingual/ESL program leaders/specialists throughout the LEA to share resources and instructional methods. For example, use specialists to record lessons or voice-over PowerPoints for consistency in asynchronous learning and/or as a support for classroom teachers.
- Utilize bilingual/ESL LEA or campus leaders, instructional specialists, and support staff (interventionists, paraprofessionals, etc.) in facilitating lesson planning that is appropriate for English learners at all levels of English proficiency.
- Provide resources for supporting teachers’ mental health and well-being and communicate the importance of mental, emotional, and physical wellness.

Integration

- Emphasize the integration of support for English learners by aligning professional development support for teachers of English learners regarding second language acquisition with general, LEA-wide instructional professional development structures and expectations. For example, create a comparison chart to show how key instructional supports for English learners fall within the components of the LEA’s created or adopted instructional framework/expectations.
- Develop a protocol for virtual “walk-throughs” specific to providing linguistic support within a remote learning environment that enables administrators/instructional coaches to observe teachers and provide authentic feedback. Embed or align this walk-through protocol with LEA- or campus-wide feedback processes.

Training

- Provide ongoing, job-embedded training on supporting second language acquisition within the remote learning setting for all teachers who serve English learners.
  - Provide ongoing training or support videos for utilizing the various functionalities of the virtual learning platforms, such as managing Zoom breakout rooms (video) and utilizing Microsoft TEAMS online classes (video).
  - Encourage co-teaching or peer coaching to support teachers’ varied levels of skill and comfort with technology, as they build skills and confidence.
  - Ensure FERPA regulations and remote learning safety and security measures are understood and observed across the LEA. Utilize the TEA COVID-19 FAQs for these topics under the categories of Information Technology and Miscellaneous.
- Deliver targeted training for paraprofessionals to support instruction, including co-teaching and co-planning training for teachers and paraprofessionals, particularly in remote learning.
- Diversify professional development and coaching support of teachers with varying levels of expertise in methods for supporting second language acquisition, providing mentorship to new or novice teachers by designated master teachers with demonstrated effectiveness in
supporting English learners. Depending on staffing numbers, create cohorts of new or novice teachers as an added layer of support and idea sharing.

- Contact the region’s Education Service Center (ESC) for identified LEA or campus professional development needs. Additionally, access all twenty regional ESC’s at-home learning resources to support English learners, their families, and their educators.

**Instructional Design – Lesson Planning and Curriculum**

**Integration**
- Proactively analyze current systems in place that support content instruction to include supports for teachers of English learners in providing linguistic accommodations.
- Consider the Texas Home Learning curriculum resources (all or specific grades/contents) to provide high quality, digitally designed materials for teachers, students and families.

**Coordination**
- Facilitate collaboration between LEA and/or campus level instructional specialists/coaches and teachers of English learners to ensure both linguistic and academic instructional support are consistently provided.
- Facilitate intentionally designed co-planning and co-teaching practices (with language specialists or paraprofessionals) that adapt to the learning environment.

**Progress Monitoring**
- Set expectations for periodic formative assessments and progress monitoring of the academic and language proficiency of English learners.
- Systemize the use of the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) **Proficiency Level Descriptors (PLDs)**, along with other familiar tools, to track and measure linguistic progress.
- Ensure English learners’ academic progress is equitably measured by setting expectations for linguistic supports that are commensurate to the students’ proficiency levels, allowing students equitable opportunities to access content and demonstrate mastery.
- Schedule regular analysis of formative assessments and progress monitoring data to inform adjustments to curriculum planning.

**Instructional Support**
- Monitor implementation and provide ongoing coaching for teachers of English learners in
  - adapting linguistic accommodations for all learning environments (considering remote learning and social-distancing practices within on-campus learning) and
  - planning learning opportunities that include meaningful practice for students to meet targeted language goals based on the ELPS.
- Set expectations for **focused, targeted, and systematic language instruction** for English learners at the beginner/intermediate stages of English proficiency, particularly in grades 3 and higher, in addition to the core curriculum when supporting teachers in the planning process.
- Set and monitor expectations for accelerated instruction for English learners, as needed.
Instructional Expectations

- Coach instructors in utilizing a variety of methods for English learners to demonstrate language use and receive feedback. Leverage familiar technology tools that can be used to capture speaking and writing samples to track linguistic progress, such as Seesaw, Flipgrid, Microsoft Office 365 Education, or Google for Education.

- Set expectations for the integration of the affective (social-emotional) component of bilingual education and/or ESL programs in addition to linguistic and cognitive needs when planning for each learning environment.

- Set and monitor expectations for culturally responsive teaching, including targeted coaching as needed.

- Communicate expectations for sheltered instruction, providing coaching support for applying sheltered instruction to all learning environments. For more information on sheltered instruction:
  - Sheltered Instruction Methods chart in the Instructors section, Instructional Design: Methods and Resources category
  - Sheltered Instruction: Teaching Content & Language Simultaneously (overview)
  - Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) Practitioner Brief: Using Sheltered Instruction to Support English Learners (in-depth article to support professional development)

Resources

- Systemize the use of embedded linguistic accessibility features available in commonly used tools to ensure access to the curriculum in remote learning. For example:
  - Newsela provides free texts in English and Spanish at multiple Lexile reading levels for each text.
  - Microsoft Office 365 Education provides easily accessible tools for accommodating texts (such as Immersive Reader) in all applications.
  - Rewordify simplifies text in English and builds vocabulary.

- Provide centralized access to student reference materials in their primary language, including online dictionaries and content glossaries in multiple languages. For example:
  - Omniglot provides online dictionaries and tools in over 100 languages.
  - An NYU-supported site provides content glossaries for language arts, math, science, and social studies in over 40 languages, including cognate glossaries.

Family and Community Engagement

Communication

- Ensure effective communication for all families with a primary language other than English when creating LEA responses to operational improvements or responses to questions.
  - Establish communication plans that include a variety of modes, such as newsletters, website postings, social media postings, emails, text messages, and phone calls.
  - Establish timely and consistent communication plans, being mindful of timelines for translation services to ensure equitable distribution and access.
  - Provide multiple platforms for families to ask questions and share concerns.
• Provide communication supports, as necessary, for staff to communicate frequently with families individually. For example, Talking Points is a free communication tool with over 100 languages in which messages are translated automatically between the preferred language of the teacher and the preferred language of the parent.

• Schedule virtual discussions with a variety of stakeholders, such as:
  o Student Panel sessions that focus on learning about English learners’ learning experiences and how to improve current systems and supports.
  o Newcomer Meet and Greets that allow newcomers and their families to become familiar with the LEA and campus resources, including plans for learning environment options.
  o Town Hall meetings that keep all families and communities up-to-date on learning plans, resources, and announcements. Ensure equitable access to the meeting information by providing interpreters in the home languages of the families.

Engagement
• Implement a system for tracking family and student involvement and obtaining feedback on their learning experiences, including targeted surveys for English learners and their families.
• Proactively collect data on English learners to identify trends, such as a high percentage of students not participating in synchronous remote learning or those relying on a cell phone to access digital resources and adjust operations for added support. Then, develop a plan for increased outreach or additional support based on identified trends.
• Adapt resources, as appropriate, for families to receive information based on individual needs, including providing printed materials, hotspots, etc.

Support
• Provide regularly updated health-related resources for students and families. Consider the following resources, which include posters and videos for families in multiple languages:
  o Colorin Colorado provides recommendations and tips for supporting ELs with online learning, including links to Center for Disease Control (CDC) in multiple languages.
  o IDRA (Intercultural Development Resource Association) has a weekly eNews update in Spanish and English in response to the Coronavirus, and other resources to support distance learning in Spanish and English.
  o Common Sense Media provides guidance for families in English and Spanish on a variety of topics related to COVID-19.
  o Center for Disease Control Communication Toolkit provides Covid-19 prevention messaging in the form of print resources in multiple languages
  o AIR (American Institutes for Research) has family FAQs on Coronavirus in English, Spanish, and Mandarin, along with other supporting resources for educators.
  o Switchboard is a platform for resettlement experts that provides a myriad of multilingual resources, including information on COVID-19 for families.
• Establish systems for communicating and facilitating at-home learning support, including ongoing training for parents and families on accessing at-home curricular materials and support.

Campus Climate
• Communicate to staff the expectations for deliberately creating a welcoming culture and climate that fosters family engagement from the start.
• Post visuals and clearly marked signage in the languages of students and families which signal social distancing practices and other health guidelines throughout school buildings and on transportation vehicles.
Essential Practices for Instructors

Instructors may include bilingual education teachers, ESL teachers, interventionists, paraprofessionals, content teachers of ELs, as well as other educators who provide instruction to English learners such as special education teachers and gifted and talented teachers.

**Staffing** and Professional Development

**Personal Growth**

- Engage in training opportunities based on personal goals for professional development in supporting English learners, seeking out or requesting support/training if not already offered.
- Investigate support videos for utilizing the various functionalities of the virtual learning platforms, such as managing Zoom breakout rooms (video) and utilizing Microsoft TEAMS online classes (video).
- Schedule opportunities for activities that promote personal mental, emotional, and physical wellness.

**Collaboration**

- Proactively share resources and expertise throughout the campus and LEA on instructional practices to support English learners.
- Collaborate with available support staff (interventionists, paraprofessionals, etc.) in targeting lesson planning that is appropriate for English learners at all levels of English proficiency.

**Follow-Through**

- Implement new skills/training outcomes from professional development related to supporting English learners within various learning environments, and seek feedback from peers or instructional specialists/coaches on progress.
- Leverage professional development on co-teaching to deliver coordinated co-teaching with language specialists or paraprofessionals, as available, and plan for reflective feedback to adjust as needed.

**Instructional Design – Lesson Planning and Curriculum**

**Progress Monitoring**

- Plan for and implement periodic formative assessments and progress monitoring of the academic and language proficiency of English learners.
- Engage in regular analysis of formative assessments and progress monitoring data to inform adjustments to instructional practices.
- Ensure English learners’ academic progress is equitably measured in the learning environment (assignments and assessments).
  - Provide linguistic supports that are commensurate to the students’ proficiency levels.
  - Utilize the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) Proficiency Level Descriptors (PLDs) to measure linguistic progress.
- Leverage familiar technology tools that assist in tracking linguistic progress by providing ways for English learners to demonstrate language use and receive feedback. Developed routines for collecting speaking and/or writing samples can be utilized in an on-campus or remote learning environment.
environment. Familiar tools may include Seesaw, Flipgrid, Microsoft Office 365 Education, or Google for Education.

Collaboration

- Collaborate with LEA and/or campus level instructional specialists/coaches to ensure linguistic support is targeted for the content.
- Employ intentional co-planning and co-teaching practices (with language specialists or paraprofessionals, as available) that adapt to the learning environment. For remote learning, consider using "breakout rooms" with one instructor in each room to further differentiate instruction.

Targeted Planning

- Diversify lessons to address the needs of English learners at the beginner/intermediate stages of English proficiency, particularly in grades 3 and higher.
- Integrate multiple learning opportunities that provide meaningful practice for students to meet targeted language goals based on the ELPS.
- Provide accelerated instruction for English learners, as needed, based on formative assessment data.
- Regularly plan for and communicate language objectives that support English learners at various levels of English proficiency.
- Plan and integrate opportunities for student activities that promote personal mental, emotional, and physical wellness.

Instructional Design – Methods and Resources

Resources

- Provide access to student reference materials in students’ primary languages, including online dictionaries and content glossaries in multiple languages. For example:
  - Omniglot provides online dictionaries and tools in over 100 languages.
  - An NYU-supported site provides content glossaries for language arts, math, science, and social studies in over 40 languages, including cognate glossaries.
- Consider ways to engage students and families that don't require internet access. For example:
  - Use voice recorder/voice memo cell phone app to create oral communication/responses and share via text.
  - Provide QR codes on hard copy resources that can be accessed via a cellular app.
  - Create/use YouTube videos that can be accessed via the cellular app.
  - Visit ESL Blog for “Tech-free” home activities for K-12 students in over 25 languages.
- Familiarize students with embedded linguistic accessibility features available in commonly used tools to ensure access to the curriculum in remote learning. For example:
  - Microsoft Office 365 Education provides short demonstration videos and links to interactive trainings on inclusive communication, the Immersive Reader feature, and tools to support math and writing, including supports for English learners.
  - Rewordify simplifies text in English and builds vocabulary.
  - Newsela provides texts in English and Spanish at multiple Lexile reading levels for each text.
- Consider the following when adapting materials and instruction to remote learning:
  - Do students have access to and know how to use speech to text features?
Do students know where to find the online reference tools?
Are there multiple modes for students to demonstrate their learning commensurate with their proficiency levels?

**Instructional Practices**

- Emphasize and integrate the affective (social-emotional) component of bilingual education and/or ESL programs, in addition to linguistic and cognitive needs, when planning for each learning environment.
- Implement and seek feedback from peers or instructional specialists/coaches on culturally responsive teaching practices.
- Implement sheltered instruction methods that apply to each learning environment. (See the *Sheltered Instruction Methods* chart below for specific recommendations and examples.)

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**Sheltered Instruction Methods**

*Sheltered Instruction* is the foundation for effective instruction within bilingual education and ESL programs. The purpose of sheltered instruction is to make content comprehensible while supporting second language development. Sheltered instruction methods apply to any language of instruction. The following recommendations support the implementation of sheltered instruction through varied learning environments.

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| Choice and engagement      | Allow students to select reading topics.                                      | o  **Newsele** provides free texts in English and Spanish at multiple Lexile reading levels for each text.  
  o  **International Children’s Library** provides free books in 20 languages. |
| Interaction                | Use tools that allow students to participate anonymously to provide a safe, comfortable format. Provide multiple, meaningful opportunities for students to engage in the learning throughout a lesson. | **Spiral** and **Padlet** are free tools that a student can use to engage in discussion activities anonymously. |
| Accessible texts           | Adapt or amplify texts, rather than relying on translation. Translating materials alone is not supportive of second language development, and based on each student’s language development in his/her home language (i.e. Spanish), translation tools or online application translation features may not increase understanding. | Adapt or amplify texts by  
  o  simplifying English texts using resources like **Rewordify** or by teacher-created adaptations, such as:  
    - highlighting key vocabulary,  
    - chunking text into manageable sections with additional headings, and/or  
    - adding visual supports to enhance understanding,  
  o  using text-to-speech, such as the Immersive Reader feature in Microsoft ([tutorial](#)), Flipgrid ([remote learning guidance](#)) or the Read & Write Google extension ([tutorial](#)),  
  o  recorded read-aloud in English by teacher with pauses and appropriate pace,  
  o  using translations as side-by-side resources rather than replacements, or  
  o  pre-reading in primary language text. |
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| **Writing process**           | Use scaffolded support, including prior knowledge in the student’s primary language, to facilitate written responses in the target language. | Rather than students writing in their primary language and translating responses into English, consider the following process:  
1. Have students compose a draft in their primary language (or a combination of English and another language) first to get their ideas in written form.  
2. Provide sentence frames or paragraph frames for students to structure responses in English. A paragraph frame can give structure to how to begin, how to transition to linking ideas, and how to conclude the response.  
3. Students re-write responses using the sentence or paragraph frames with as much English as possible to complete their ideas.  
4. Allow students to use translation features or bilingual dictionaries/glossaries as resources for key words needed to complete their compositions in English.  
5. Provide opportunities for students to express their ideas in other forms as well, such as oral response, creating a chart or picture, organizing phrases/sentences provided by the teacher into a graphic organizer, etc. |
| Clear instructions            | Provide step-by-step instructions to break down how to complete tasks, including a model or exemplar to show the expectation for assignments/tasks. | Instructions may include  
   o a picture of the completed task,  
   o a video of the teacher modeling the directions,  
   o pictures of the materials/resources, and  
   o a word bank with simple definitions, examples, and/or cognates of key terms used in the instructions. |
| Videos                        | Select and use videos that support comprehensible input.                       | Provide supports, such as:  
   o selecting videos with  
     • a clear speaker’s voice and comprehensible pace and  
     • visual support of key words/vocabulary,  
   o giving a purpose for listening and define key vocabulary prior to viewing,  
   o providing stopping points for questions/reflections (example tools: Spiral Clip feature or Fluentkey), and  
   o ensuring students have captions available in English or another language, as needed. |
| English language development (ELD) tools | Use English language development software/tools as supplemental resources to the content, rather than a replacement of content tasks. | If using ELD software/tools that students can access from home,  
   o provide parameters for time spent in the ELD program,  
   o customize activities to target needs, and  
   o provide access details to families. |

**Family and Community Engagement**

**Communication**
- Ensure equitable communication with students’ families with various primary languages by utilizing simple tools that don’t require families to go through multiple steps to get started. For example: Talking Points is a free communication tool with over 100 languages in which messages are translated automatically between the preferred language of the teacher and the
preferred language of each family. Only a family’s cell number is needed to receive and send translated messages with the teacher (from a masked phone number).

- Provide consistent communication on student progress (academic, linguistic, and affective), including ways for parents and families to ask questions and communicate needs.

**Engagement**

- Involve families of English learners, particularly family members with limited English proficiency, by encouraging families to read and discuss books in their home language, tell their children stories or fables related to their culture, and/or engage in remote read-alouds with visual support. For example:
  - International Children’s Library provides free books in 20 languages.
  - Storyline Online is an award-winning children’s literacy website that streams videos featuring celebrated actors reading children’s books in English alongside creatively produced illustrations.
  - The Fable Cottage provides fables in Spanish and other languages with videos.

- Regularly conduct outreach to non-engaged students and families, per district- or campus-wide systems for outreach.

- Establish and maintain a welcoming classroom culture and climate that fosters student and family engagement.

- Provide ongoing support for at-home learning, including targeted instructions for parents and families on accessing at-home lessons and resources.
Local Education Agency (LEA) Examples

Additional LEA examples will be forthcoming as they are developed. If your LEA would like to submit an example related to the categories below in response to program continuity for the 2020-2021 school year, please email EnglishLearnerSupport@tea.texas.gov with your example resource. Submit with “LEA Example” in the email subject line.

Program Model Design

- San Antonio ISD – LEA-wide adaptation of Dual Language Model for online learning

Staffing and PD

- Dallas ISD – At Home Learning site with Teachers of Language Learners section

Lesson Planning and Curriculum

- Bryan ISD – video in English and Spanish demonstrating the steps to login to Schoology
- Katy ISD – teacher considerations for supporting English learners online with Language and Literacy and Math
- Plano ISD – teacher guide for ESL Considerations for Creating Remote Learning Experiences

Methods and Resources

- Ferris ISD – English learner accommodations for virtual learning chart
- Aldine ISD – resource for district recommendations of technology to linguistically accommodate online learning

Family and Community Engagement

- Tomball ISD – Social Emotional resources posted in both Spanish and English
- International Leadership of Texas – parent website for online learning with norms, tutorials, and schedules
- McAllen ISD – LEA-facilitated recorded webinar on Coping with Stress and Anxiety at Home with mental health experts from the field.