Guidance for Planning a Long-term ELL Strategic Academic and Literacy Support Model that Builds College and Career Readiness

The goal of a Long-term ELL Strategic Academic and Literacy Support Model is to support English Language Learners/Multilingual Learners with more than 6 years in the United States.

The Long-term ELL Strategic Academic and Literacy Support Model addresses the needs and challenges of students who have been classified as MLLs/ELLs for more than six years who have not met the performance criteria to exit MLL/ELL status as they progress toward English proficiency and full inclusion into the schools' academic program. These students, referred to as Long-Term ELLs, have specific needs that have not been consistently or effectively addressed through the instructional services they have received.

Research evidence suggests that many Long-Term ELLs require rigorous and high-interest learning opportunities and intentional and intensive supports to develop their academic discourse and literacy skills. A strong focus on academic reading and writing of expository texts is crucial for accelerating these students' academic language and literacy skills. In addition, many of these students have become disengaged and passive in the classroom. Specifically, they have not been effectively supported to develop essential discourse and literacy practices, nor have they been explicitly taught study skills and behaviors associated with academic engagement and success. Instead, "they are passed from grade to grade by educators who don't know how to engage them and who have varied expectations for their performance" (Olsen, 2014, p. 6).

The Long-term ELL Strategic Academic and Literacy Support Model must include specially designed instructional services at the upper elementary and secondary levels to ensure that these students have rigorous, purposefully scaffolded learning opportunities to accelerate their academic discourse and literacy; classroom environments that are safe and encourage risk-taking; an engaging and supportive school climate that includes strong, caring adult and peer relationships; flexible scheduling; relevant and motivating texts; and a curriculum-wide focus on study skills, metacognition, and a variety of learning strategies. Students identified as Long-Term ELLs must receive services that are carefully crafted based on their age and/or grade level, and on a carefully developed profile of their assessed strengths and areas for acceleration. Students in grade 5 (upper elementary) should receive additional, intensive academic discourse and literacy support through a before school class, with no more than 10 students, focused on developing their academic discourse and reading and writing skills in preparation for the middle school curriculum. This class is aligned to, not a substitute for, their regular English language arts course.

Middle school students (grades 6–8) participate in a specially designed course that makes use of discipline-specific multi-modal materials that support core content area classes at a challenging reading level for students so that academic discourse and literacy development directly support students' engagement with the grade-level conceptual understandings and analytical practices of content area classes. It incorporates daily practice in oral and written academic discourse through carefully planned and implemented interactive learning tasks using interesting and relevant age-appropriate materials. All middle school Long-Term ELLs are assigned a specific counselor, ENL teacher, or faculty member to monitor their language development, assess progress and achievement of goals for meeting grade-level literacy standards, becoming college and career ready, and exiting MLL/ELL status. All Long-Term ELLs and their families meet at least quarterly with the designated faculty member to review current progress, program placement, assessment results, goals for meeting the exit criteria, and accelerated academic progress targets. The ENL teacher collaborates with all the student's core content teachers to build their capacity, plan units, and regularly monitor student progress in those classes.

High school students (grades 9–12) are provided rigorous supports with a sense of urgency to strengthen their academic language and literacy and to ensure that they get and stay on track to graduate. At the same time, these students are not isolated but rather integrated into rigorous college preparatory courses with their English-proficient peers and are encouraged to be active participants in their education. They receive an extra credit-bearing college preparatory course focused on academic reading and writing, oral academic discourse, and study skills. Such courses are designed to motivate learning and expand students' academic content knowledge. They focus, for example, on journalism, theater, psychology, college writing, Ethnic Studies, robotics and contemporary topics that motivate and strengthen students' sense of self-efficacy and expressive capacity. There is also coordination and planning among their teachers to support their students' particular needs. Schools use dynamic, creative, innovative, and flexible scheduling structures to support Long-Term ELLs in addition to their participation in these courses. Block scheduling, looping, after-school and weekend tutoring, and summer school are some of the structures employed to support these students.

Educating Long-Term ELLs to meet standards and be college and career ready, particularly those who have been in school but are outside the sphere of success and have low levels of literacy, is no small challenge. Yet, there are schools that have graduated all typologies of ELLs and their exemplary practices are captured in a recent report by Understanding Language at Stanford University, *Schools to Learn From: How Six High Schools Graduate English Language Learners College and Career Ready:* *http://ell.stanford.edu/content/schools-learn*

This guidance tool is enriched by examples of practices implemented by schools that have graduated significantly high percentages of all MLLs/ELLs to be college and career ready. The following tool presents the essential features for high quality programs for Long-Term ELLs and their components, examples from successful schools to consider, and guiding questions to assist with planning. A strong Long-term ELL Strategic Academic and Literacy Support Model will address the following essential features for high quality programs for Long-Term ELLs:

1. A foundational instructional language development approach that specifies how high-quality academic standards-based integrated content and language development is delivered throughout the MLL/ELL's day with literacy enrichment in English and home language.

2. Strategic staffing of strong, caring adults that build relationships to address the needs of Long-Term ELLs on their journey to graduation is in place.

3. Motivating courses with demanding texts and a curriculum-wide focus on study skills, metacognition/metalinguistics, and varied learning strategies for rigorous, purposefully scaffolded learning opportunities to accelerate their academic discourse and literacies are offered.

4. Ongoing, intentional academic and social-emotional assessments to determine needs with follow-through are administered.

5. Intensive social-emotional and college and career planning supports draw on strategic community and family partnerships.

6. Intentional, carefully orchestrated structures afford opportunities for Long-Term ELLs to accelerate and strengthen their language, literacy, and academic capacities.

7. Professional learning sessions are focused on curriculum development and instructional strategies for all teachers of Long-Term ELLs including ELA and home language literacy, Bilingual Education, ENL and content area teachers.

Motivating, supporting, and providing Long-Term ELLs demanding curriculum that integrates language and literacy development requires creating school communities with an asset-oriented mindset and processes that ensure that Long-Term ELLs are supported and coached to meet college and career readiness standards. These communities must provide Long-Term ELLs with the information and guidance on their path to graduating college and career ready. This includes a broad spectrum of supports for students and their families as well as for teachers. The tool that follows outlines each of the essential features mentioned above. It includes descriptors of the components and provides some examples of practices within each essential feature. In addition, the tool posits guiding questions that the community designing the Long-term ELL Strategic Academic and Literacy Support Model should consider.

Long-term ELL Strategic Academic and Literacy Support Model Planning Guidance Tool: Essential Features

Essential Feature 1:
The foundational instructional language development approach specifies how high quality academic standards-based integrated content and language development is delivered throughout the MLL/ELL's day with literacy enrichment in English and home language.

Components include:

a. The school's language development approach is aligned to the district's college and career readiness standards, instructional foci, course offerings, assessments, and other essential school features;
b. Instruction in every classroom integrates content and disciplinary language development;
c. The instruction is designed to fully engage MLLs/ELLs and develop their autonomy; and
d. The schoolwide culture values MLLs/ELLs assets and instructional practices draw on MLL/ELL linguistic and cultural assets.

Examples from Successful Schools

- The school's language development approach is aligned to the district's college and career readiness standards, instructional foci, course offerings, assessments, and other essential school features.
- Content area teachers work with English as a New Language (ENL) and Bilingual Education instructors to integrate content, analytical practices, and language development within their unit and lesson planning.
- Teachers consistently use appropriate scaffolds across classrooms to support students' language development and strategies to foster autonomy.
- Schools leverage the cultural and language assets of MLLs/ELLs, to strengthen students' language and academic development simultaneously, through use of resources from more than one language to make content meaningful and comprehensible for students.

Essential Feature 2:

Strategic staffing of strong, caring adults that build relationships to address the needs of Long-Term MLLs/ELLs on their journey to graduation is in place.

Components include:

a. Recruitment, interviews, onboarding and mentoring seek to secure candidates that are a good fit for the goals of the Long-term ELL Strategic Academic and Literacy Support Model; and
b. Teachers of Long-Term MLLs/ELLs have:
   1. Knowledge of content, language development, disciplinary literacy development in English language, pedagogy, and formative assessment practices for MLLs/ELLs;
   2. Ability to create a highly motivating classroom culture of risk taking, persistence, mutual respect and learning, and motivate students to engage and persevere in rigorous oral and written production;
   3. Ability to build, draw on and make connections to students' home culture and language, life experiences and aspirations;
   4. Knowledge and experience in working with MLLs/ELLs;
   5. Strong strategies for fostering the academic language and literacy skills of students who have not developed these forms of discourse and literacy in English or their primary language. This includes supporting students to engage in close reading of complex texts and in dynamic, sustained academic discussions;
   6. Strong communication, coaching, and mentoring skills;
   7. Knowledge of strategies and structures for developing metacognition, metalinguistics, learning skills and autonomy; and
   8. A strong willingness to learn and grow as a part of school community.

Examples from Successful Schools

- School community recruits a team to design and implement the Long-term ELL Strategic Academic and Literacy Support Model. The team includes representatives from counseling, the academic core as well as teachers with language development and literacy expertise.
- School community hires staff members, including leadership, who are immigrants and Former ELLs, speak students' home languages, and/or have significant international travel experience.
- School Community collaborates with teacher preparation institutions in recruiting diverse teacher candidates who have the potential to succeed with Long-Term ELLs.
- School seeks dually-certified teachers in ENL and content areas.
- School seeks literacy experts in multiple languages and bilingual extensions.
- School community ensures all school staff have appreciation of and sensitivity to cultural diversity.
- Leadership involves the community in the vetting of candidates.
- School has candidates teach a demonstration lesson with Long-Term ELLs.
- School has candidates meet with the team designing and refining the Long-term ELL Strategic Academic and Literacy Support Model.

Essential Feature 3:

Motivating courses with demanding texts and a curriculum-wide focus on study skills, metacognition/metalinguistics, and varied learning strategies for rigorous, purposefully scaffolded learning opportunities to accelerate Long-term ELLs' academic discourse and literacies are offered.

Components include:

a. Classes are designed with students' prior experiences and interests at the forefront. Learning opportunities leverage student interests that support college and career readiness;
b. Literacy development support and services accelerate successful performance of Long-Term ELLs; and
c. Courses use demanding and motivating texts and themes and integrate practices to help students plan and persevere to meet individual learning goals.

Examples from Successful Schools

- School community uses high interest texts and motivating themes to design courses.
- Contemporary topics that motivate and strengthen students' sense of self-efficacy and expressive capacity are integrated into courses.
- Extra credit-bearing college preparatory courses focus on academic reading and writing, oral academic discourse, and study skills. Such courses are designed to motivate learning and expand students' academic content knowledge.
- A college preparatory course in journalism is designed to strengthen research and analytical practices while affording students opportunities to understand how language works and is structured for distinct media related purposes.
- An elective college preparatory theater class is designed for 9th or 10th graders to increase academic discourse and writing as students study plays and create their own productions.
- A college preparatory psychology course generates rich opportunities for academic discourse and writing while growing MLLs/ELLs self-efficacy.
- A college preparatory 11th and 12th grade writing course prepares MLLs/ELLs for the demands of college and reduces their enrollment rate in post-secondary remedial English courses.
- A college preparatory Latino Studies course motivates Long-Term ELLs to persevere with complex narrative and informational text as they develop strategies for reading to improve their literacy skills while growing an understanding of Latino(a)/Hispanic perspectives and contributions.
- Classroom and school libraries carry a wealth of resources in English and multiple languages, oftentimes requested by students, in their collections. Student focused interviews and surveys have informed the collections.

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Essential Feature 4:

Ongoing, intentional academic and social-emotional assessments to determine needs with follow-through are administered.

Components include:

a. School community carries out a range of assessments that gather information about student's prior knowledge, literacy levels in multiple languages, aspirations, interests, growth targets, learning styles, and competencies that can be used to inform placement as well as teaching and learning decisions;
b. Ongoing assessment practices feed into a larger framework and mindset of continuous improvement which values strengthening the quality of learning experiences for all students; and
c. Summative assessments such as end of term tests, projects, performances, and state assessments serve as major benchmarks that are aligned to the school's goals and mission.

Examples from Successful Schools

- Assessment practices allow teachers to adapt instructional materials to meet the strengths and needs of students.
- Teachers leverage formative assessment practices for continuous improvement, to deepen understanding of both language and content-area learning, and to involve students in their own learning trajectory.
- School communities gather detailed data on students in order to inform decisions around instruction, course offerings, and school structures. They capture data from a variety of sources (i.e., transcript reviews, interviews, English and home language literacy assessments, summative assessments from previous years, diagnostic assessments administered periodically throughout the year, samples of student work, and information shared at student study team meetings or gathered through the course of interventions).
- School community works closely with students and their families, both formally through initial diagnostics and home visits, and informally through conversations and meetings throughout the year, to collect relevant information about the aspirations, interests, background, needs, and strengths of each student and their family.
- School community values assessment for learning evidenced by teachers' continuous use of diagnostic and formative assessment practices to monitor student learning and inform instruction.
- Teachers elicit evidence of student understanding and language use through a variety of techniques, from Do Nows, exit slips, and quick writes to follow-up questions.
- The evidence from formative assessment opportunities is used to plan instructional supports to better meet students' needs and to help students monitor and assess their own progress.
- School community's outreach and trust building often surprises students. This attentiveness makes students feel cared for and reduces the external anxieties that may impact students' experiences at the school and ultimately enables the school to function peacefully. The support staff works closely with the instructional staff to understand the various modes of expressions (e.g., theater, music, arts), passions, and creativity that can positively impact Long-Term ELLs' educational goals.

Essential Feature 5:

Intensive social-emotional and college and career planning supports draw on strategic community and family partnerships.

Components include:
a. School teams have deep understanding that academic and social-emotional learning for students work in symbiotic ways in promoting student engagement in learning and post-secondary outcomes (National Research Council, 2012);
b. School-wide practices and policies attend to students' social-emotional well-being (e.g., student interviews, home visits, advisory programs, counseling, and mental health services);
c. Schools provide wrap-around services for families in need and their students;
d. Schools acknowledge their own strengths and limitations and are willing to engage in meaningful conversations and actions toward improvements in student learning. This includes involving families in the caring and learning work, while respecting their unique and diverse experiences;
e. Schools coordinate with professional learning partners, universities, businesses and community-based organizations so that the appropriate resources and opportunities are available to students, their families, and to the school;
f. Schools provide care, compassion and respect for students and families and value student families for their unique and diverse experiences;
g. Educators engage in consistent, meaningful, two-way conversations about student learning; and
h. Schools equip students and their families with tools and resources so they can serve as leaders and change agents within their own communities and as equal partners in school-based decision-making.

Examples from Successful Schools
- School community cultivates numerous beneficial relationships with families, community-based organizations, university partners, and stakeholders to secure the supports needed for Long-Term ELLs.
- School community coordinates intensive social-emotional supports to help students become healthy and thriving young adults while working toward academic success.
- School community starts social-emotional supports as soon as a student enrolls.
- School community welcomes families in from day one and shows them the support systems in place for their students.
- Counselors and teachers gain an understanding of their students' varied schooling and social-emotional histories.
- School community respects students' experiences, and the realization that students often need additional supports to thrive in academics.
- School community sustains social-emotional support of students through close counseling from adults, either through structured advisory programs or close mentoring relationships.
- School community connects students and their families with wrap-around services related to health, housing, food security, employment, and community resources.
- Teachers and counselors guide MLLs/ELLs in their whole development through systematic attention to their social-emotional well-being and skills (i.e., coping with trauma, failure, stress control, realistic and adaptive goal setting, planning, decision-making, and motivation).
- School community views families as crucial allies and takes extensive measures to involve families.
- School community has strong ties with the local community and the families of their students.
- School community forges lasting partnerships with external organizations that are purposefully and carefully selected to augment and improve the existing practices at the school.
- School community works strategically with community organizations to expand opportunities for students.
- School community partners with local colleges and universities to offer college-level courses, provide mentoring, internship opportunities, as well as intensive college counseling and guidance to include financial planning for college.

Essential Feature 6:

Intentional, well-orchestrated structures afford opportunities for Long-Term ELLs to accelerate and strengthen their language, literacy, and academic competencies.

Components include:

a. Master schedule and flexibility in course options accommodate students' strengths and needs and are aligned to school's language development approach and college and career readiness standards;
b. Student learning opportunities are created in and outside of the classroom, beyond the traditional school day and academic calendar year; and
c. Flexible schedules enable students to advantage motivating and innovative learning experiences.

Examples from Successful Schools

- School community builds dynamic, creative, and flexible school-wide structures that facilitate student success. These structures are not bound by the regular class period or school day.
- School community has flexibility in the master schedule to accommodate students' varied and immediate needs, notwithstanding the additional work this often entails.
- School community gives informal assessments each semester to gather up-to-date information about MLL/ELLs' progress in language, literacy and content development.
- School community does not track MLLs/ELLs into stock schedules by groups but has highly individualized programs based on a combination of their language and subject-area needs.
- School community advantages block scheduling and double-blocking for certain courses to provide sufficient instructional time where it matters most, such as a double block of English and ENL to give students time to develop their language proficiency and literacy skills using highly motivating texts and themes. In most cases, block scheduling allows for more instructional time per student, more time on task, and smaller roster sizes per teacher, to allow for more individualized attention per student and more time for critical thinking.
- School community schedules time for teachers to co-teach.
- Educators recognize that the school day does not provide enough time to help students meet their rigorous academic demands. They extend the school day through a combination of after-school tutoring, Saturday school, and summer time use.
- School community determines student and family needs and designs schedules and structures to meet those needs.
- School community provides consistency for students across their years by "looping," a strategy that provides students with consistency across their school years by having the same teacher(s) two or more years in a row.
- School community provides students access to college preparatory courses and career technical education pathways.
- School community creates processes and structures to ensure that Long-Term ELLs have access to the entire spectrum of district course offerings, including gifted and talented programs, special education, advanced placement courses, career and technical education (CTE), and other programs or courses offered to general education students.
- School community schedules support planning for and advantaging postsecondary options for Long-Term ELLs (e.g., connect with community colleges and trade schools, explore scholarship options, provide career education).
- School community creates strategic business and university partnerships for students to expand extracurricular options (e.g., mentorships, career fairs, internships) and to explore college and career opportunities.

Essential Feature 7

Professional learning sessions are focused on curriculum development and instructional strategies for all teachers of Long-term ELLs including ENL and content area teachers.

Components include:

a. Professional learning affords teachers resources and time to examine and plan lessons that are instructionally aligned with the *Key Principles of Effective ELL Instruction* and New York State's Next Generation Learning Standards (CCLS), Next Generation Science Standards and the Bilingual Common Core Progressions;
b. Sustained, on-site professional learning is anchored in research-informed practices that develop MLLs/ELLs' capacities to fully participate in rigorous learning opportunities across content areas in all schools;
c. Professional learning enables teachers to develop both the dispositions and capacities to serve diverse MLLs/ELLs effectively especially Long-Term ELLs;
d. Professional learning sessions are intentionally designed to build teachers' capacities to highlight and leverage interrelationships among content area understandings, analytical practices, and the language needed to meet disciplinary conceptual and practice demands;
e. Professional learning sessions develop a deep understanding of subject matter content knowledge and subject matter pedagogy that incorporates an understanding of the language practices needed to engage in the discipline(s);
f. Professional learning sessions develop a profound understanding of literacy development, second language development and strategies for teaching MLLs/ELLs, preferably with applications within the specific subject matter area(s) they are called upon to teach;
g. Professional learning sessions have teachers learn about approaches to language learning that can build bridges between students' native language knowledge and their evolving acquisition of a new language in an academic context;
h. Professional learning sessions help teachers design motivating lessons that integrate literacy development which include the kinds of learning tasks students will be expected to undertake in progressing through the standards and demonstrating their knowledge and capacities. Teachers learn how to calibrate the content and language demands of these tasks, as they learn to build curriculum, lessons, and assignments, and how to create temporary scaffolds that enable students to actively engage in and productively carry out learning tasks; and
i. Professional learning sessions call on teachers to implement structured assignments that allow for the application of theory to practice. Structured assignments engage teachers in assessing students, designing lessons, trying out strategies, evaluating outcomes, and continuously reflecting with expert guidance on what they are learning.

Examples from Successful Schools

- School community has collaborative structures and scheduled time to facilitate co-teaching by ENL and content area teachers in order to support the balance of language, literacy and content learning.
- School community engages teachers in deliberate and thoughtful unit and lesson planning among ENL, literacy and content area teachers.
- School community promotes cross-disciplinary and cross-grade literacy expectations and teacher collaboration.
- School community ensures that all teachers of MLLs/ELLs have access to high-quality professional development that provides high leverage pedagogical practices, promotes the effective use of student assessment data, and develops skills for supporting literacy development and second-language acquisition across the curriculum.
- School community creates early-release days or shared prep periods, for teachers to meet in grade-level teams to create interventions for struggling students, or in department teams to plan for instruction, examine student work, and carry out data inquiry work.