



# GUIDANCE TO SUPPORT ENGLISH LEARNERS (ELS)

During the 2020-2021 school year, school systems are delivering instruction across three possible scenarios: virtual, hybrid and traditional. Across learning scenarios, English Learners (ELs) must continue to receive language support services to ensure equitable access to high-quality instruction.

School system leaders and educators should support the needs of ELs by continuing to:

- **Identify** all newly enrolled ELs within 30 days using the [EL Identification Flowchart](#), [EL Program Handbook](#) and, if necessary, the [Provisional EL Identification Guidance](#).
- **Communicate with parents** using the [EL Parent Notification](#) letter to notify them of their child's EL status and to outline language supports.

In addition, school systems and educators must follow specific considerations for providing ELs with language support services across learning scenarios, including:

- [Preparation for Supportive EL Instruction](#)
- [Delivery of Supportive EL Instruction](#)
- [EL Accommodations](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

## PREPARATION FOR SUPPORTIVE EL INSTRUCTION

To ensure EL program service delivery continues across learning scenarios for students at all levels of language acquisition, school systems and educators should follow best practices for preparing for supportive EL instruction.

- ✓ Follow [Strong Start Instructional Materials Guidance](#) for support in providing high-quality, content-based instruction.
- ✓ Administer diagnostic assessments to determine learning gaps in content using [Diagnostic and Screener Guidance](#).
- ✓ Review proficiency levels using the [EL Language Check-up](#) and adjust [language supports](#) as needed.
- ✓ Support content teachers in using the [EL Accommodations Guidance](#) to deliver content-based instruction across learning scenarios.
- ✓ Schedule regular face-to-face or virtual meetings to provide EL Specialists and content teachers time to [co-plan](#), identify language objectives and [adapt instruction](#) for ELs. Refer to the [Supporting ELs During Distance Learning](#) for additional guidance for virtual and hybrid learning scenarios.
- ✓ Communicate any changes to instruction to the parents of ELs in a mode and language they can access. See [EL Toolkit: Chapter 10](#) for more guidance.

## DELIVERY OF SUPPORTIVE EL INSTRUCTION

Supportive EL Instruction must consider an EL’s proficiency level—emerging, progressing or nearly proficient (high progressing)—to effectively deliver language support services. The table below supports school systems and educators in scheduling and implementing high-quality EL instruction across learning scenarios.

LEARNING SCENARIO			EL PROFICIENCY LEVEL		
TRADITIONAL	HYBRID	VIRTUAL	EMERGING	PROGRESSING	NEARLY PROFICIENT
	Use the <a href="#">Guidance for Staffing and Student Monitoring</a> to establish and maintain connection with ELs.		✓	✓	✓
Deliver instruction to newcomers in small group classes to offer specialized English language development.	Deliver <a href="#">small group instruction</a> during synchronous learning to promote English language development.		✓	✓	
Provide English language development instruction to leveled groups of ELs around the four language domains (listening, speaking, reading and writing).	Schedule specific synchronous learning time to provide <a href="#">English language development instruction</a> around the four language domains.		✓	✓	
	Prioritize synchronous learning time to provide <a href="#">direct language-based</a> instruction that supports all four language domains.		✓	✓	✓
Provide <a href="#">EL supports</a> directly to ELs in core instruction or with the assistance of an EL Specialist through a “push-in” model.	Provide EL supports as an additional, “set-aside” time during virtual learning.		✓	✓	✓

## EL ACCOMMODATIONS

School systems must continue to provide accommodations across learning scenarios, using the [EL Accommodations Checklist](#) and/or [EL Classroom Differentiation Plans](#), to ensure ELs have access to high-quality instruction and equal opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge. In addition, school systems should follow specific considerations for implementing accommodations across learning scenarios.

ACCOMMODATION	TRADITIONAL	HYBRID/VIRTUAL
<b>TRANSLATIONS/NATIVE LANGUAGE</b>		
<b>Bilingual dictionary/electronic translator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide the EL with a paper dictionary or computer/translator.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a dictionary or translator for the EL to use at home.</li> <li>Provide instructions, via written materials that go home or during a special instructional session, for how to use computer translation technology such as Google Translate, iTranslate or others.</li> </ul>
<b>Provide English/Native Language Word-to-Word Dictionary (no definitions)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide the EL with a word-to-word only dictionary in their native language to English. These are the only dictionaries permitted for use on statewide assessments.</li> </ul>	

ACCOMMODATION	TRADITIONAL	HYBRID/VIRTUAL
<b>Accept compositions and written assignments in native language</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accept assignments written in an EL's native language.</li> <li>Give the EL time and instructions on how to translate assignments using either a dictionary or translation software/apps such as Google Translate or iTranslate.</li> </ul>	
<b>Native language reading material sometimes allowed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide native language materials for parents to support assisting their child with learning at home.</li> <li>Provide texts in whatever medium is most accessible students (book, ebook) in the EL's native language.</li> </ul>	
<b>Directions in native language</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide directions in the EL's native language upon request.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide translated parent-facing directions for assignments to support learning at home.</li> <li>Provide audio and written directions in the EL's native language by allowing them to access translation software/apps such as Google Translate or iTranslate during asynchronous learning.</li> <li>Provide instructions to the EL on how to request directions or support in their native language (e.g. chat feature, raised hand, etc.), during synchronous learning.</li> </ul>
<b>Audio textbooks/novels</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide access to audio versions of texts using resources such as <a href="#">Audible</a>, <a href="#">Barnes &amp; Noble</a>, <a href="#">Learning Ally</a>, or local libraries.</li> </ul>	
<b>COOPERATIVE LEARNING</b>		
<b>Cooperative learning/peer assistance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following all health and safety guidelines, pair the EL with an English speaking student who is willing to assist them with learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pair up the EL with an English speaking student who is willing to assist them with learning by assigning them to specific virtual meeting times or in breakout rooms to work cooperatively. Students can also use FaceTime or phone calls for this purpose.</li> <li>Practice this accommodation in short, informal lessons, until students become comfortable with the format and understand the dynamic.</li> </ul>
<b>Peer assistance for note taking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide the EL with copies of notes another classmate has taken or access to a central hub where students cooperatively share notes.</li> </ul>	
<b>Photocopied notes/study guide</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides a copy of the notes or study guide. This can include "fill-in-the-blank" style notes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide digital copies of the notes or study guides to ELs through email, Google Classroom, Blackboard or whatever virtual platform is available.</li> <li>Gradually transition these guides to be where the student is providing more of the information by pointing out page numbers, references, websites, or time stamps on videos so that they can learn the skill of finding the information.</li> </ul>
<b>TIMING AND SCHEDULING</b>		
<b>Extended time for tests and assignments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Add at least 50% more time to EL's active work time for assignments and homework.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schedule more time/days for assignments to be completed.</li> </ul>

ACCOMMODATION	TRADITIONAL	HYBRID/VIRTUAL
<b>TASKS AND ACTIVITIES</b>		
<b>Increased hands-on activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide manipulatives or other learning tools that allow ELs to interact with the concepts beyond reading or lecture.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide virtual activities such as games, videos, online chats and more as learning tools to help ELs engage more with the content.</li> <li>Provide manipulatives and learning toolkits for ELs to use at home.</li> </ul>
<b>Shortened, modified, fewer, or taped assignments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select specific activities that the EL must complete based on their language ability and mastery of skill.</li> </ul>	
<b>Reduced paper/pencil tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assign the most important or vital paper/pencil tasks to help the EL master a skill.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assign specific digital tasks such as virtual labs, virtual field trips, webquests, cooperative/interactive online tasks and more to help the EL master a skill.</li> <li>Teach students how to record responses orally and post them to the appropriate virtual portal in place of a written response.</li> </ul>
<b>Repeated directions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repeat directions upon request.</li> <li>Allow ELs to ask questions about the directions for additional clarification.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Record videos or live lessons to support pause and replay options.</li> <li>During synchronous instruction, provide instructions for ELs on how to ask for repeated directions (e.g. chat feature, raised hand, etc.)</li> <li>Allow more time for understanding directions in distance learning, and/or allow the EL to chat, message, or email the teacher with clarifying questions.</li> </ul>
<b>Spelling deductions discounted</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not deduct points for spelling errors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not deduct points for spelling errors.</li> <li>Allow the EL to use SpellCheck or other related spelling tools.</li> <li>Provide explicit instruction on how to use spelling tools in whatever learning platform or application they are using.</li> </ul>
<b>ASSESSMENTS</b>		
<b>Math assessment in Spanish</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide accurate and grade appropriate Spanish translations of all math assessments. This is beneficial only if the EL has access to bilingual support for the content.</li> </ul>	
<b>Tests read aloud on Math, Science, and Social Studies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read aloud tests or use a software program to provide this support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilize read aloud software (such as Kurzweil 3000) or platform embedded to allow the EL to have on demand access to read aloud.</li> <li>Provide support for read aloud including one-on-one phone calls and pre-recording.</li> </ul>
<b>Modified/shortened tests</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select the most important items on a test for the EL to take. Select a variety of complexity levels and skills.</li> </ul>	

# STRONG START FOR ELS: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## 1. What guidance is available from the U.S. Department of Education on providing language development services to English Learners during COVID-19?

The USDOE produced the [Providing Services to English Learners During the COVID-19 Outbreak](#) that covers some of the issues we face as we strive to provide the best educational opportunities for ELs. This guidance does provide the basis for our [Provisional EL Identification](#) and our recommendations for how to serve ELs across different learning scenarios.

Exiting procedures as outlined in the [ELPT Assessment Guide](#) must be followed since Louisiana was able to finish administering ELPT before schools shut down for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year.

If you have questions about exiting ELs, providing services, or other related topics, please email: [diverselearnersupport@la.gov](mailto:diverselearnersupport@la.gov).

## 2. Do I still need to provide EL services even if we are 100% virtual?

Yes, schools must continue to provide EL services to all identified ELs in any learning scenario using the best practices described in this guidance.

## 3. What EL documentation is mandatory for each student?

- All identified ELs must have a completed [home language survey](#) with a language other than English noted.
- All identified ELs must have a screener score (ELPS from 2019-Present, other screeners from 2018-before).
- All ELs must have a completed [EL Accommodations Checklist](#) if they are receiving accommodations on assessments.
- All parents of ELs must have been notified of their child's EL status via a [Parent Notification Letter](#).

The above items should be kept on file and provided to LDOE monitoring staff upon request. See the [EL Sample Document Guidance](#) for more information.

Other documents are optional but highly recommended to help EL specialists and content teachers provide appropriate supports for each EL. Refer to the Classroom Resources in [English Learner Library](#) for these documents.

## 4. Has there been an extension on the 30-day window for identifying and notifying parents of their child's EL status?

No. School systems still have 30 days to identify and notify parents of all new and returning ELs. Information about identification and notification can be found in the [EL Program Handbook](#).

## 5. How can we identify ELs if we are unable to administer ELPS?

ELPS is available for those who can administer the screener safely and securely. If a school is offering virtual learning options only, or a student is unable to come to take ELPS, a school may use the [Guidance for Provisional Identification of English Learners](#).

Schools must keep track of the students they have identified as provisional ELs because they will need to take ELPS once they are able to do so.

## 6. How can we address/assess language/learning gaps for our current ELs?

[Diagnostic and Screener guidance](#) contains information on using content based formative assessments for these purposes.

[EL Language Check-up](#) is available in the same grade bands as ELPS and ELPT to help determine if a student is in need of additional or less support based on their EL assessment scores.

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## 7. How do we notify parents of their child’s EL status if we cannot send the letter home with students because we are offering distance learning only?

Use every means possible to contact the parent. [Parent Notification Letters](#) are available in the [English Learner Library](#) in [Arabic](#), [Spanish](#) and [Vietnamese](#). These can be sent home by mail or electronically. If bilingual staff is unavailable to conduct follow-up communication, use language access tools such as Language Line, Talking Points, etc.

## 8. If we are using a virtual program that is completely in Spanish, do we still need to provide English Language Development services?

Yes, all ELs must receive English language development services either through their content classes, as a separate class, as supplemental instruction, or a combination of each. If the school system is using a Spanish only online program, the school must schedule additional time for the student to develop English whether through a virtually taught class, meeting or through an EL specific online program.

## 9. How can I find more guidance on support ELs during distance learning?

See the [Supporting ELs During Distance Learning](#) in the Department’s [Strong Start 2020 Resource Library](#). Contact [diverselearnersupport@la.gov](mailto:diverselearnersupport@la.gov) with further questions.