

It is important that evaluations of EL programs and services focus on overall and specific program goals. The goals should address expected progress in English language development and core-content instruction. SEAs and LEAs are encouraged to develop continuous evaluation systems that align with both program design and the needs of EL students in each state or community.

COMPONENTS OF AN EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR ELS

The following tool is based on the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights’ Web page “Developing Programs for English Language Learners,” located at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/ell/programeval.html>. It may help SEAs and LEAs identify elements for evaluating EL programs and services. Questions and data sources focus on EL program implementation information; staffing and professional learning; student performance in English language development and academic content areas; and analyzing the information collected and identifying areas for improvement. EL program evaluation will vary from LEA to LEA; thus, the information below is illustrative.

A. EL Program Implementation Information

Overview: Following are questions to consider in collecting and maintaining information needed to determine whether all aspects of an LEA’s EL program(s) are being evaluated. Where an LEA uses more than one EL program, the evaluation should disaggregate current and former EL students’ performance data by program to ensure that each program’s strengths and weaknesses can be identified and addressed, as needed.

Questions to Ask About EL Program Implementation:

1. Does the evaluation cover all procedural and service provision requirements set forth in the LEA’s EL plan, including
 - the identification/screening process?
 - the student assessment process, including the annual ELP assessment?
 - the provision of EL programs and services to all EL students in ways that avoid the unnecessary segregation of EL students?
 - the provision of qualified staff and resources consistent with EL program design?
 - equal opportunities to participate meaningfully in programs and activities, whether curricular, co-curricular, or extracurricular?
 - following appropriate criteria for exiting students from EL program services?
 - the implementation of monitoring practices for current EL students, including opt-out ELs, and former EL students who have transitioned from EL program services?
2. Is the information collected on each EL program element being assessed with reference to the specific requirements of the district’s EL plan? For example, when looking at the process for identifying potential EL students, does the evaluation determine whether the LEA has followed the established plan for identifying potential EL students with a home language survey (HLS) and timely referral for an ELP assessment?
3. Does the evaluation determine whether staff are adequately trained and have followed applicable procedural and service requirements, including frequency, timeliness, and documentation to ensure no lapses in EL services?

Possible Data Sources:

- file and record reviews (e.g., date of enrollment, HLS, assessment, placement, notice letter to EL parent)
- staff interviews and surveys
- enrollment data in advanced, gifted, and special education courses; choice programs, like magnets; extracurricular activities
- input from parents, student surveys, or focus group meetings
- grievances or complaints made to the district regarding program implementation, service delivery, or access to programs

B. Staffing and Professional Learning

Overview: The following questions will be helpful to ask to determine if school leaders and EL program teachers are well prepared and effectively employing professional learning in the classroom to help ensure that EL programs and services facilitate improved educational outcomes and English language development for ELs.

Questions to Ask About Staffing and Professional Learning:

1. Do classroom teachers have the resources, skills and knowledge to address the needs of EL students in their classroom?
2. Are content teachers trained in specific methodologies to provide EL students with meaningful access to the content?
3. If English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers teach in content areas, do they have certification in their specific content areas, as well as ESL certification?
4. Does the LEA provide adequate professional development and follow-up training in order to prepare EL program teachers and administrators to implement the EL program effectively?
5. Are administrators who evaluate EL program staff adequately trained to meaningfully evaluate whether EL teachers are appropriately employing their training in the classroom?
6. Does the school use mainly paraprofessionals to serve EL students or teachers who are qualified to deliver EL services?

Possible Data Sources:

- copies of required certifications, licenses or endorsements of teachers who instruct ELs, including content-area certification, as appropriate
- list of all paraprofessionals who work with ELs and their qualifications to provide support to ELs
- classroom observations
- class lists and description of how ELs are placed in classes (e.g., ESL, bilingual, and supported content instruction)
- topics, schedules, and participants at professional learning opportunities

C. Student Performance Information: English Language Development

Overview: Following are questions that may be considered when evaluating the success of EL programs in meeting English language development (ELD) goals.

Questions to Ask About English Language Development Goals:

1. Rate of English Language Development

- Are EL students acquiring English language skills in all four language domains (e.g., listening, speaking, reading, and writing) at a pace that is consistent with EL program goals or expectations and with EL students at comparable ages and initial ELP levels?
- Is the rate of language development compatible with the LEA's objectives for academic progress?
- Is the language progress of intermediate and advanced ELs or ELs with disabilities stagnating? If so, what supports are these ELs receiving in addition to continued ELD instruction targeted to their language needs?

2. English Language Proficiency

- How are EL students performing in English language skills compared to the LEA's goals and standards?
- Are EL students progressing in English language skills so they will be able to successfully manage regular coursework?
- Do former EL students, who no longer receive English language development services, continue to demonstrate English language skills that enable them to successfully manage regular coursework?

Possible Data Sources:

- performance on standardized achievement tests
- standardized language proficiency tests
- English oral, reading, and writing skills, as demonstrated by grades in language development courses
- year-to-year test scores
- teacher observation
- parental observations and feedback
- records on length of time from entry to exit from the program
- grades in core classes
- graduation rates

Note: Longitudinal data is especially important in evaluating the success of each EL program with respect to whether ELs attain English proficiency within a reasonable time period. Disaggregating data by current ELs, former ELs, and never ELs is particularly useful for assessing whether EL programs enable ELs to attain parity of participation in the standard program within a reasonable time period.

D. Student Performance Information: Academic Content

Overview: This area addresses whether EL students are demonstrating progress in grade-level academic content and are not incurring irreparable academic deficits. The following are questions that may be appropriate to consider when evaluating program success in the area of academic performance.

Questions to Ask:

Rate of Academic Progress

- Are EL students receiving ELD services targeted to their language needs and progressing academically relative to EL program goals or expectations?
- Are EL students learning grade-level core content in addition to English language development?
- Depending upon the LEA's EL program model(s) and goals, are EL students making sufficient academic progress in the core-content areas so that they are either at academic grade level or will be able to "catch up" academically within a reasonable period of time?
- Are middle and high school EL students receiving meaningful access to courses needed to graduate on time?

Comparison to Other Students

- Once EL students have exited EL programs and services, are they able to participate meaningfully in the standard curriculum comparable to their never-EL peers?
- How are EL and former EL students doing, over time, as compared to the academic performance of never-EL students in core-content subjects and with respect to on-time graduation?
- How do the percentages of current ELs, former ELs, and never-ELs compare in special education, advanced courses, and extracurricular activities? Does such access differ by EL program or language background? If there is disproportionate participation, what are the barriers to participation? Are the barriers based on language needs or EL status?
- Are multiple measures used to assess the overall performance of current EL and former EL students in meeting the educational goals the district has established for its EL program?

Note: Longitudinal data is especially important in evaluating the success of each EL program. Disaggregating academic performance data by current ELs, former ELs, and never ELs is particularly useful for assessing whether EL programs enable ELs to attain parity of participation in the standard instructional program within a reasonable period of time.

Possible Data Sources:

- performance on standardized achievement tests
- year-to-year test scores
- teacher observation
- parental observations and feedback
- records on length of time from entry to exit from program, including the EL student's ELP and age at the time of entry
- grades in core classes
- graduation and drop-out rates
- inclusion of EL students in gifted and talented, as well as other special programs (e.g., magnet programs)
- participation in extracurricular activities
- measures related to meeting state or local school reform goals

Note: Most data should already be available in the LEA's student records. Are data collection and maintenance systems maintained to effectively support this portion of the evaluation? Are data systems maintained that permit EL and former EL students to be compared to never-EL students?

E. Analyzing the Information and Identifying Areas for Improvement

Overview: This section provides information on analyzing the data collected and describes steps to consider in developing an action plan to address the findings from the evaluation. For illustrative purposes, the information is organized into three areas discussed below.

Questions to Ask:

1. Review of Results—Findings and Conclusions

Following are questions that may be considered when compiling, organizing, and summarizing the information collected for each area where the district is not meeting the educational goals it established:

- Is each identified area of concern evaluated to determine why it arose and how it is interfering with program objectives?
- Were adequate resources allocated to the area of concern?
- Were the responsible staff adequately trained with respect to their duties?
- Were goals and expectations realistic? Were goals and other program expectations adequately communicated? Does the concern suggest the need to take another look at some aspect of the program design?
- Are there any contributing factors, explanations, or reasons for each area of concern?

Note that it may be convenient to organize a written summary of three basic components:

- *Goal or Standard*—Describe program goal or standard where a concern has been identified.
- *Actual Outcome*—Describe what the evaluation demonstrated with respect to shortcomings in achieving the desired goal or standard.
- *Contributing Factors*—Describe factors and circumstances that may have influenced the outcome of the goal or standard (i.e., why was the outcome not as expected?)

2. Planning and Designing Modifications and Improvements

The following questions relate to planning and designing corrective measures or improvements tailored to address the specific concerns identified, while promoting the overall success of the program:

- Has a description of the changes been developed (e.g., What procedural and program modifications will be undertaken? Who is expected to be responsible for what? When will the changes be implemented?)
- Has a description of the rationale and objective(s) been developed (e.g., What are the changes expected to accomplish? How will success be measured?)

3. Implementing Program Changes

Once the planned modifications are developed, they can be put in place. Questions about implementation procedures may include:

- Have all stakeholders (i.e., responsible and interested parties) been notified of any program changes?
- Has necessary training been identified? Have appropriate steps been put in place so that responsible persons understand expectations and are prepared to implement the changes as planned?

To facilitate the success of the program improvement process, you may wish to consider the following questions:

- *Staff Responsibilities*—Have staff been assigned specific responsibility for activities? Have the assigned staff been granted appropriate authority and have they been provided directions describing responsibilities and expected outcomes?
- *Establishing Schedules*—Has a schedule of due dates been established for key events, action steps, and expectations? Does the schedule provide for prompt actions to afford equal educational opportunities to EL students?
- *Follow-up, as Appropriate*—Has an approach been established to ensure that the process moves forward as expected? Has a person been designated with overall responsibility for the process to ensure its effective implementation?