

# Supporting English Learners

## What to Learn from Your State's ESSA Plan

Approximately 1 in 11 public school students is an English learner (EL), a number that has been consistently increasing over the last decade.<sup>13</sup> To better serve the growing number of EL students, states must fully describe EL data and supports as part of their accountability system. This includes accountability standards around ELs, measuring and reporting EL proficiency at all levels, and standardized processes for identifying and classifying ELs that include criteria for their exit from specialized services. Assessments should also be sensitive to both language and ability (e.g. eligibility for IEP). LEAs and schools will be responsible for implementation of this accountability for ELs, including providing appropriate services and supports (e.g. access to the appropriate native language assessments where the state does not already provide them).

## Guidance for School Improvement

With EL accountability now shifted to Title I, districts have more flexible access to funding to support EL students. Additionally, Title III funds may be used to support placement, instruction, assessment, reclassification, professional learning, student support, and family engagement efforts.

LEAs and schools might work with local partners, including other public agencies, to align other resources to support English proficiency and set goals for EL outcomes. This coordination should span a student's academic career, ranging from opportunities in high quality early childhood education to ensuring students have access to quality teachers in K-12. Title I and Title II funds that support teaching and professional development for educators and leaders can also support efforts to increase cultural and language competence for the adults in the building. LEAs must help to build capacity for families to support their children and to become active and welcome stakeholders in the decision-making processes, regardless of language background or ability.

## Find Support for this Strategy in ESSA

TITLE I, PART A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies

TITLE I PART C: Education of Migratory Children

TITLE II PART A: Supporting Effective Instruction

TITLE III, PART A: English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act

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13. [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator\\_cgf.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cgf.asp) ; <http://www.ideapartnership.org/390-osep-vetting/1514-multi-tiered-systems-of-support-mtss-for-english-language-learner-ell-families-and-practitioners-draft-3-14-11.html>

## Essential Stakeholders

- ✓ Parents and families of ELs, including migrant and immigrant students
- ✓ Community/parent bilingual groups
- ✓ Civil rights and community-based organizations and businesses that support EL students and youth (e.g. after school tutoring programs and programs that provide job networking opportunities and social services)
- ✓ Translation services
- ✓ Educators and support personnel who understand the constraints of working with ELs in public schools, and who can provide valuable input on best practices;
- ✓ Agencies that work with families in which English is not a native language and with refugee students and families;
- ✓ Agencies that oversee the correctional system, given the disproportionate number of EL youth that are system-involved.
- ✓ Faith-based communities or organizations

## Ask the Experts

- ✓ [NCIIP: English Learners and the Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#) (Migration Policy Institute)
- ✓ [English Learner Toolkit for State and Local Education Agencies \(SEAs and LEAs\)](#) (US ED)
- ✓ [“All In” guide for Educators](#) (The National Education Association)



### Keep in Mind

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LEAs must also take proactive steps to address language and literacy barriers, per Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.