The Local Education Agency (LEA) Self-Assessment Tool For English Learner (EL) Programming: Using Data to Improve Programming

Annual Statewide Meeting for Administrators Supporting English Learners

September 2026

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Agenda

- Introduction
- Federal & State Requirements
- The LEA Self-Assessment
- Using the LEA Self-Assessment Effectively
- Q&A

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Meet the Monitoring Team



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Meet the Monitoring Team (Continued)



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Federal and State Requirements

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Federal Requirements

- **Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964**
  - Prohibits denial of equal access to education because of language minority students' limited proficiency in English
- **Title VII of the ESEA of 1968: The Bilingual Education Act**
  - The first federal legislation to recognize the unique needs of English learners and the need for specialized instruction
  - Establishes federal funding for the training of bilingual teachers and bilingual programs
- **Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974**
  - Defines denial of equal educational opportunity as "failure by an educational agency to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by students in an instructional program"
- **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1975**
  - Provides for free appropriate public education to eligible children with disabilities throughout the nation
  - Ensures special education and related services to those children
- English learners (ELs) must be able to participate effectively in all programs and content areas.

Landmark Cases

- Lau v. Nichols (414 U.S. 563, U.S. Supreme Court, 1974)
  - Districts must take affirmative steps to overcome educational barriers faced by the non-English speaking students in the district
- Castañeda v. Pickard (648 F.2d 989, U.S. Court of Appeals, 5th Circuit, 1981)
  - Program for ELs should be:
    - Theory: Based on "a sound educational theory"
    - Practice: "Reasonably calculated to implement effectively the educational theory adopted by the school," with adequate resources and personnel
    - Results: Evaluated as effective in overcoming language barriers after a trial period
- Plyler v. Doe (457 U.S. 202, 102 S. Ct. 2382, 72 L. Ed. 2d 786, 1982)
  - The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that undocumented children have the same right as U.S. citizens and permanent residents to receive a free public education.

Illinois Codes

- Illinois School Code
  - Article 14C, Transitional Bilingual Education
  - Article 14D, Dual Language Education
  - Section 22-105, Safe Schools for All Act (Guidance on the Safe Schools for All Act)
- Illinois Administrative Code (Title 23)
  - Part 228, Transitional Bilingual Education
  - Part 680, State Seal of Biliteracy

The LEA Self-Assessment Tool

12 Components for Monitoring EL Programming

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The LEA Self-Assessment



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Compliance Monitoring Framework

- ISBE monitors EL programs via a structured system involving 12 key components to ensure:
  - LEA is compliant with federal rules and regulations.
  - LEA is compliant with state rules and regulations.
- The LEA self-assessment can help districts self monitor for compliance and improve programming.
  - Use the data to inform decisions and evaluate programs available within your district.

The LEA Self-Assessment Components 1-6

Component 1:
Identification of Eligible Students and Equal Opportunities for All Students

Component 2:
Student Assessment

Component 3:
Providing Services to All Eligible/Placement

Component 4:
Program Components/Curriculum and Instruction

Component 5:
General Program

Component 6:
Staff Certification

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The LEA Self-Assessment Components 7-12

Component 7:
Professional Development

Component 8:
Parent and Community Participation

Component 9:
Communication with Parents/Parents' Rights

Component 10:
Student Records, Report Cards, and Data Management

Component 11:
Dually Identified Students (Special Education & English Learners)

Component 12:
Title III (For Districts with Title III Language Instruction Education Programs and/or Immigrant Student Education Programs)

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Using the Self-Assessment Effectively

Where to Start

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Utilizing the LEA Self-Assessment Tool

- Self-evaluate at least once per year to reflect on local program
  - Beginning of the year
  - End of the year
- These questions help frame the components in a meaningful way:
  - Who are our students?
  - Are we providing the right program for them?
  - Can our ELs fully participate in our school/district?
  - Do we have the staff/capacity to do this well?
  - Are our students' families informed and engaged?
  - Are we meeting the needs of our dually identified students?
  - Is our program working? Are our students making adequate progress?

Who Are Our Students?

Components 1, 2, and 10

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Who Are Our Students?

How Do the Components Answer the Question?

Component 1 - Identification of Eligible Students and Equal Opportunities:
Verifies that the district is correctly identifying students who may need English learner services and mitigates barriers to enrollment or services.

Component 2 - Student Assessment:
Verifies that the district accurately determines students' English proficiency and tracks their English development over time.

Component 10 - Student Records, Report Cards, and Data Management:
Verifies that the district maintains accurate information about EL students and ensures the information follows the student.

What Language(s) Do Our Students Speak?

- **Component 1**
  - Administer a Home Language Survey (HLS) to all families.
  - Ask the two required questions for Illinois.
    - Is a language other than English spoken in the home, and if so, what language?
    - Does the student speak a language other than English, and if so, what language?
  - Provide the HLS in the home language and English.
  - Do not inquire about immigration status.
    - A state ID or driver's license cannot be the only acceptable form of identification.

What Is Their Level of English Proficiency?

- **Component 2**
  - Screen all potential ELs for English proficiency using the appropriate screener.
    - Record student's enrollment date, test date, and results.
  - Pre-K students are all rescreened for kindergarten.
  - ACCESS testing is completed for all EL students.
    - If ACCESS testing does not occur, the district must enter a correction code that reflects why an EL student did not take the ACCESS test.
    - If a district does not enter a code, code 19 is assigned by ISBE.

How Are Our Students Doing Over Time?

- **Component 10**
  - All individual student records are updated yearly to reflect language, birth date, grade, achievement level, and EL status.
  - Report cards are provided in English and the home language unless a parent communicates an English-only preference to the district in writing.
  - All EL cumulative files, or temporary folders, are updated to include all the required documents listed on the EL Cumulative Folder Cover Sheet and these files follow the student.

Tips From the Multilingual Department – HLS

- The HLS should not be completed in isolation.
  - Engage families in conversations about the purpose and significance of the HLS.
  - Ask questions to understand language use.
    - **Do not enter the Native Language field in the Student Information System (SIS) for Illinois if there are any doubts about the HLS.**
  - Use the new guidance document scenarios.
  - When in doubt, contact your assigned principal consultant with questions.
- Train the front office staff about the HLS and how to provide support for families.
  - IRC training "Becoming Multilingual Champions: Home Language Survey Edition"
- If students qualify for services, they must be placed into services.
  - Refusals do not carry over from one school district to another.
  - Place first; parents can refuse later.

Are We Providing the Right Program for Our Students?

Components 3 and 4

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Are We Providing the Right Program for Our Students?

How Do the Components Answer This Question?

Component 3 – Providing Services to All Eligible Students:
Verifies that students who need EL services receive them, and ensures the district continues monitoring students after they leave the program.

Components 4.1-4.5 – Program Components, Curriculum, and Instruction:
Verifies that the district's instructional model matches students' needs, and that students have meaningful access to grade-level learning. It is the heart of the question, "Are we providing the right program?"

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What Kind of Programming Will Our Students Receive?

- **Component 3**
  - Students are placed into the program that they receive in SIS, not what they should receive.
  - Student placement should accurately reflect “Class Periods Per Week.”
  - Students who transition out of EL programming must be progress monitored for two years after exiting programming.

What Kind of Classrooms Are Our Students In, and What Support Do They Receive?

- **Component 4**
  - If an attendance center has 19 or fewer students from the same language group, a Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI) must be provided.
  - If an attendance center has 20 or more students from the same language group (including refusals), a Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) full-time program must be provided.

Tips From the Multilingual Department—Classrooms

- TBE programming considerations
  - An LEA must offer full-time TBE in an attendance center required to have full-time TBE.
    - **An LEA cannot only offer part-time TBE instead of full-time.**
  - Having bilingual teachers does not automatically mean TBE programming.
    - **Services and supports must be intentional and meaningful.**
  - Full-time TBE does not have to mean self-contained classrooms in that language.
  - The goals of TBE and the goals of dual language programs are different.
    - **The goals of dual language are bilingualism and biliteracy while the goal of TBE programming is English language proficiency.**

Tips From the Multilingual Department – Classrooms (Continued)

- The ability to access EL programming should not hinder an EL's participation in honors classes, Advanced Placement, electives, or other courses.
- TBE/TPI Curriculum
  - Purchased curriculum with "EL Considerations" does not automatically mean compliance for Component 4.2 or Component 4.5.
  - The LEA may need to still update a scope and sequence, vertical alignment map, etc. to include WIDA ELD standards and Illinois standards.
- Full-Time TBE vs. Part-Time TBE
  - Remember to use the part-time TBE rationale form when appropriate.
  - Save a copy in the EL cumulative folder.

Can Our ELs Fully Participate in Our School and District?

Component 5

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Can Our ELs Fully Participate in Our School and District?

How Does the Component Answer the Question?

Component 5 - General Program:
Verifies that the district ensures that a student's status as an EL does not limit their access to the rest of the school experience.

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Do Our EL Students Have Access to the Full School Experience?

- Component 5
  - Receive credit for ESL coursework.
  - Participate with never-ELs and former ELs in elective courses and extracurriculars.
  - Students and parents receive information in English and the home language.
  - Summer school offers language support for ELs.
  - Class sizes do not exceed 90% of general education class sizes.

Do We Have the Staff and Capacity to Deliver the Program Well?

Components 6 and 7

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Do We Have the Staff and Capacity to Deliver the Program Well?

How Do the Components Answer the Question?

Component 6 - Staff Certification:
Verifies that the people responsible for EL instruction and program leadership have the required qualifications.

Component 7 - Professional Development: Verifies the district provides staff with opportunities to continually improve their capacity to serve ELs.

Do We Have Appropriate Staffing to Support EL Programming?

- Component 6
  - Bilingual teachers- provide bilingual services
    - Self-contained? Collaborative? Do we have enough bilingual teachers for the language(s) of our TBE program(s)?
  - ESL teachers- provide ESL services
    - Self-contained? Collaborative? Do we have enough ESL teachers to provide language supports?
  - Paraprofessionals- provide instructional support but not direct ESL/Bilingual services
    - Do they have a bachelor's degree? Could they get an ELS-TBE?
  - A program director with the appropriate endorsement
    - Do we have more or fewer than 200 ELs in the district?

Do Our Teachers Receive Professional Development to Support EL Students in the District?

- Component 7
  - New teachers and staff learn about the EL programming throughout the district.
  - ESL and bilingual teachers engage in professional development (PD) **at least twice** a year.
  - Attendance centers that require TBE Spanish must provide Spanish Language Arts (SLA) PD **at least once** per year.
  - PD is provided to administrators, principals, elective teachers, and any staff who interact with EL students to **have a lasting impact.**

Are Our Students' Families Informed and Engaged?

Components 8 and 9

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Are Our Students' Families Informed and Engaged?

How Do the Components Answer This Question?

Component 8 - Parent and Community Participation:
Verifies that the district ensures that families have a voice in the EL program and provides them with meaningful opportunities to participate in their children's education.

Component 9 - Communication with Parents/Parents' Rights:
Verifies that the district ensures that families understand their child's EL educational programming and the choices and rights they are entitled to receive.

Do EL Families Have a Voice About Programming in Our District?

- Component 8
  - For districts that require TBE, there must be a Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee (BPAC).
    - Majority of BPAC is parents with EL students in TBE programming.
    - Meet at least four times per year.
    - Record and file minutes.
  - Families should receive training and function autonomously.
    - “Autonomously” will not happen without proper training and support from the district.
    - Review district plans, methods of instruction, state and federal laws, and any other topics of interest to the BPAC.

Tips From the Multilingual Department – Engagement

- BPAC meetings are not required to meet in person
  - In person, remote, hybrid, or a combination throughout the year.
- Talk to families about what they need and want to see for committee meetings
  - Make meetings about topics of importance to families.
  - Consider having a parent liaison or parent coordinator on staff.
- Get to know your parents and their strengths
  - Get to know a family's day job → it could carry over to something they help with in BPAC meetings.
- Strategically schedule and plan meetings
  - Open house night, curriculum night, special programs, sport events — schedule BPAC meetings before these events so parents are already in the building.

Tips From the Multilingual Department – Engagement (Continued)

- Use ISBE BPAC resources on the Multilingual page
  - Bylaws template.
  - How to take meeting minutes.
- Document the district's efforts to create a BPAC, and hold a BPAC meeting even with inconsistent or low attendance.
  - If you held a meeting and no parents attended, the LEA still held a meeting.
  - Work on family and community engagement to get parents to attend future meetings.
  - Talk to feeder districts regarding engagement. Collaborate towards continued BPAC participation amongst districts.

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Do Parents Know What Is Happening in Their EL Student's Education?

- Component 9
  - The district sends notice of enrollment letters to EL families.
  - The letters are in English and the home language.
  - The district sends letters to parent refusals to offer programming availability.
  - The district documents parent refusals in writing and maintains the refusal letter in the EL cumulative folder..
  - The district informs families when students transition out of EL programming with a 4.8 on the ACCESS test.

Tips From the Multilingual Department – Family Engagement

- The template letters that may be provided and translated through your local management system may not meet compliance requirements.
  - Verify that the template has all the compliance components before sending it to parents.
  - Consider the number of languages offered to see if a software solution is cost effective.
- Parent refusals do not transfer from one district to another.
- Parents must refuse programming in writing, and the refusal must be placed in the EL cumulative file.
  - Parents must sign and date the letter.
  - Text messages, emails, or other written communication are acceptable.

Are We Meeting the Needs of Our Dually Identified Students?

Component 11

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Are We Meeting the Needs of Our Dually Identified Students?

How Does the Component Answer This Question?

Component 11 - Dually Identified Students (Special Education & English Learners):

The purpose of this component is to ensure the district is appropriately addressing both parts of a student's needs when a student is both an EL and a student with a disability.

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Are Our Dually Identified Students Receiving Both EL Services and Special Education Services?

- Component 11
  - The home language of students must be taken into consideration for evaluations.
  - Qualified Interpreters should be present at Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings.
  - Families must receive IEP conference notices, procedural safeguards, and consent forms in English and the home language.
  - EL students should receive appropriate test accommodations for ACCESS.
  - IEPs should address linguistic and cultural accommodations for EL students.

Tips From the Multilingual Department – Dually Identified Students

- Have interpreters sign in
  - If virtual or by phone, the district should ask for an interpreter ID number and document it in the attendance section of the IEP.
  - If in person, the interpreter should sign their name.
- ISBE provides procedural safeguards and consent forms in a variety of languages on the Special Education website.
- Linguistic and Cultural Accommodations must be filled out. A district should not mark “no” for both items in an EL student’s IEP.

Is Our Program Working? Are Our Students Making Adequate Progress?

Component 4

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Is Our Program Working?
Are Our Students Making Adequate Progress?

How Does the Component Answer This Question?

Component 4.6 - Program Effectiveness:
Verifies the district has a data-driven system in place that measures the EL program's effectiveness and uses the system's findings to modify the program when necessary.

District EL staff and administrators should continually ask:
"Are the things we are doing actually helping students?"

rather than simply:
"Are we doing the things we are supposed to do?"

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How Do We Know That EL Students Are Making Adequate Progress in Our EL Programming?

- Component 4.6
  - The district monitors EL student progress over time.
  - The district must set at least two goals to monitor program effectiveness over time.
- Districts should verify that EL programs address the following questions:
  - Are EL students becoming proficient in English?
  - Are EL students able to participate meaningfully in the regular educational program at levels comparable to students who have never been EL?

Tips From the Multilingual Department – Program Effectiveness

- To measure EL program effectiveness, a software solution is not required
  - An effectiveness tool may include, but is not limited to:
    - EL Progress to Proficiency (ELPtP) Data
    - Learning management software reports
    - Other district-selected data-collecting system reports
    - District data
    - Institute day agendas and/or presentations about data and implementation
    - Professional Learning Committee (PLC) agendas and/or presentations about data and implementation

Questions?

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Assigned Consultant Listing

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