

## Blueprint for English Learner Success

### Vision for English Learner Education

English learners in Massachusetts attend schools in which all educators share responsibility for their success, engage effectively with their families, and value and nurture their linguistic and cultural assets. English learners are taught by effective, well-prepared, and culturally responsive educators who hold them to high standards and have the resources and professional learning they need to advance students' academic and linguistic development simultaneously. English learners have equitable access to meaningful and rigorous learning opportunities that build on their cultural and linguistic assets and the academic, linguistic, social, and emotional supports they need to excel. English learners thrive in high school and graduate with the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to be successful in college and/or a career of their choice, and to contribute to civic life in a global community.

The vision statement above depicts the PK-12 experience and outcome all English learners deserve. The Blueprint for English Learner Success that follows deconstructs that vision into four distinct pillars and then goes deeper to identify specific building blocks at the classroom, school, district, and state levels of the education system to reinforce each pillar. These pillars support the achievement of the vision and serve as essential foundations needed to make sure it becomes a reality.

### Pillar 1: School Culture

*From the Vision: English learners in Massachusetts attend schools in which all educators share responsibility for their success, engage effectively with their families, and value and nurture their linguistic and cultural assets.*

#### Building Block 1: Shared responsibility for English learner success



- Educators create classrooms that are inclusive learning environments; with necessary supports, educators provide English learners (ELs) with opportunities to participate in classroom activities and cooperative learning experiences alongside their non-EL peers.
- All teachers including general education, bilingual education and ESL teachers communicate and collaborate regularly to provide effective instruction for ELs.
- All teachers including general education, bilingual education and ESL teachers are clear about their respective responsibilities for the language development of ELs: general education and bilingual education teachers scaffold language to support ELs to learn the content and ESL teachers provide systematic, explicit, and sustained language development instruction in the context of the content.



- School administrators maximize academic and non-academic opportunities for ELs to engage in learning alongside their non-EL peers.
- School administrators ensure that general education, bilingual education, ESL, and, where appropriate, special education teachers have regular, collaborative planning time to review student data, analyze student work, and design instruction, including appropriate scaffolds.
- School administrators reinforce clear expectations for general education, bilingual education and ESL teachers and provide regular, actionable feedback to improve instruction for ELs.



- The district has English language education programs that meet the varied needs of its EL population. District leaders and the school committee ensure that each program is sufficiently resourced (e.g., all staff have proper language development training, administration hires a sufficient number of ESL teachers).
- The district clearly communicates that collaborative planning time for general education, bilingual education, ESL, and, where appropriate, special education teachers is a districtwide priority and provides districtwide opportunities for shared learning.
- District administrators regularly consult with school administrators and educators to understand what they need to fulfill their responsibilities to ELs. District leaders and school committees message a clear “no excuses” mentality for adults when it comes to the success of ELs.



- The Department regularly provides guidance informed by the latest research and emerging best practices to assist districts in meeting the needs of ELs.
- The Department convenes forums for districts to share best practices related to scheduling and equitable resource allocation for ELs.
- The Department incentivizes districts to develop strategies to promote shared responsibility for EL success within their schools.

## Building Block 2: Effective family engagement



- Educators use culturally responsive practices and strategies to engage in two-way communication with families of ELs (e.g., providing interpreters/translators for parent-teacher conferences, promoting participation of EL family organizations such as English Learner Parent Advisory Councils, empowering families of ELs to communicate in the language of their choice and using their preferred method of communication).
- Educators regularly invite families of ELs to participate in their children’s education in an intentional, systematic and sustained manner, while demonstrating respect for different home languages, cultures, and values.
- Educators engage in ongoing conversations with families of ELs about grade-level standards and their children’s learning throughout the year and work together to identify strategies for supporting learning in and out of school, including appropriate supports for ELs.



- School administrators partner with families, staff and community partners to develop culturally responsive strategies that remove cultural, linguistic and other barriers to engagement with families of ELs. (e.g., provision of translation/interpretation services, racial, ethnic, cultural and linguistic biases).
- School administrators support family-school partnerships by providing resources to educators and families to ensure that families of ELs feel welcome, interact as equal partners and contribute their cultures to the life of the school.
- School administrators hold themselves and staff accountable for using asset-based approaches to regularly engage with families of ELs about their children’s academic and linguistic progress.



- District leaders follow a clear process for identifying parents and guardians who need interpretation and translation services and ensure communication is provided accordingly (e.g., essential educational documents are translated, interpreters are available at key meetings).
- The district improvement plan and other district plans communicate urgency around building relationships with families of ELs and reflect a commitment to partnering with families of ELs (e.g., the vision for ELs is specific about supports and opportunities for families, support for dual capacity buildings).
- District leaders and school committees effectively engage families, encouraging their contributions to decision-making involving their children's education and their participation in school/district activities (e.g., English Learner Parent Advisory Council, curriculum nights, parent-teacher conferences) by ensuring ongoing collaboration and providing them with resources in English and their preferred language.



- The Department provides resources for districts and families in multiple languages with the goal of effectively engaging families of ELs to make informed decisions about their children's education and contribute to the success of their schools.
- The Department identifies resources and strategies districts can use to include and honor students' cultures in the curriculum and learning environment.
- The Department provides guidance, training, and oversight to districts in order to build their capacity to work with families of ELs to support their children's learning (e.g., guidance on the establishment of an English Learner Parent Advisory Council, best practices including research-based family engagement and dual capacity buildings).

### Building Block 3: Asset-based teaching and learning



- Educators know their students and deliver instruction that reflects their cultures, families, and experiences, such that it promotes student success with rigorous content.
- Educators value bilingualism, biliteracy, and programs in their school that lead to proficiency in English and other languages.
- Educators empower ELs by providing instruction that leverages their cultures, families, and experiences and supports them to take academic and linguistic risks (e.g., reducing teacher talk and increasing student conversation, leadership opportunities, and cooperative learning).



- School leaders support and train educators to implement instruction that encourages students to share their cultures, families, and experiences in ways that promotes student success with rigorous content.
- School leaders implement programs and activities that promote bilingualism and biliteracy (e.g., State Seal of Biliteracy, dual language/two-way immersion programs, world language classes).
- School leaders provide a safe learning environment where ELs are empowered to have a voice, be active learners, and contribute to the school community.



- District leaders ensure that schools prioritize culturally responsive instruction that encourages students to share their cultures, families, and experiences in ways that promotes student success with rigorous content.
- District administrators and school committees ensure that all schools cultivate programs and activities that lead to proficiency in English and other languages (e.g., dual language/two-way immersion, language learning support, State Seal of Biliteracy).
- District leaders enact policies that communicate a sense of urgency about empowering ELs to use their voice, be active learners, and contribute to the district community.



- The Department provides data to districts on the school climate dimensions of safety, engagement, and school environment disaggregated for ELs to highlight areas of success and areas for growth.
- The Department adopts policies that recognize bilingualism and biliteracy as assets (e.g., guidance and technical support for the State Seal of Biliteracy and the establishment of two-way immersion/dual language programs, training for leaders on bilingual education, grants to support new bilingual education programs).
- The Department provides guidance supporting districts to prioritize empowering ELs to use their voice, be active learners, and contribute to the school and district communities.

## Pillar 2: Access to Educators

*From the Vision: English learners are taught by effective, well-prepared, and culturally responsive educators who hold them to high standards and have the materials and professional learning they need to advance students' academic and linguistic development simultaneously.*

### Building Block 1: Effective, well-prepared, and culturally responsive educators



- Educators differentiate instruction to respond to the educational backgrounds and English proficiency levels of their ELs.
- Educators draw upon their training and preparation to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students using research-based best practices (e.g., using specific content and pedagogical knowledge learned in the SEI endorsement course and other EL-related professional development).
- Educators create classroom spaces in which ELs of all cultures feel supported to learn and succeed (e.g., choosing content that reflects and respects various cultures; displaying pictures, books, labels, and other information from various cultures; encouraging all students to learn languages commonly spoken by their EL peers).



- School administrators ensure that ELs have equitable access to effective educators (e.g., using DESE’s Student Learning Experience report).
- School administrators conduct recruitment efforts focused on hiring and retaining educators who are well prepared (e.g., by education, training, and experience) to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students.
- School administrators ensure that all educators have access to curricular materials, professional learning opportunities and other resources that support them in delivering culturally responsive instruction.



- The district’s educator evaluation system supports evaluators and educators to have honest conversations about practice that lead to effective and culturally responsive instructional improvement and enable district leaders to ensure that all ELs have equitable access to effective educators.
- The district’s hiring and retention policies and procedures include strategies to recruit, train, and support teachers and administrators well prepared to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students (e.g., partnering with institutions of higher education, creating a student-teacher pipeline).
- District leaders adopt culturally responsive curricular materials and provide ongoing professional learning opportunities to support educators to meet the unique needs of ELs.



- The Department regularly shares data with districts on ELs’ access to effective educators (e.g., annually updating and sharing the Student Learning Experience report).
- The Department develops and implements policies intended to assist educator preparation programs in training educators that are effective, well prepared, and culturally responsive to needs of ELs and monitors licensure requirements.
- The Department convenes forums of district leaders to share best practices related to culturally responsive instruction.

## Building Block 2: Educators with high standards for English learners



- Educators hold the same expectations for all students and demonstrate the belief that all ELs can meet or exceed grade-level standards with the right supports and scaffolds in place. Educators assume responsibility for developing ELs’ academic and social language.
- Educators provide instruction and active practice opportunities for ELs that build their linguistic and academic skills continually.



- School leaders hold the same expectations for all students and are vocal about their belief that all ELs can meet or exceed grade-level standards with the right supports and scaffolds in place. School administrators provide regular feedback to educators to reinforce high expectations for ELs.
- School administrators hold educators accountable for developing EL students’ academic and social language. Classroom observations and feedback emphasize opportunities for ELs to engage in complex academic discourse at the same rates as their non-EL peers.



- The district's planning documents and professional learning opportunities communicate urgency about the need to support ELs to meet or exceed grade-level standards. District leaders provide regular feedback to school administrators that reinforces high expectations for ELs.
- District administrators monitor schools to ensure that ELs participate in complex academic discourse at the same rates as their non-EL peers.



- The Department relentlessly communicates the importance of holding ELs to the same high expectations as their non-EL peers and invites regular conversation with stakeholders to advance instruction for ELs.
- The Department shares examples of supports and scaffolds for ELs that cultivate their academic and social language through regular, complex academic discourse.

### Building Block 3: Educators with the resources they need



- Educators have and use curricular materials that advance ELs' academic and linguistic development simultaneously and align fully to the content and rigor of grade-level standards.
- Educators engage in intentional and ongoing professional learning that provides them with the necessary tools and strategies to meet the academic and linguistic needs of ELs.



- School administrators procure curricular materials that advance ELs' academic and linguistic development simultaneously and align fully to the content and rigor of grade-level standards.
- School leaders ensure that educators implement tools and strategies learned through ongoing professional learning opportunities to meet the academic and linguistic needs of ELs.



- District leaders and school committees use data to develop a budget that includes a predictable adoption cycle for culturally responsive curricular materials that adequately support the needs of ELs.
- District leaders provide and monitor intentional and ongoing professional learning that provides educators with the necessary tools and strategies to meet the academic and linguistic needs of ELs.



- The Department organizes a review process to identify curricular materials that best meet the needs of ELs (i.e., CURATE) and convenes districts to support adoption and implementation of such materials.
- The Department shares models of high-quality, ongoing professional learning opportunities.



### Pillar 3: Opportunity and Support

From the Vision: *English learners have equitable access to meaningful and rigorous learning opportunities that build on their cultural and linguistic assets and the academic, linguistic, social, and emotional supports they need to excel.*

#### Building Block 1: Meaningful and rigorous learning opportunities that build on English learners' assets



- Educators encourage ELs at all English proficiency levels to participate in rigorous, grade-appropriate courses that build on their cultural and linguistic assets. ELs should have equal opportunity to meaningfully participate in all programs and activities, including advanced courses such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, early college, and dual enrollment courses.
- Educators collaborate with school administrators to create and adhere to ELs' schedules that ensure no disruption to core content instruction or ESL, two mandated instructional components in ELE programs.
- Educators use appropriate formative and summative assessments to provide rigorous learning experiences to ELs that accelerate their progress toward mastery of content standards and English language proficiency.



- School leaders communicate to all staff, including guidance counselors, that students' status as English learners, or their English language proficiency levels, cannot be used as an excuse to deny them access to courses they desire, including advanced courses such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, early college, and dual enrollment courses.
- School administrators balance student schedules to make sure that English language development support, academic services, and programs provided to ELs cause minimal disruption to core content instruction.
- School leaders establish processes to ensure that educators use appropriate formative and summative assessments to provide rigorous learning experiences to ELs that accelerate their progress toward mastery of content standards and English language proficiency.



- District leaders monitor ELs' course-taking patterns and remove barriers that prevent equal participation of ELs in rigorous, grade-appropriate courses, including advanced courses such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, early college, and dual enrollment courses.
- The district leader responsible for EL programming (e.g., EL Director) collaborates with school leaders to develop policies and scheduling procedures to ensure that ESL, academic services, and programs provided to ELs cause minimal disruption to core content instruction.
- District leaders use assessment data to evaluate the effectiveness of the district's English learner education programs and make appropriate adjustments.



- The Department promotes the adoption of MassCore and encourages ELs to take rigorous coursework, including advanced courses such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, early college, and dual enrollment courses.
- The Department provides guidance on developing school schedules that ensure that English language development support, academic services, and programs provided to ELs cause minimal disruption to core content instruction.
- The Department monitors the effectiveness of districts' English learner education programs in supporting students' academic and linguistic development (i.e., through Tiered Focused Monitoring).

#### Building Block 2: Academic and linguistic supports



- Educators provide targeted supports to ELs in addition to English language development and other core content instruction.
- Educators provide all ELs (including SLIFE, ELs with disabilities, and newcomers) with instructional supports and services tailored to their unique academic and linguistic needs.
- Educators identify areas in which ELs need improvement and establish personalized goals for attaining English proficiency.



- School administrators create a master schedule that provides targeted supports to ELs in addition to English language development and other core content instruction.
- School administrators allocate resources to provide instructional supports and services tailored to the unique academic and linguistic needs of all ELs (including SLIFE, ELs with disabilities, and newcomers).
- School leaders track the progress of ELs who do not meet English language proficiency benchmarks and support teachers in establishing processes to ensure ELs are on track to attain English language proficiency (e.g. identifying the areas in which identified ELs need improvement, establishing personalized goals for attaining English proficiency; assessing and tracking the progress of ELs who did not meet benchmarks and other benchmark requirements)



- District leaders provide training and planning support to schools for implementing the Massachusetts Tiered System of Support and monitor the provision of tiered instruction and supports to ELs.
- District leaders align and coordinate fiscal and human resources to ensure that ELs (including SLIFE, ELs with disabilities, and newcomers) receive ESL, native language instructional supports, and services tailored to their unique academic and linguistic needs.
- District leaders monitor ELs' achievement in the content areas and progress in acquiring English by reviewing data and establishing policies and procedures to improve outcomes for ELs.





- The Department provides guidance on the implementation of Massachusetts Tiered System of Support and monitors ELs' access to all academic and linguistic supports available in the district.
- The Department provides guidance on best instructional practices for all ELs (including SLIFE, ELs with disabilities, and newcomers).
- The Department provides data reports to assist districts in monitoring ELs' achievement in the content areas and progress in acquiring English; the Department also shares evidence-based resources designed specifically for teachers of ELs.

### Building Block 3: Social and emotional supports



- Educators actively create and maintain a safe and collaborative learning environment in which they intentionally integrate knowledge of students' cultures, languages, prior experiences, and goals into social and emotional learning.
- Educators and support staff provide supplemental or intensive social and emotional supports to ELs whose needs are urgent or severe.
- Educators are aware of linguistic and cultural supports available in the district and community to address the social and emotional needs of ELs; information about such resources is provided to ELs and their families in a language they can understand.



- School leaders prioritize a school climate in which all ELs have safe and collaborative learning environments and all teachers embrace responsibility for developing students' social and emotional competencies.
- School staff respond to a range of social and emotional needs using a tiered approach.
- School leaders are aware of linguistic and cultural supports available in the district and build partnerships with families and community-based organizations to address the social and emotional needs of ELs.



- The district reviews data on each school's climate to ensure that ELs have safe and collaborative learning environments; the district provides professional learning opportunities to administrators and teachers on developing students' social and emotional competencies.
- District leaders strategically deploy support staff to schools to provide tiered social and emotional learning supports where they are needed.
- District leaders communicate urgency around meeting ELs' social and emotional needs and support collaboration across schools and with families and community-based organizations to maximize available resources.



- The Department monitors statewide data on ELs' perceptions of their learning environments and supports initiatives designed to improve school climate.
- The Department shares best practices for providing tiered social and emotional learning supports to ELs.
- The Department convenes forums for district leaders to share best practices for meeting ELs' social and emotional needs.



## Pillar 4: A Plan for Future Success

From the Vision: *English learners thrive in high school and graduate with the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to be successful in college and/or a career of their choice, and to contribute to civic life in a global community.*

### Building Block 1: Thriving in high school



- Educators encourage ELs to participate fully in school life (e.g., in athletic teams, student government, clubs, and academic enrichment activities in addition to meaningful and rigorous classroom learning experiences).
- Educators nurture self-confidence and ensure that ELs participate in classroom and school activities; educators help to coordinate available school resources.



- School administrators prioritize ELs' participation in all aspects of school life and regularly communicate this priority to school staff.
- School leaders cultivate partnerships and organize resources to address linguistic, economic, and social barriers to ELs' participation in school life (e.g., provide support for extracurricular activities, transportation support, native language communications, assemblies on implicit bias).



- The district has a clear action plan to ensure the inclusion of ELs in all aspects of school life.
- District leaders are committed to removing linguistic, economic, and social barriers to ELs' participation in school life.



- The Department provides strategies for including ELs in all aspects of school life and monitors districts' success in this area.
- The Department convenes forums for district leaders to share best practices for removing linguistic, economic, and social barriers to ELs' participation in school life.

### Building Block 2: Graduating college and/or career ready



- Educators ensure that classroom learning prepares ELs for enrollment in college and access to other post-secondary opportunities and honors the hopes and dreams of ELs for post-secondary life.
- Educators believe that all ELs are candidates for graduation and motivate students by cultivating relationships with them, engaging and collaborating with families, and responding to early warning signs for dropout.
- Educators who support students with career development activities act without bias and push ELs to reach their highest potential.



- School administrators design a range of courses appropriate for a variety of post-secondary options; prerequisites do not serve as unnecessary obstacles to ELs' pursuing courses of interest
- School leaders celebrate educators who successfully support ELs to graduate and pursue their desired post-secondary options.
- School administrators ensure that educators responsible for advising students on post-secondary options focus on supporting ELs to reach their highest potential and ensure that ELs and their non-EL peers have equal access to counseling/post-secondary planning support.



- District data teams regularly review students' attainment of goals as well as post-secondary outcomes for ELs.
- The district improvement plan includes actions to track and resolve problems that may be early warning signs for dropout, specifically for ELs.
- The district creates opportunities for ELs to participate in educational opportunities related to career development (e.g., awareness, exploration, and immersion activities, including but not limited to internships and capstones).



- The Department reports data about ELs' success after high school and convenes a forum to review best practices.
- The Department reports data about ELs' graduation and dropout rates and convenes a forum to review best practices.
- The Department incentivizes partnerships with business, workforce development agencies, and institutions of higher education to develop career awareness and participation.

### Building Block 3: Graduating ready to contribute to civic life in a global community



- Educators regularly communicate with families and focus on ensuring that ELs participate successfully in civic opportunities.
- Teachers engage ELs in classroom activities focused on civic participation that provide them with authentic opportunities for leadership.



- School leaders identify strategies to engage students in civic opportunities (e.g., outreach and encouragement to specific students).
- School administrators sponsor or identify a wide range of opportunities for ELs to engage in civic activities.



- District teams have clear plans to address inequities in the inclusion of ELs in civic opportunities.
- The district supports educators to ensure multiple opportunities for ELs to contribute to civic life in a global community.



- The Department regularly provides guidance informed by the latest research and emerging best practices and provides opportunities to promote ELs' civic participation within and beyond their schools.
- The Department convenes forums for district leaders to share best practices related to engaging ELs in civic opportunities.