

**ENGLISH  
LEARNERS'  
INDIVIDUAL AND  
COLLECTIVE  
CHARACTERISTICS**

## EDUCATING ENGLISH LEARNERS

### Characteristics of Individual English Learners



English learners are a diverse group of students. To design linguistic and culturally relevant programs and implement instructional approaches that provide ELs meaningful access to the curriculum, districts should review the following student characteristics:

1. English language proficiency level;
2. Native language proficiency level and level of literacy in the home language;
3. Schooling and academic performance:
  - a. Previous level and continuity of schooling (also whether student has interrupted education);
  - b. Academic performance including honors or areas in which the student excels;
4. Language use at home:
  - a. Exposure to literacy (either home language(s) and/or English);
  - b. Language(s) child and family use;
5. Cultural background(s);
6. Number of years living in the U.S.;
7. Experiences of traumatic events that impact learning; and,
8. Special education needs.

### Characteristics of the District's English Learner Population



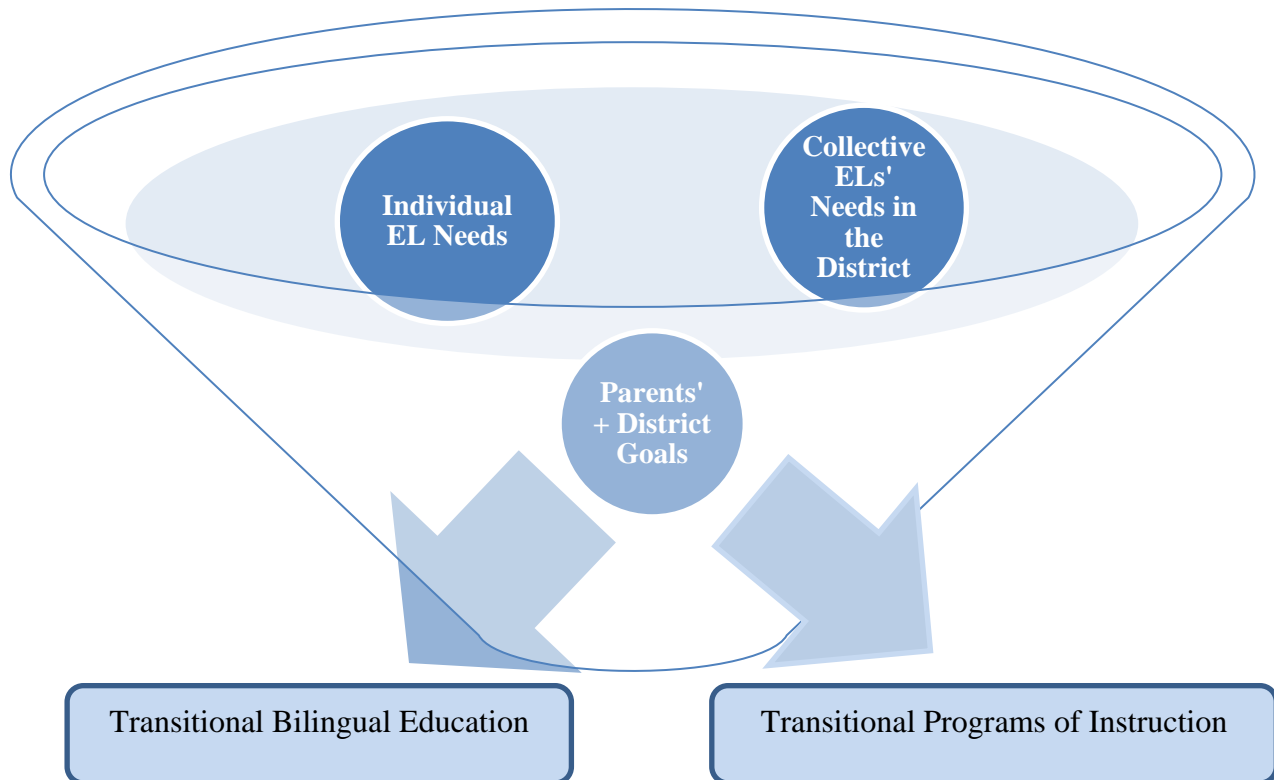
The number of English learners enrolled in the district influences the choice of instructional designs and groupings.

Number of ELs

- By grade level and attendance center
- Who have the same home language
- Who have the same cultural background
- Who share characteristics such interrupted schooling, recent arrivals, or who are long-term ELs
- Who have a similar range of language proficiencies

## LEGAL REQUIREMENTS: TRANSITIONAL BILINGUAL EDUCATION (TBE) OR TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM OF INSTRUCTION (TPI)?

After considering English learners' characteristics both individually and collectively, districts categorize all ELs as either receiving TBE or TPI services per guidelines set forth in [23 Illinois Administrative Code 228](#). The following pages outline the program designs districts may choose from that fulfill the legal requirements of TBE or TPI services.



The School Code mandates TBE for ELs but the type of program(s) offered in an attendance center may vary based on characteristics of the ELs and the number of ELs by language group. Schools may offer full-time TBE or full-time TBE combined with part-time TBE placement for students who meet state criteria for part-time placement. When 19 or fewer ELs from the same language group are enrolled in a school, the school has the flexibility to offer TBE (FT/PT) or a TPI for this language group. As a result, a school may have a TBE program for some ELs and TPI for others enrolled in the same school.