

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this toolkit is to guide districts in designing comprehensive, research-based services for kindergarten through 12th-grade English learners¹ that meet federal Title VI requirements of equitable and meaningful access to education as well as Illinois state requirements under the Illinois School Code Article 14C. This framework presents an overview of factors that districts and other public education centers should consider when developing effective educational services for English learners. It begins with a detailed description of the legal requirements stipulated in federal legislation and litigation, in the Illinois School Code Article 14C, and in the Illinois Administrative Code Part 228. This legal foundation explains the importance of ensuring equitable and meaningful access to education for English learners. These laws are supported by pedagogical research, which is summarized in the “Foundational Research” section. The second section of the toolkit, “Comprehensive Services for English Learners,” outlines the services guaranteed to all Illinois students, with pathways to ensure accessibility for English learners. Because English learners are the collective responsibility of districts and all stakeholders within those districts, it is critical that district administrators, school leaders, teachers, and other instructional personnel, in collaboration with the family members and the community at large, develop a cohesive and systemic support structure to meet the students’ varying needs. The “Student-Centered Program and Services Delivery System” section, which encompasses a detailed description of instructional designs, service delivery models, and proven effective strategies, shows districts how they can enact these legal and pedagogical requirements.

¹ This document addresses programs for English learners in kindergarten through 12th grade. We acknowledge that programs for English learners in preschool, gifted, and special education merit attention as well. These are areas we hope to address in the future through additions to this document.

TOOLKIT COMPONENTS

Components of this toolkit include:

- Overview
- Federal and State Educational Mandates
- Foundational Research
- Comprehensive Services for English Learners
- Standards-Based Instruction and Assessment
- A Framework of Illinois English Learner Services
 - English Learners' Individual and Collective Characteristics
 - Informed Leadership, Shared Vision, and Collective Efficacy
 - Instructional Designs, Service Delivery, and Resources

Overview

This toolkit is framed through the equity lens to ensure that English learners (ELs) in Illinois receive adequate access to the excellent education that is guaranteed to them. The Equitable Outcomes of Schooling is set by State Superintendent of Education Tony Smith, Ph.D., for all students. English learners bring value to the educational institution, and their bilingual and biliteracy abilities should be celebrated, especially in today's multilingual world. The vision for ELs in Illinois is to ensure that true equity exists and ELs are reaching parity with all students. Compliance with the federal and state legal requirements is the floor; best pedagogical practices should drive how educational services for ELs are designed and delivered.

Federal and State Educational Mandates

This section discusses key legislation and landmark cases that have shaped bilingual education at both the federal and state level. It also provides a definition of the legal programmatic requirements for Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) and Transitional Programs of Instruction (TPI) for ELs in Illinois.

Foundational Research

This section provides the research basis for this toolkit. Literature reviewed includes: the benefits of multilingualism, development of bi/multiliteracies, importance of cross-cultural competency, standards-based instruction and assessment, and the need to value the positives ELs bring.

Comprehensive Services for English Learners

This section points out some of the important factors to consider when educating ELs: seeing them as assets to the educational community, sharing the educational responsibility amongst all stakeholders, and using appropriate data to inform instructional practices.

The graphic shows six essential educational practices all students are entitled to; the gradation toward the center of the graph, “Services for English learners,” outlines differentiation tactics districts can use to ensure equitable access to these six essential educational practices for English learners. The table following lists some strategies for each of the six essential educational practices that districts may adapt.

Standards-Based Instruction and Assessment

This section specifically addresses the instructional and assessment needs of English learners. In Illinois, there are legally mandated standards that must be used for instructional delivery. These standards are applicable to all students, not exclusively to English learners. English learners require mandated English language development standards and meaningful access to core content. This section then covers how assessments should be designed to accurately measure the achievement and progress of English learners.

A Framework of Illinois English Learner Services

This section begins to describe the process districts should engage when designing comprehensive services for English learners. As is the case with all processes, it is critical to build in a continuous cycle that uses appropriate data to evaluate the services delivered and the results obtained. English learners are at the center of the services design process; districts must first consider the individual English learners’ learning needs, then aggregate this individual data to capture the learning characteristics of the district’s English learner population. Legally, the number of English learners from the same language background will determine the TBE or TPI identification. Instructionally, combining these learning characteristics with district and family goals will determine which one of the six instructional designs will best fit the English learners’ educational needs. It is imperative to keep in mind that English learners are the collective

responsibility of all district's stakeholders; therefore, shared vision and collective efficacy are integral to the success of the program. Once the instructional design(s) are finalized, the district can then use the Resources worksheet to build the program with regard to what endorsements/licenses the teacher(s) should possess and what instructional/supplemental materials to purchase.