Supporting English Learners in the COVID-19 Crisis

August 2020

Council of the
Great City Schools

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The Council of the Great City Schools is the only national organization exclusively representing the needs of urban public schools. Composed of 76 large-city school districts, its mission is to promote the cause of urban education and to advocate for inner-city students through legislation, research, and media relations. The organization also provides a network for school districts sharing common problems to exchange information and to collectively address new challenges as they emerge in order to deliver the best possible education for urban youth.

Supporting English Learners in the COVID-19 Crisis

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Background and Purpose of this Guide

As the nation grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic, the families of English learners (ELs) have experienced disproportionate distress with the shuttering of schools and the economic crisis. The reality of what many EL and immigrant families have faced during the pandemic must be incorporated at the outset into any planning for the reopening of schools to ensure appropriate supports for English learners and their families. ELs constitute a substantial and growing portion of total enrollment in the Great City Schools. Of the 73 districts examined in the Council's latest demographic report, 23 districts (or roughly 32 percent) had ELs who comprised more than 20 percent of total district enrollment. Furthermore, ELs in the Great City Schools are increasingly diverse, representing over 50 language groups.[1] The failure to address the needs of these students in the reopening of schools would jeopardize the educational outcomes of a sizable portion of students and the overall recovery efforts of districts across the country.

This guide is the ninth in a series developed by the Council of the Great City Schools to help districts as they prepare to reopen schools—whatever that may look like—in the 2020-21 school year.[2] Many of these guides identify some EL-specific needs and challenges. This guide will address the issues facing families of English learners in greater detail. It will also include some of the lessons that districts have learned while working to support their English learner and immigrant communities during school closures. In Appendix C, we provide a list of resources from districts and other sources that we used for examples in the document. In addition, this report provides EL-specific guidance for districts to consider as they plan for the start of the 2020-21 school year. While this guidance does not include an exhaustive review of English learner instructional issues, needs, and best practices, it does reflect priority areas and issues identified by EL leaders across the Council's urban school district membership. Starting in late March 2020, the Council began holding weekly virtual meetings of EL program directors and staff from member school districts to discuss shared challenges and strategies for supporting English learners' continuing access to rigorous instruction in all content areas and academic language development during school closures. Consequently, this document reflects the collective struggle and wisdom of EL leaders on the front lines of the nation's biggest city school systems.

The EL-focused recommendations in this report also reflect a *systems approach* consistent with the findings and recommendations of the Council's seminal report, Succeeding with English Language Learners: Lessons Learned from Urban School Districts.[3] Specifically, the 2009 report shed light on the complex interaction of organizational, structural, instructional, and staffing issues needed to promote the achievement of English learners—in other words, how all parts of the organization

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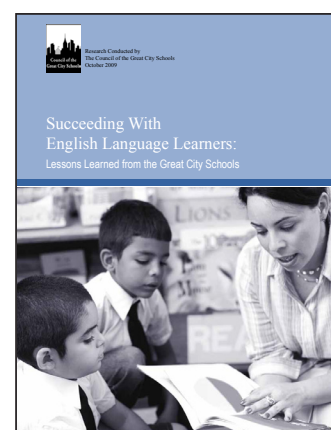
1   Uro, G., & Lai, D. (2019, April). *English language learners in America's great city schools: Demographics, achievement, and staffing.* Council of the Great City Schools. https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/domain/35/publication%20docs/CGCS_ELL%20Survey%20Report.pdf

2   See the Returning to School Series on the Council's Coronavirus Information Site. Council of the Great City Schools. (2020). *Coronavirus information.* Retrieved July 20, 2020, from https://www.cgcs.org/corona.

3   Horwitz, A. R., Uro, G., Price-Baugh, R., Simon, C., Uzzell, R., Lewis, S., & Casserly, M. (2009, October). *Succeeding with English language learners: Lessons learned from the Great City Schools.* Council of the Great City Schools. https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/35/Publication%20Docs/EL_Report09.pdf

needed to work together to develop, communicate, implement, and sustain a clear vision and strategy for EL instructional improvement. This systems approach to addressing the needs of English learners has greater importance now. An executive summary of this 2009 report can be found in Appendix B of this guide.

The suggestions made in this document build on the notion of shared responsibility across school district departments and the importance of a well-articulated curriculum for the success of English learners; and it covers a range of areas: screening and placement, instructional practices and technology, English language development, staffing, professional development, assessment, and family engagement. The specificity of the guidance is constrained, however, by the wide range of demographic and organizational contexts existing in Council-member districts. Considerations and suggestions in the report, therefore, are meant to be customized by each school district.

Part 1

The Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis on English Learners

The unique circumstances facing many English learner families have placed them in particularly vulnerable positions during the COVID-19 pandemic. School districts learned about these COVID-19-related hardships as they worked to support families and sustain teaching and learning during school closures. Many member districts re-deployed staff, including EL educators—teachers, coaches, instructional assistants, and bilingual family liaisons—to conduct check-in calls with students, nurture existing relationships, and determine the needs of EL families. Districts' efforts to identify the challenges, needs, and concerns of their families were particularly important for understanding and responding to the needs of EL families.

In particular, we identify five main areas where the COVID-19 crisis has had a disproportionate impact on vulnerable students and communities: health, financial stability, access to public assistance and resources, learning (access to devices and instruction), and mental health and social-emotional wellbeing.
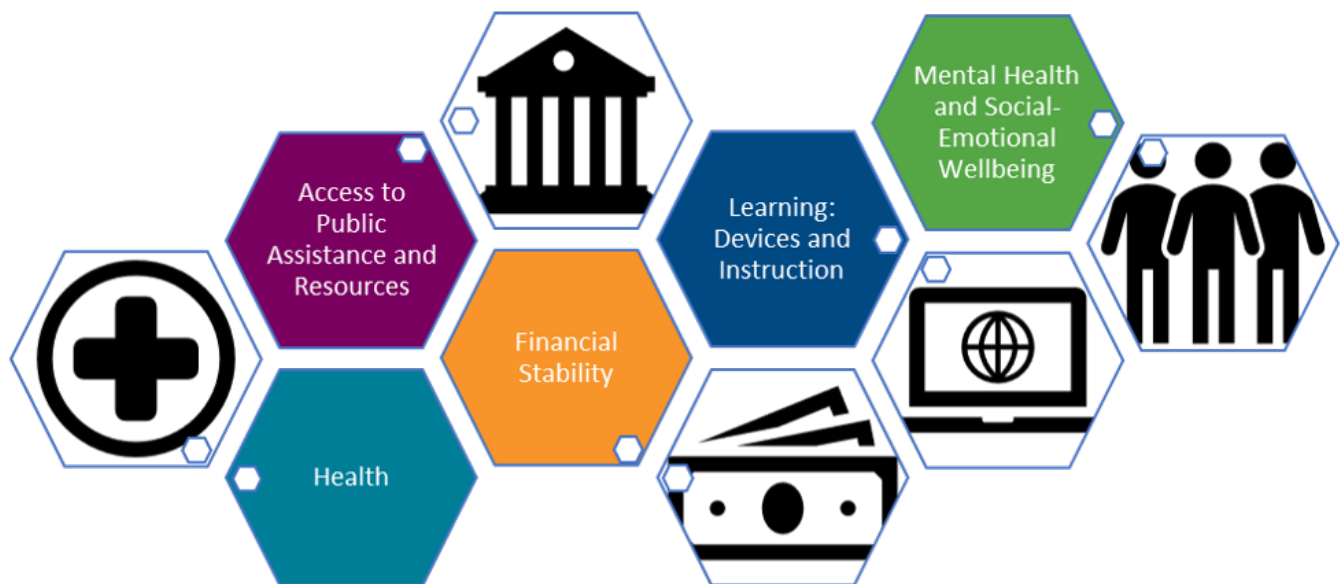
Health

The data are clear about the disparate health effects the COVID-19 pandemic has had on different populations. Communities of color, including Blacks and Latinos, are among the hardest hit by the disease, making up the largest shares of both confirmed cases and hospitalizations, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Hispanic/Latinos accounted for over one third of all COVID-19 cases and even higher rates for individuals under 44 years of age.[4] The conditions affecting Hispanics/Latinos are particularly relevant to ELs because the vast majority of English learners in U.S. schools speak Spanish.

Financial Stability

The Pew Research Center found that Hispanic women, immigrants, young adults, and those with less education were hit the hardest by COVID-19 job losses, because they were employed in sectors where social distancing of workers was difficult or the option to telework was nonexistent. Immigrants and women had high participation rates in leisure and hospitality jobs, education and health services, and retail trade sectors, which accounted for 59 percent of all nonfarm job losses between February and May.[5]

English learner families also are more likely to have at least one parent who is an immigrant and have lower overall household incomes in comparison to native-born households. According to the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), immigrants experienced a greater increase in unemployment rates during the first months of the pandemic than U.S.-born workers. Adults, ages 25 and older, who are foreign-born with no high school diploma were most affected. For instance, the unemployment rate among immigrants in the leisure and hospitality industry was four percent in January 2020 but close to 40 percent by April 2020.[6] An Urban Institute analysis of data from the Federal Household Pulse Survey revealed similar disparities. As of June 9, 2020, 62 percent of Hispanic/Latino households had at least one person who lost employment.[7]

Access to Public Assistance and Resources

The COVID-19 pandemic unveiled holes in existing safety nets and relief programs for low-income families. In fact, many low-income immigrant families were left out of the CARES Act relief funds entirely, despite paying billions in tax dollars into the Treasury. Immigrants who used an Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN)[8] were deemed ineligible to receive CARES Act relief funds. The latest data available for 2015 shows that 4.35 million people paid over $13.7 billion in net taxes using an ITIN.[9]

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4   Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020, June 1). Cases in the U.S. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/cases-in-us.html

5   Kochhar, R. (2020, June 9). *Hispanic women, immigrants, young adults, those with less education hit hardest by COVID-19 job losses.* Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/06/09/hispanic-women-immigrants-young-adults-those-with-less-education-hit-hardest-by-covid-19-job-losses/

6   Capps, R., Batalova, J., & Gelatt, J. (2020, June). *COVID-19 and unemployment: Assessing the early fallout for immigrants and other U.S. workers.* Migration Policy Institute. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/covid-19-unemployment-immigrants-other-us-workers

7   Brown, S. (2020, July 1). *The COVID-19 crisis continues to have uneven economic impact by race and ethnicity.* Urban Institute. https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/covid-19-crisis-continues-have-uneven-economic-impact-race-and-ethnicity

8   The ITIN program was created by the IRS in July 1996 so that foreign nationals and other individuals who are not eligible for a Social Security number (SSN) can pay the taxes they are legally required to pay.

9   American Immigration Council. (2020, July 1). *The facts about the individual tax identification number (ITIN).* https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/facts-about-individual-tax-identification-number-itin

Additionally, national data show that the majority (60 percent) of Hispanic and Black low-income family households had no or limited access to banks.[10] Low-income families who are eligible for federal relief funds may still have difficulty accessing them if monies are distributed through direct deposit.

Moreover, high percentages of Black and Hispanic households do not have access to other financial resources, like credit. About 36 percent of Black households and 31.5 percent of Hispanic households have no mainstream credit tools (e.g., credit cards, mortgages, student loans, personal loans, etc.). The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) found that lower-income households, less-educated households, Black and Hispanic households, households with working-age disabled individuals, and foreign-born, noncitizen households were also more likely not to have mainstream credit. With limited access to banking and no mainstream credit, these households faced more financial hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic than other families.[11]

Learning: Devices and Instruction

COVID-19-related school closures have resulted in significant hurdles for schools as they continue to provide robust opportunities for ELs to acquire English and develop academic language for success with grade-level content. Without interaction with schoolteachers who are often the sole role model for students in using academic English, schools have quickly turned to technology applications and online platforms for language learning that were freely available for students to practice and learn independently. Unfortunately, research suggests that the learning activities in these popular language-learning programs do not necessarily provide the type of feedback that would be most helpful to English learners in becoming language proficient.[12] Furthermore, research and practitioner-reported experience indicate that many language-learning programs are not aligned to English Language Development (ELD) standards or to content standards, nor are some of them even designed for K-12 students.

Moreover, a December 2019 report from the U.S. Department of Education found that few teachers reported assigning English learners to digital learning resources outside of class, in part because of concerns about students' lack of access to technology at home. The same report also showed that teachers who work with English learners are more apt to use **general** digital resources rather than tools designed specifically for English learners and that English learner educators reported fewer hours of professional development with digital learning resources than did mainstream teachers.[13]

Experience during the pandemic-related school closures confirmed that teachers were concerned about English learners' access to devices and internet connectivity. Even in districts that had already implemented a one-to-one device program ensuring that all students had sufficient and consistent access to the internet for online learning was a challenge. The inconsistent access to technology and connectivity were significant barriers to equity and continuity of instruction. Teachers also found themselves with inadequate devices to use the learning platforms and connect with students.

10   Guzman, L., & Ryberg, R. (2020, June 11). *Most low-income Hispanic and Black households have little-to-no bank access, complicating access to COVID relief funds.* National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families.

11   Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. (2018, October 22). *2017 FDIC national survey of unbanked and underbanked households.* https://www.fdic.gov/householdsurvey/. https://www.hispanicresearchcenter.org/research-resources/the-majority-of-low-income-hispanic-and-black-households-have-little-to-no-bank-access-complicating-access-to-covid-relief-funds/

12   Bajorek, J. P. (2017). L2 pronunciation in CALL: The unrealized potential of Rosetta Stone, Duolingo, Babbel, and Mango Languages. *Issues and Trends in Educational Technology,* 5(1), 24-51.

13   U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service. (2019, May). *Supporting English learners through technology: What districts and teachers say about digital learning resources for English learners* (Volume 1). National Study of English Learners and Digital Learning Resources. https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/title-iii/180414.pdf

Social Justice

It would be impossible to publish this document, at this time, without acknowledging the fact that in addition to the stress and trauma created by the COVID-19 pandemic, our nation has been undergoing considerable civil unrest resulting from its long history of inequity and injustice. The disparities that have come to light regarding the pandemic have also illuminated the intersecting disparities in health care, health outcomes, education, safety, and criminal justice. Many of our EL families who may be experiencing a disproportionate impact from the virus may also be experiencing acts of intolerance, racism, and violence. People of Asian descent, for instance, have been unjustly targeted and blamed for the outbreak, while many Black and Brown people have been subject to racial slurs, insults, accusations, and more as a result of participating in protests[14] or simply because they are wearing masks.[15] The level of fear and trauma is heightened by feelings of distrust of authority and lack of safeguards.

Mental Health and Social-Emotional Wellbeing

While school closures have affected all students and families, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented levels of stress to low-income families, immigrant families, and communities of color. As discussed above, these communities were most at risk of contracting the virus and the most likely to sustain job losses, because of the economic shutdown. The shuttering of schools added to the already stressful situations for these families, a situation that was exacerbated by gaps in access to technology and other home educational resources.

In addition to the social-emotional stress of social isolation, food and shelter insecurity, and COVID-19 related health scares, English learners likely had to confront other challenges. For instance, it is common that students who are English learners have more English proficiency than their immigrant parents, and thus, often must deal with the landlord, social service agencies, and school—if no interpretation services are offered. In addition, older ELs likely have to support younger siblings in navigating remote learning and helping them connect to digital platforms. Finally, in some instances where parents were laid off, English learners may have found employment, providing vital income to help support the family. All these new responsibilities are likely to add pressure to English learners during the pandemic.

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14   During the more than three weeks following the onset of protests, researchers found no evidence that the protests contributed to COVID-19 case growth. Dave, D. M., Friedson, A. I., Matsuzawa, K., Sabia, J. J., & Safford, S. (2020, June). *Black Lives Matter protests, social distancing, and COVID-19*. National Bureau of Economic Research. https://www.nber.org/papers/w27408.

15   Ruiz, N. G., Horowitz, J. M., & Tamir, C. (2020, July 1). *Many Black and Asian Americans say they have experienced discrimination amid the COVID-19 outbreak*. Pew Research Center.

District Efforts to Support English Learners: Lessons Learned

While the challenges discussed above may seem daunting, our weekly conversations with district personnel indicate that staff, teachers, students, and parents across Council-member districts have used this time as an opportunity, working outside the walls of the school building, to provide support and advance learning in innovative ways. For example, in some districts, school closures have led to greater collaboration among teachers and district offices, spurred innovative approaches to providing distance learning and language assistance, and increased access to technology for EL families.

Moreover, our discussions with school officials have provided a valuable reminder of the resilience and resourcefulness of EL and immigrant families and students. During school closures, considerable independent and experiential learning has occurred. Districts will need to capture and build on this learning as they examine the strengths and needs of ELs returning to school.

Collaboration among Teachers and District Offices

EL staff report that the breakdown of physical school walls has been an opportunity for teachers and central office staff to collaborate without the need for complex scheduling or logistical coordination, or the need to provide substitute teachers or additional pay that would be needed for intra-district travel during or after the workday. The sense of urgency, coupled with the capabilities of technology, gave way to important educator-driven enterprises, such as—

- EL office staff developing ELD lessons for teachers with different levels of comfort with technology;

- EL offices hosting collaborative sessions for content-area teachers to work with EL teachers in planning lessons to address the English development needs of ELs, anchored in grade-level content;

- Central offices supporting collaborative sessions during which general education and ESL/ELD teachers co-developed lessons that addressed grade-level content and language acquisition;

- EL offices holding weekly webinars to assist teachers in developing lessons that addressed academic language needs;

- EL office staff creating districtwide repositories of sample lessons, activities, and instructional materials to support English language development; and

- Central offices and schools establishing co-teaching protocols and opportunities using videoconferencing platforms that enabled both general education and ESL teachers to deliver lessons with EL-embedded supports.

Language Assistance: Interpretation and Translation

The closure of schools compelled districts to augment how they communicated with students and families who speak languages other than English. In many cases, this involved learning to use tools districts already had at their disposal. Districts found that some built-in features of their web-based platforms incorporated principles of universal design and benefited not only students with disabilities but also English learners. Similarly, personnel fluent in the most frequent languages spoken by EL families became highly valuable resources to districts in communicating with EL families about the rapidly changing nature of school operations. For instance,

- EL offices partnered with other departments in crafting effective communications approaches for reaching EL communities and strengthening existing relationships with EL communities.

- Several EL offices, in collaboration with relevant departments, created videos to guide EL parents on helping their children access their district's virtual learning platform.

- Multilingual personnel provided live support through phone hotlines in the most frequently spoken languages by EL families.

Instructional Technology

Prior to COVID-19 school closures, instructional technology was often used as an extension of classroom instruction to supplement and support student learning. The shuttering of schools moved technology increasingly to the center of instruction as a primary delivery vehicle or source of content, tools, and accommodations. As districts ramped up their capacity to virtually support ELs in content-area learning and provide ELD, some found new opportunities in technology.

For example, videoconferencing platforms allowed EL teachers to join in core content classes, to lead small-group instruction, and even provide individual mini-lessons to preview or review content with a focus on academic language. The online platforms offered more flexible scheduling of lessons to teach and support ELs in content classes, especially with the recording capability that allowed students to access the class at any point in the day and to listen to instruction as many times as desired. In addition, remote learning also offered new opportunities for ELs to be engaged in extended academic discourse and writing tasks beyond what may have been offered in the traditional classroom. Districts embraced these opportunities by—

- Using videoconferencing capabilities in digital learning platforms in ways that allowed other EL teachers, coaches, and/or specialists to join in the class to co-teach with or support a teacher and ELs;

- Using the capabilities in digital learning platforms to record their lessons so students could watch asynchronously whenever it was best for them and more than once, if needed;

- Virtually creating safe learning spaces, such as smaller groups, that enabled ELs to feel more comfortable in expressing their thinking in English; and

- Creating lessons, classes, and mini-lessons for groups of English learners, such as newcomers to address specific needs.

In Appendix D, we provide a list of technology-related tools and programs—or digital learning resources and digital support features—that Council-member educators found helpful during COVID-19 school closures. **This list contains examples that illustrate the application of various technologies and is not intended as an endorsement by the Council of any product or program.** The list also shows examples of their features, since technology is quickly adapting, and new tools are constantly appearing in the education space.

Of course, while technology has enhanced some aspects of teaching, learning, and communication during school closures, its increased use has also led districts to discover some limitations—particularly for EL instruction. As discussed earlier, many of the popular language-learning applications and programs employed for distance learning during school shutdowns were not aligned to district standards or English Language Development (ELD) standards. In planning for the upcoming school year, which may bring a sustained reliance on distance learning, many district staff have been working to identify online instructional programming that is better aligned to grade-level content standards and that meet the English language development needs of ELs. Later in this document, we provide general considerations and resources to help educators select digital resources to support ELs.

Gaps in Access to Technology

Ensuring that all families have a device for online learning has been a challenge in many districts, particularly those that did not already have a one-to-one plan. To address this gap, many districts mounted ambitious campaigns to purchase and distribute devices in communities that historically lacked access to technology and internet connectivity. For EL families, this situation has proven to be a greater challenge than expected due to multiple factors—language barriers, concerns around being responsible for expensive equipment, or distrust of strangers coming to their home to deliver equipment. As districts ramped up their device deployment systems, school districts learned that requiring a government-issued ID to deliver or receive equipment—rather than just a signed form or the student's name and school assignment—presented a significant barrier for some EL families.

To address these and other technology-access challenges, districts also have had to employ low-tech solutions, such as packets with paper-and-pencil activities. Some districts sought to maximize the technology that students and families already have access to, such as cell phones and television, to spur outreach and instructional quality. For example, several districts partnered with their local public television stations and/or major Spanish-language networks to offer several hours of instruction each day, while other districts expanded their use of texting applications that immediately translated communications between educators and EL parents.

Professional Development in Instructional Technology

School closures have also revealed a critical need for professional development in the use of virtual tools and platforms. In the early days and weeks of school closures nationally, school districts quickly found that many teachers were either unaware of or not quite comfortable with using instructional technology in their daily instruction. Many required substantial—and immediate—professional development in this area.

To address these challenges, many districts quickly deployed systemwide professional development to support teachers. For instance, EL teams in several districts created professional development on every digital tool they used and made this training available to everyone in the school district. One district held weekly professional learning communities (PLCs) with teachers to discuss the technologies being used.

Independent Learning and Social-Emotional Growth

While the weekly calls between Council staff and district EL staff provided a forum for districts to discuss the myriad challenges faced by English learners and immigrant families during the COVID-19 crisis, they also served as a regular reminder that time away from the classroom has not always been detrimental. Considerable experiential learning occurred, and our resilient English learners were advocating and negotiating for resources and services for their families, obtaining jobs to help with family expenses, and were teaching and caring for younger siblings and neighbors.

Moreover, while English learners will have faced difficult moments with COVID-19, they may also have developed important skills and perspectives as a result. To be sure, students will need supports to better understand and process these moments in a healthy way. But having survived the crisis may help students grow in new ways, resulting in new knowledge and resilience to navigate challenging future situations.

In addition to this experiential learning, school closures have prompted considerable independent learning and growth. Technology often paved the way. For older students who may not have been able to take advantage of synchronous lessons because of family or job responsibilities, digital tools allowed them to work on their own time. Spending more time with technology may also have opened a world of new experiences with art galleries around the world, music and writing tutorials, home language development opportunities, and connections with different cultures across the globe.

Many districts have been creative in supporting the independent learning of ELs at home, responding to challenges faced by parents of ELs when communications were provided only in English and work schedules and extenuating circumstances made it difficult to support their children. For example,

- Districts prepared instructional materials that required minimal parental support, including videotaped lessons and taped read-alouds organized by grade and content.

- Other districts used web-based learning platforms to deliver lessons, especially helpful for newcomers, that could be translated into additional languages with publicly available applications.

- Others translated and recorded—in the top languages spoken by EL families—instructions to access lessons and/or support accessing online lessons to allow students to work independently *via* virtual drop-in hours and "helplines."

It is too early to tell, but the net effect of the independent learning and social-emotional growth that districts witnessed and, at times, facilitated may become evident when students return to school, whether physically or virtually, and they will demonstrate their increased autonomy and agency as learners.

Part 3

Considerations and Recommendations for Supporting ELs in the 2020-21 School Year

As schools plan for the 2020-21 school year, it is important to remember that families will still face many of the same health and economic challenges they faced before school reopening. These issues may be worse in families that have been unemployed, have recently lost jobs, and/or experienced illness or death due to COVID-19 since the end of SY 2019-20. Planning for the physical or virtual return to school will therefore need to include the following considerations—

- **Ongoing basic needs.** EL families distressed by health conditions or with limited resources due to job loss will have ongoing needs that, if unmet, will result in challenging learning environments for students at home. Meal and device distribution and district-supported access to the internet will continue to be important to families in need. Wrap-around services will be needed to address health concerns, food insecurity, rent insecurity, and job loss of parents (and students).

- **Social-emotional supports and student engagement.** As districts develop plans to provide instruction and needed supports to address the social-emotional needs students have as they return to school, it will be important that EL-specific needs are included.

- **Student employment.** As a result of family job losses, EL students may be working to provide much needed resources. Flexibility in learning approaches should therefore not only apply to health concerns but also allow high school students to remain employed and continue their education.

- **Childcare needs.** For adults to rejoin the workforce, free or affordable childcare should be provided during remote learning times. Otherwise, young children may be left home alone or older siblings will not be able to attend school due to childcare duties while parents work outside the home.

- **Transportation.** Because immigrant families are less likely to own cars or have access to alternative transportation, school districts that rely on mass transit to transport students need to work to modify service schedules when planning in-person school options.

- **Safety.** In addition to ensuring the health and safety of students returning to school buildings, school personnel, including bus drivers, need to be vigilant to potential bullying behavior or harassment related to COVID-19 that English learners may experience.

In addition to these basic considerations, the complexity of reopening schools requires systemwide planning across district offices. For too long, the provision of services and instruction for English learners has been undertaken by EL departments working in isolation with insufficient resources, authority, and input into districtwide decision-making and planning. As such, programming and planning for ELs is often an afterthought in instructional initiatives, undermining the efforts of EL teachers and staff and limiting the effectiveness of instruction and other supports these students need to succeed academically.

To address the heightened needs of English learners, school districts need to adopt a systems-oriented approach to EL services that are supported by all departments. Specifically,

- Schools and educators need district guidance on how to plan instruction, even in the absence of annual English proficiency assessment scores, to continue progress in developing English proficiency.

- Schools require clear guidance on how to determine needed levels of support in content area instruction, the number of periods and delivery of English language development, and necessary monitoring and supports for recently re-designated ELs.

- Districts need to determine how stand-alone ELD classes are delivered during remote or hybrid instruction, particularly with high school courses that may be credit-bearing, and in districts that have strict ELD time allocations delineated in state law or regulation, or in compliance agreements with the U.S. Department of Justice or the Office for Civil Rights.

- Teachers need long-term, hands-on professional development and ongoing coaching to build capacity to meet the needs of ELs, especially in using technology to deliver remote or hybrid instruction.

Throughout the following section, we describe system-level supports that will be critical in meeting the needs of English learners as schools reopen with new methods of delivering instruction: well-designed screening and placement protocols; accelerated learning strategies to address unfinished learning within the context of grade-level instruction; comprehensive language development strategies for ELs that are integrated into the district curriculum; use of instructional technology; strategic staffing; high quality, relevant professional development; assessments that effectively gauge both English language development and content learning needs; and strategic and effective communications with EL families.

Enrollment, Screening, and Placement

As districts and schools develop their plans for reopening, screening, identification, the placement of ELs in a timely and efficient way will require thoughtful consideration of the large numbers of ELs enrolled in Council-member districts. Administration of state-required comprehensive language proficiency assessments poses health-related complications as well as logistical challenges due to the sheer number of students who were not screened during the pandemic and the large number of entering Pre-K or kindergarten students.

Considerations for Supporting EL Families in Enrollment, Screening, and Placement

- Informational materials are user-friendly and in the top languages spoken by EL families

- Technology used is familiar to EL families with access to 'live' support

- Availability of options (e.g., enrollment forms submitted online or at a drop-off location)

- Welcoming locations that are convenient to get to and offer safe conditions for families

- EL placement is clearly explained, especially regarding hybrid or remote instruction

New enrollment and kindergarteners. Many school districts resorted exclusively to online enrollment between March 2020 and the end of the school year due to COVID-19. Many may continue this practice in the upcoming year. Online enrollment can be difficult for EL families to navigate for multiple reasons—

- Information might be mostly in English;
- EL parents might not have an email address; and/or
- Parents may not be familiar with a computer or navigating a website and online forms, especially if uploading documents is required.

Greater use of well-designed and universally understood graphics and carefully curated information would improve online registration for all. Many current online registration forms are lengthy and require documents to be scanned and uploaded, which may present hurdles for families navigating language barriers, learning new technologies, and/or lacking access to scanners.

In addition, districts can support EL families with online registration in the following ways—

- Creating 'how-to' videos in the top 5-7 languages most spoken by the district's EL families, explaining how to use the online enrollment process, including how parents can use their cell phone to scan documents, take pictures of required physical exam forms, and upload forms to online registration sites;
- Including a live "chat" feature with access to help in the top languages, where parents can ask questions using their home language as they register or use video conferencing via screen sharing with staff members who could provide support;
- Collaborating with refugee resettlement agencies, community-based organizations, or faith-based organizations to assist EL families with online registration;
- Considering drop-off locations that parents can use when they have trouble uploading documents, including libraries where families can also receive assistance with accessing websites;
- Deploying assessment teams with personal protective equipment to different locations across the city/county, so students can finish the registration process; and
- Creating a "one-pager" for EL parents with relevant information on services and supports for newly enrolling families.

Initial screening for ELs. During the last four months of the 2019-20 school year, when enrollment and registration was exclusively online, students could not be formally screened to determine their English language instructional needs. If formal procedures for screening are not practical, school districts may wish to use provisional screener questionnaires developed by the Council.[16] If hybrid delivery models are in place, school districts can set up a safe and controlled process that allows for comprehensive initial screening of students to determine their needs for English language instructional services and supports. The following are suggestions for safely managing the screening process—

- Necessary PPE and safety equipment/protocols to protect staff, students, and families that enable students and screeners to see one another's mouths for effective communication and assessment;
- Designated school sites that can safely carry out formal language screening and have a safe waiting area for families or determine whether a centrally located site needs to be established to conduct English language proficiency screening; and
- Crowd control protocols, such as carefully scheduled appointments for language screening, at locations that are centrally located and easily accessible via public transportation.

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16 Council of the Great City Schools. (2020, May). *Assessing language proficiency during extended school closures: Sample questionnaires.* https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/35/CGCS_SampleQuestionnaire_K-12_v6.pdf

EL services and placement. Explaining to EL families the services, programs, and placement of their children requires a detailed conversation with a knowledgeable school staff person. The complexities of how English language development (ELD) will be delivered using hybrid and remote methods and the implications of program placement need to be carefully explained to families. Hybrid and remote learning models will likely require that children stay at home on some days, which is a challenge for many EL families, especially if they are new to the city. Newly arriving EL families will be less familiar with state child welfare laws and local support services. School districts will also need to provide EL families with information on and referrals to necessary wrap-around services that may be required during hybrid and remote learning.

Accelerated Learning for ELs

Returning to school—whether in person, virtually, or some combination of both—will require that learning for ELs be accelerated rather than remedial. Given the varied instructional experiences during the last three months of the 2019-20 school year and the summer, educators needed to cull key concepts and essential learning that would promote access to and success with grade-level content.
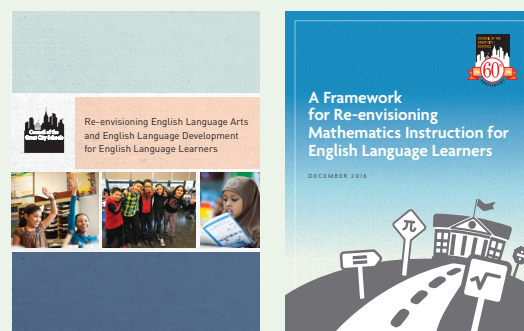
The challenges that districts have always faced regarding EL program design will be even more complex as districts reopen within narrow health and safety guardrails. For instance, online and hybrid instructional delivery models will require key EL learning supports and engagement. **A vision for accelerating learning of content and language will be essential,** including specific steps to establish and/or maintain student engagement and address challenges to realizing that vision.

Despite the obstacles, there may be new opportunities for ELs in hybrid instruction. For instance, videoconferencing can expand opportunities to integrate language development with content learning through co-teaching arrangements allowing students access to both general education and ELD/ESL teachers. Furthermore, more flexibility is permitted in offering content-based ELD through short, small group instructional "previews" before regular content class begins. There may also be opportunities for educators to co-plan and share resources and professional learning across the district, transcending the brick-and-mortar barriers of school walls.

Council Frameworks for ELA/ELD and Mathematics

Re-envisioning English Language Arts and English Language Development for English Language Learners

A Framework for Re-envisioning Mathematics Instruction for English Language Learners

DECEMBER 2016

Appendix A describes educational experiences that may be important to accelerating learning for English learners and mitigating the impact of reduced instructional time due to COVID-19. These educational experiences are grounded in principles from the Council's ELA/ELD[17] and mathematics[18] frameworks. Specifically, districts should ensure that instruction for ELs—

- **Reflects high expectations.** Rigorous grade-level and age-appropriate assignments should be used to ensure that ELs access grade-level content and instructional rigor. Lesson planning should be built around high-quality, complex, and culturally responsive texts with pre-reading activities and supports designed to foster "just-in-time" instruction to address unfinished learning. Teachers should use scaffolding strategically to support ELs in working with complex texts and concepts without removing the productive struggle needed to build intellectual capacity (e.g., progressively complex linguistic frames and models).

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17 Council of the Great City Schools. (2017, May). *Re-envisioning English language arts and English language development for English language learners.* https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/domain/4/darrell/CGCS_ReinvisEngLang_pub_Rev_final.pdf

18 Council of the Great City Schools. (2016, December). *A framework for re-envisioning mathematics instruction for English language learners.* https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/domain/4/darrell/FrameworkForMath4ELLs_R10_FINAL.pdf

- **Advances English language development.** Instruction should address all aspects of language acquisition, including foundational skills, academic language, and extended discourse in ways that are connected to grade-level content. English language development should also provide a bridge to ELA and other content standards in increasingly complex ways.

- **Acknowledges the interdependence of language and content learning.** Effective instruction for ELs requires explicit attention to the language demands inherent in grade-level tasks and assignments. Teachers can maximize opportunities provided by remote learning platforms to employ multiple modes of content and concept representation, including students' ability to use their first language (L1). Teachers should also provide thematic coherence that ties language development to essential questions related to grade-level content.

- **Applies an asset-based approach.** Teachers should acknowledge the skills and knowledge that English learners acquired by living through the COVID-19 pandemic and use these to strengthen the learning of grade-level content through texts and tasks that are culturally relevant and responsive.

- **Promotes shared responsibility.** School closures brought about new ways for general education/content teachers and ESL/ELD teachers to collaborate as well as a heightened sense of shared urgency in Council-member districts to ensure that ELs could access remote learning resources. A heightened sense of shared responsibility for EL success can fuel teacher collaboration in ways that result in stronger instructional coherence, English language development, and grade-level content instruction.

English Language Development

In addition to ensuring effective instructional design and teacher supports to provide ELs access to grade-level curriculum, a district's EL program needs to include attention to the development of English proficiency. In advancing English language development amidst all the unknown contextual factors during the 2020-21 school year, districts face several hurdles, including—

- The required number of ELD periods by English proficiency level according to state law or in compliance agreements with DOJ or OCR will limit a district's flexibility in student assignments.

- The grouping of EL students is complicated by unknown levels of English proficiency following five months of being away from brick-and-mortar schools during which language assessment has been limited.

- The persistent shortage of EL-qualified educators will be further exacerbated when reopening will require greater strategic deployment of limited staff to provide ELD and content instruction and support general education teachers working in hybrid and remote modalities.

Appendix A lays out a set of educational experiences we consider to be priorities for ELs as schools reopen, especially if instruction is delivered remotely or in a hybrid fashion. The experiences are organized according to the Council's ELD framework.[19] This framework lays out two main components of a re-envisioned ELD program that address the dual learning goals for ELs. Specifically, *Focused Language Study* (FLS) attends to the explicit needs ELs have for learning how English works, especially in the school setting, while *Discipline-specific Academic Language Expansion* (DALE) recognizes the interdependence of language and content learning, calling on all teachers with ELs in their classrooms to attend to the development of academic language anchored in grade-level content. Below are brief descriptions, considerations, and recommendations for districts in each of these categories.

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19   Council of the Great City Schools. (2017, May). *Re-envisioning English language arts and English language development for English language learners.* https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/domain/4/darrell/CGCS_ReinvisEngLang_pub_Rev_final.pdf

Focused Language Study (FLS)

An EL instructional program should include dedicated time for targeted English language development regardless of instructional modality—remote, hybrid, or in-person. FLS or dedicated ELD time provides teacher-led instruction that reveals how English works through instruction in phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and sentence structure. Whether ELs are receiving face-to-face learning or mostly remote instruction, districts will need to develop activities and use technologies that sustain the social interaction necessary for continued language acquisition. Districts have used several ways to maintain instructional focus on English language development and have found ways to ensure that English learners benefit from live—even if remote—interaction with (a) an English-fluent adult—the teacher—who provides modeling and immediate feedback and (b) peers who are more English-proficient. Some solutions rely on technology while others are low-tech with varied opportunities for listening, speaking, reading, and writing—

- *Receptive language development.* To support ELs in their ongoing development of listening and reading, some districts have created short instructional videos or narrated PowerPoints with captioning to enable visual input, speech, and written language simultaneously. These supports allow ELs to remain engaged with complex and compelling grade-level text, providing the needed exposure to academic English language forms.

- *Productive language development.* Online platforms and technological solutions may provide ELs with greater opportunities to engage in speaking and extended discourse than what they often receive during the traditional school day.
  - For writing, ELs need regular, timely, and clear feedback on how to improve their writing.
  - For speaking, individual and small group virtual sessions provide strategic opportunities for ELs to interact with teachers and other students.
  - Teachers' creative use of technology has allowed students to show their work in different ways, encouraging students to practice English at home by uploading recorded videos and recorded interviews with family, neighbors, etc.

Instructional videos, PowerPoints, and other resources need not be limited to virtual platforms. Districts distributed these on flash drives along with packets and supplies at school meal distribution sites. In several districts, ESL staff also developed instructional "packets," connected to grade-level content, for English language development (ELD) at home.

Planning Considerations. Careful design and delivery of ELD should be intentionally linked to the essential learning identified by the school district for the reopening of schools. No matter the instructional delivery system, collaborative planning between EL and general education teachers should allow for focused language study to provide the necessary supports for learning new concepts, addressing misconceptions, and building academic language to enable ELs to engage with grade-level content. While the "focused" aspect of FLS should provide the foundational skills needed to support access to grade-level content, collaborative planning of activities and assignments ensures that language acquisition is not decontextualized grammar or phonics instruction but rather is anchored in grade-level content.

> *...collaborative planning of activities and assignments ensures that language acquisition is not decontextualized grammar or phonics instruction but rather is anchored in grade-level content.*

Discipline-Specific Academic Language Expansion (DALE)

Providing instruction that emphasizes language through content, called *Discipline-Specific Academic Language Enrichment (DALE)* in the Council's Framework,[20] is predicated on the need to engage students in complex thinking and expect them to express their ideas about grade-level content. Careful planning and collaboration among educators are imperative, as is an investment in professional development that equips all general education teachers with the understanding and strategies needed to attend to academic language development that supports grade-level content and provides EL teachers with in-depth understanding of the essential grade-level learning so they in turn can support the teaching of that content.

- ■ ***Rigor and thematic coherence.*** To keep ELs engaged and excited about learning content, a high level of rigor must be maintained, and topics should be compelling and interesting. Complex, universal themes of global importance, particularly during these turbulent times, provide the kind of content that will engage ELs and keep them coming to school. The goal is to provide sustained, in-depth learning about exciting and engaging topics of grade-level content through activities and tasks that are rigorous and standards-aligned. These activities can then provide the basis for formative assessments.

> *Careful planning and collaboration among educators are imperative, as is an investment in professional development that equips all general education teachers with the understanding and strategies needed to attend to academic language development that supports grade-level content…*

  - – Several districts have ESL teachers and general education teachers collaborate in developing thematic units to make instruction more focused and coherent, tied to grade-level content, and then made these lesson plans and units of study available districtwide through a digital repository.

  - – As part of the collaborative lesson planning, teachers developed corresponding formative assessment tasks and activities to measure student attainment of both grade-level content and English language development. In the remote learning environment, teachers used available technology platforms and tools to create and administer these tasks.

- ■ ***Academic language development.*** The core of DALE is that explicit development of language—not just lists of vocabulary but the language—of each discipline as well as the academic language of schooling are explicitly taught in an integrated manner to accelerate content mastery. As teachers model the use of academic language in their teaching, they reveal for English learners how language is used in individual content areas and for particular purposes. During school closures, teachers have found new sources of content-specific academic language and innovative ways to model the use of this language. For example,

  - – Teachers carefully curated online videos that provided both engaging content and models for academic language used to present knowledge and explain concepts.

  - – Districts developed lessons embedded with teacher moves that showed students the specific language structures and functions of a specified text being explored as students learned engaging standards-aligned content.

  - – Students then learned to use academic language with supports, such as linguistic frames, to engage grade-level content and convey what they know.

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20 Council of the Great City Schools. (2017, May). *Re-envisioning English language arts and English language development for English language learners.* https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/domain/4/darrell/CGCS_ReinvisEngLang_pub_Rev_final.pdf

Particularly in hybrid and remote learning modalities, where learning takes place at home, ELs should be given opportunities for and encouraged to use their home language to support content learning, especially if they are grappling with new and complex ideas. For instance, teachers might assign an activity that requires students to explain (verbally) a concept to a sibling, parent, or neighbor and upload the recording. For writing assignments, students and teachers can avail themselves of translation features available in some learning platforms currently being used in districts.

Planning Considerations. Designing and delivering coherent, grade-level, engaging learning experiences—especially for hybrid or remote instruction—require even greater collaboration among teachers who bring differing strengths to their instruction. Districts and schools play an important role in facilitating teacher collaboration in ways that avoid asking educators to choose between competing priorities and prevents burnout. For instance,

- Creative and district-supported schedules can maximize teachers' time to plan together and share strategies.

- Centrally managed virtual repositories of model lesson plans and materials aligned with the districts' general curriculum facilitate collaboration between ESOL and content educators in ways that support academic language development across content areas. The repository needs to be easy to navigate and easily accessible.

- District-supported teacher collaboration can also lead to the development of **formative assessments** as part of planning engaging lessons and activities to support both language and conceptual learning. The EL office in one district helped teachers embed formative assessment activities into lessons using their lesson template to address language acquisition and literacy connected to content.

Supporting English Language Development

PD on attending to academic language across content areas

Collaborative planning among educators

Academic language and grade-level learning for English learners

The Selection and Use of Instructional Technology

As districts pivoted to remote learning in the weeks following widespread school closures, schools quickly began using their technology to promote academic literacy and content learning for all students. For ELs, research indicates that technology can be particularly helpful in the following ways—

- **Language supports and scaffolds.** The use of computers and the internet can provide supports for extensive and independent reading and writing, assist with language scaffolding, and provide opportunities for authentic research and publication (Warschauer, Grant, Del Real, & Rousseau, 2004).[21]

- **Native language materials.** The internet can be an important source for instructional materials in a range of native languages and can afford educators substantially greater alternatives for fostering language learning with contextual and cultural depth.

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21 Warschauer, M., Grant, D., Del Real, G., & Rousseau, M. (2004). Promoting academic literacy with technology: Successful laptop programs in K-12 schools. System, 32(4), 525-537.

- **Productive learning environments.**
  Technology can also play an important role in the construction of productive learning environments for the youngest English learners (Castek, 2007).[22]

However, to the extent districts continue to use online applications for independent language learning and provide ELs the opportunity to practice English, they will need to be more discerning about their adopted programs, as not many deliver on their marketing promises. For example, many programs develop vocabulary in a decontextualized manner and fail to provide concrete feedback to ELs on how to produce English phonemes. In fact, the "fun," gamified language-learning applications widely available to the public are generally not designed for English learners in K-12 schools in the U.S., and therefore, are not aligned to English proficiency standards for speaking and listening or to grade-level themes and content. EL educators have also found that web-based and gamified language-learning programs use an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) rather than an English as a Second Language (ESL) approach. EFL instruction primarily focuses on language acquisition for everyday communication without the important integration of grade-level content knowledge required in the ESL approach for English learners in U.S. schools.

> ### Instructional Technology Supports
>
> In hybrid learning, instructional technology can support English learners in important ways—
>
> - Remote access to grade-level learning
> - Supporting instructional coherence
> - Enhancing engagement
> - Supporting academic language development
> - Making connections with peers and teachers

To use these applications responsibly and effectively, they need to be carefully embedded in a broader ELD instructional experience designed by educators. For example, web-based language programs can help with the "EFL portion" of speaking, listening, and understanding of communications, while teachers can address the "ESL portion" of instruction that attends to content learning, developing academic language, and building coherence across all instructional streams.

In addition, when selecting instructional technology tools and resources to support ELs, districts need to consider what they learned from the rapid rollout of technology tools and applications during school closures at the end of SY 2019-20—

- Instructions for programs are rarely provided in languages other than English;
- Tools that required parents to have multiple passwords or accounts became difficult to navigate, especially for EL parents with little familiarity with computers or web-based programs; and
- EL families expressed fear that their child and family privacy was being compromised through digital programs.

Moreover, as districts extend their reliance on virtual delivery and digital content, it is critically important to ensure that digital resources increase student engagement, support academic literacy, and deepen conceptual understanding of grade-level content. The Council's framework documents (ELA/ELD[23] and mathematics[24]) discuss these features and the use of instructional technology to support EL success. In a hybrid, remote learning environment certain criteria become more critical—

- **Grade-level remote learning.** Digital resources should ensure full access to grade-level instructional rigor and content.

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22 Castek, J., Leu, D. J., Jr., Coiro, J., Gort, M., Henry, L. A., & Lima, C. O. (2007). Developing new literacies among multilingual learners in the elementary grades. In L. L. Parker (Ed.), *Technology-mediated learning environments for young English learners: Connections in and out of school.*

23 Council of the Great City Schools. (2017, May). *Re-envisioning English language arts and English language development for English language learners.* https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/domain/4/darrell/CGCS_ReinvisEngLang_pub_Rev_final.pdf

24 Council of the Great City Schools. (2016, December). *A framework for re-envisioning mathematics instruction for English language learners.* https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/domain/4/darrell/FrameworkForMath4ELLs_R10_FINAL.pdf

- **Instructional coherence.** Digital resources should fit together to seamlessly advance English language development and content learning for ELs during hybrid or remote learning. Furthermore, all materials need to fit into a larger vision of instruction for ELs.

- **Engagement.** Digital resources should facilitate student involvement in cognitively engaging projects (e.g., analysis and creation of purposeful texts in a variety of media and genres) (Warschauer et al., 2004).[25] Technology-supported feedback should be timely, meaningful, and of high quality for content that is individualized for students' unique needs (Zhao & Lai, 2007).[26]

- **Academic language development.** Digital resources should include linguistic scaffolds and opportunities for language development that are linked to expanding understanding of content. Technology can support academic language development in several ways:

  - Promoting independent reading by offering language scaffolding and contextualized vocabulary instruction to facilitate reading comprehension; and

  - Expanding access to more complex text and higher levels of literacy through screen reading features.

- **Making connections.** Digital resources should assist students in making connections among multiple representations (e.g., verbal, symbolic, abstract, visual, algebraic, etc.) and facilitate student use of these representations in expressing their reasoning.

Further Guidance and Resources for Selecting Digital Learning Resources

In 2018, the U.S. Department of Education developed a toolkit geared towards educators, *Using Educational Technology—21st Century Supports of English Learners,*[27] which provides guiding questions and sources that are helpful for educators seeking to maximize the capabilities of technology to support English learners. The toolkit also provides two matrices with comprehensive descriptions of technology supports in two categories—

- *Digital learning* resources that refer to applications (apps) software, programs, or websites that engage students in learning activities and support students' learning goals. These resources are divided into three subcategories, each with particular features of education technology; and

- *Digital support features,* which are embedded features in digital learning resources that assist students in understanding or communicating content.

In Appendix E, we share the two matrices from the U.S. Department of Education Toolkit that describe the types and uses of digital learning resources and digital support features. These descriptions are largely consistent with the experiences described by Council-member educators. As schools prepare to reopen in entirely virtual or hybrid modalities, the toolkit could be helpful in determining which technological supports are suitable for districts to incorporate into their lesson plans, assignments, and activities to maximize learning and engagement for English learners.

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25 Warschauer, M., Grant, D., Del Real, G., & Rousseau, M. (2004). *Promoting academic literacy with technology: Successful laptop programs in K-12 schools.* System, 32(4), 525-537.

26 Zhao, Y., & Lai, C. (2007). Technology and second language learning: Promises and problems. In L. L. Parker (Ed.), *Technology-mediated learning environments for young English learners: Connections in and out of school.*

27 U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service. (2018, October). *National Study of English Learners and Digital Learning Resources, Educator Toolkit: Using Educational Technology—21st Century Supports for English Learners.* Retrieved July 20, 2020, from https://tech.ed.gov/edtech-english-learner-toolkits/educators/

Strategic Staffing

The ongoing challenge of hiring and deploying EL teachers is exacerbated by multiple factors related to reopening schools in the COVID-19 context. The situation is aggravated by the potential reduction in the teaching force due to funding cuts and teacher decisions about returning to their classrooms. The extent of in-person instruction that can be offered is affected by these two factors and others. For districts that rely on international hiring to supplement their EL teaching force, the cancellation of relevant immigration visas further intensifies the staffing challenge.

The strategic staffing of EL-qualified educators ensures that schools have the necessary teachers to serve ELs. It also ensures that central offices have sufficient EL coaches and specialists to provide needed supports for general education teachers with whom ELs spend most of their school day. For instance, during school closures, EL staff from central offices played an important role in designing lessons and courses for districtwide dissemination, holding office hours to support general education teachers, and working collaboratively with general education teachers in co-planning or co-teaching lessons.

Many districts assign itinerant EL teachers to multiple schools on a rotating basis to meet the needs of ELs when they enroll in small numbers within specific schools. As districts explore ways to meet instructional needs with fewer staff, staffing arrangements to virtually allow for the following might be considered—

- Districtwide courses to be delivered online by EL-qualified teachers who can open new possibilities to provide ELs access to courses that may not have been available at their brick-and-mortar school; and

- Grouping ELs by proficiency levels across clusters of schools to create schedules that maximize opportunities for students to be engaged with effective, qualified EL teachers—whether in-person or through videoconferencing platforms.

Nonetheless, any new, more flexible staffing configurations might be subject to contractual parameters involving teachers and other certificated staff. In addition, teacher evaluations and oversight might need to embrace new work configurations that are not limited to brick-and-mortar assignments. Again, protocols in place for itinerant teachers can serve as a starting point for expanded arrangements. For example, districts would need to look at such protocols as—

- How student groups are structured for accountability purposes (e.g., student learning objectives (SLOs), etc.) when an EL grouping draws students from more than one school;

- How teachers are assigned or transferred between schools and/or roles based on changing needs;

- How to create sustained opportunities for teachers working across schools to engage meaningfully with teachers assigned to a single school for planning purposes and supporting school culture;

- How curricular materials and pacing can be coordinated to maintain alignment between lessons conducted by EL teachers with students (perhaps simultaneously from several schools) and lessons being delivered in core content classes;

- How principals set expectations for teachers who are supporting additional schools and ensure that these teachers are reasonably integrated to support overall goals and the culture of their schools in a way that sustains collaborative relationships with school-site teachers; and

- How to ensure that the evaluation process for teachers in flexible positions, serving ELs and other students districtwide or across several schools, is fair and that data systems are in place to accurately track/link teachers working across schools to the students they serve.

High Quality, Relevant Professional Development

The pandemic created an immediate demand for professional development that could quickly equip teachers to deliver instruction with relevant supports for ELs using technology and remote videoconferencing platforms. The urgent need to learn how to create engaging lessons delivered using technology during school closures opened new opportunities for how professional development is delivered. The distance learning environment brought down walls that may have prevented teachers from coming together. Collaboration is amplified when, for example, third grade teachers from across a district can learn together and share resources, plan and develop lessons jointly, and can harness the brain power of many minds focused on creative solutions to the challenges they are facing. EL offices in districts responded to this urgent need for professional development in several ways, including—

- Offering "on demand" training videos;
- Holding weekly webinars to learn about effective strategies for working with ELs; and
- Having EL offices hold drop-in office hours during which teachers could virtually connect for assistance in designing and incorporating scaffolds and using technology to support ELs in remote instruction.

Quality professional development can build educators' capacity to recognize the natural progression of English language development of ELs, and thus not mistake this for being behind or needing reading remediation.

As districts prepare to reopen schools, a priority for professional development is to prepare teachers with the ability to assess students' unfinished learning as well as recognize the strengths that students bring from accrued experiences while away from school. To adequately support ELs, this assessment capacity needs to include the ability of teachers to recognize the natural progression of English language development, and not mistake it for being behind or needing reading remediation. In other words, districts need to ensure that professional development is meaningful, aligned to the overall instructional framework and vision for ELs, and is provided in accordance with best practices (i.e., promotes collaboration, uses opportunities to practice, and provides continuous feedback and support, etc.).

Districts have made the most of systemwide professional development to expand the number of teachers with the skills and strategies to help ELs build their academic English proficiency. It will be important that future efforts to provide professional development opportunities for teacher recertification or to fulfill required annual professional development hours be well-aligned to the instructional priorities for reopening schools.

Effective Assessment of EL Learning Needs

As schools reopen for SY 2020-21, data-driven decision-making will be more critical than ever. Students will be returning to or newly enrolling in schools after a wide range of educational experiences during remote instruction at the end of the previous year. Teachers will be charged with accelerating learning as they work to shepherd all students toward achieving grade-level college- and career-readiness standards. With the prospect of considerable unfinished learning and perhaps limited face-to-face instruction, the time that teachers have for instruction may be more limited. Strategically designed and purposefully conducted assessments can enable teachers to better target their instruction while providing appropriate support. Specifically, for English learners, assessments should measure the progress in content learning and help identify students for whom language development was halted during remote learning in SY 2019-20.

While diagnostic and summative assessment results can show some unfinished learning, attentive instruction with embedded formative assessments is better suited to probe and address specific areas of unfinished learning through an accelerated rather than remedial approach that risks enlarging learning gaps.[28] (See Addressing Unfinished Learning After COVID-19 School Closures for further discussion on the limitations of assessments.)

Of course, assessment data are only as useful as the quality of the instruments and the knowledge of educators using the data. In planning and administering assessments, as well as interpreting and responding to assessment results, districts will need to account for a number of items, including grade-level content, strategic collaboration, assessments that are designed with ELs in mind, strategic timing, scaffolding and linguistic accommodations, and criteria for the selection of standardized assessments.

Formative Assessment in the Context of Grade-Level Instruction

A defining feature of EL education is the simultaneous learning of English and academic content knowledge. Yet typical diagnostics or standardized assessments are generally not designed to capture progress on both fronts in an instructionally meaningful way for ELs at various English language proficiency levels. For English learners, the purpose of formative assessments is twofold—

1. **Determining language development needs.** Formative assessments that reveal English learners' unfinished learning of academic language will help situate students along an English proficiency continuum to determine appropriate language supports and instructional next steps.

2. **Identifying unfinished learning in content areas.** Formative assessments of students' understanding of content knowledge, independent of their English proficiency, should reveal if a student has gaps or misconceptions in content areas. ELs who experienced interrupted instructional opportunities during school closures may show signs of unfinished learning in one or more content areas.
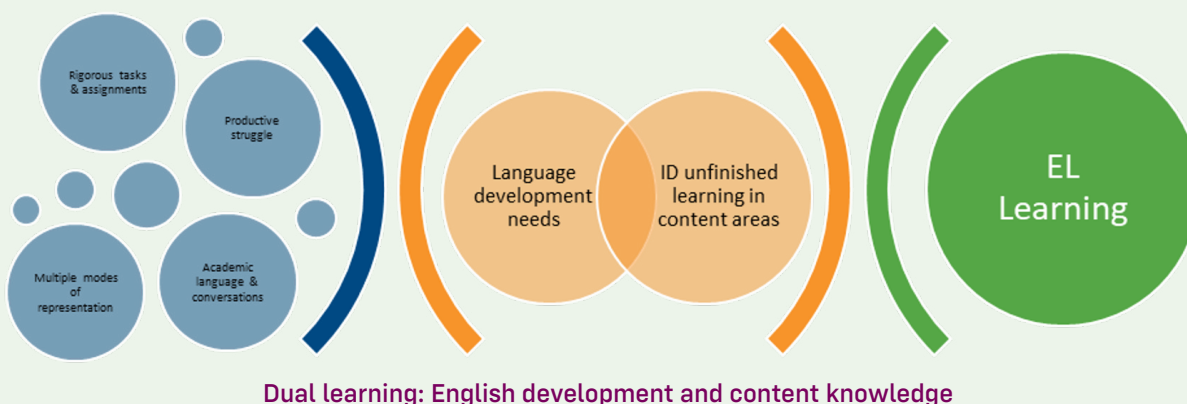
When designing formative assessments for the remote learning context, four areas of focus are suggested to ensure that both language development and grade-level content are measured—

- *Employing rigorous tasks and assignments.* All assessment activities and tasks conducted virtually should be aligned to rigorous college- and career-ready standards and engage the intended levels of cognitive demand and rigor outlined by the standards in full. Assessment activities should not rely solely on features of a district's learning management system or specific instructional product; the strategic use of technology tools can promote engagement and open doors for more assessment activities.

- *Encouraging productive struggle.* Formative assessments facilitate learning when they provide students opportunities to wrestle with new learning—i.e., productive struggle. Teachers need to carefully select supports students may need to carry out formative assessment activities or tasks in a virtual setting, especially if students do not have access to the teacher. Educators should keep in mind that remote learning demands new ways of detecting when a student is frustrated with or is productively grappling with new content.

- *Employing multiple modes and representations.* When learning a new language, the various language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) develop at varying rates, depending on the relative strength of these domains that an individual already has and the instructional focus that each domain receives. Consequently, ELs will use different domains to explain or demonstrate their conceptual understanding of grade-level content. Virtual assessment activities and tasks should allow students to demonstrate what they know in a variety of ways, including multiple representations and various language domains.

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28 Council of the Great City Schools. (2020, June). *Addressing unfinished learning after COVID-19 school closures.* https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/313/CGCS_Unfinished%20Learning.pdf

- *Supporting academic language and conversations.* As college- and career-ready standards call for students to engage with the language of varying academic disciplines, educators must intentionally foster language development, including critical conversations that help students refine and demonstrate their conceptual understanding. Accordingly, formative assessments should include tasks and assignments that demonstrate language development across content areas. Districts have found it helpful to supplement the features (e.g., file uploads and discussion boards) of their learning management systems with other technologies that facilitate conversations via synchronous video or asynchronous video/voice uploads.

Effective Assessment of EL Learning Needs

Rigorous tasks & assignments

Productive struggle

Multiple modes of representation

Academic language & conversations

Language development needs

ID unfinished learning in content areas

EL Learning

Dual learning: English development and content knowledge

Though formative assessment can and should be conducted in a variety of ways, they do not always need to result in a traditional work product (i.e., reports, models, etc.). **Writing prompts,** for instance, can be a particularly powerful formative assessment task for gauging language and conceptual knowledge development, when they are aligned to the listed focus areas. Furthermore, they can serve as a launching point for further formative assessments involving the domains of speaking and listening (e.g., peer conversations about writing, collaborative revisions, etc.). Additional benefits and considerations for using writing prompts include—

- *Tangible evidence of progression.* A well-designed prompt as part of content instruction can serve the dual purpose of providing a baseline or formative assessment of a student's developing grasp of grade-level language demands and their conceptual understanding and English proficiency level. (An examination of writing products over time can yield critical insights into a student's progress.)

- *Asset-based understanding of student experiences.* Especially for students returning to schools after experiencing COVID-19, the use of asset-based prompts will be important to help educators understand what students have learned and experienced during school closures. They will also provide students an opportunity to process what they experienced. Such prompts should enable students to process and share what they have learned in ways that are connected to the content.

- *Collaboration for development.* Collaboration between EL and content-area educators facilitates the integration of language and content, and it helps ensure that the protocol for administering the writing prompt is responsive to EL needs. Just as important, collaboration is key to designing common rubrics and scoring guidance to review writing samples.

- *Rubrics accounting for language development needs.* Interpretive tools or evaluation guidance should include descriptors of imperfect writing that are likely to be common when students are reacclimating to academic writing after months away from school. Similarly, descriptors should include common writing mistakes made by students who are new to the English language.

Strategic Collaboration

Greater collaboration between English language development educators and content area educators is important for developing (and/or selecting) assessments, reviewing assessment data, and planning instruction based on results on simultaneous language and content development. Ensuring integration of language and content in instruction and assessment is best accomplished when the expertise of English learner staff and content area staff are jointly leveraged.

Collaboration can also help make sense of and contextualize the data by acknowledging the factors that may have influenced EL performance. For instance, EL performance on content assessments may reflect students' familiarity with technology and testing modalities, the degree of acculturation to schooling in the United States, unaddressed trauma, and/or interrupted English acquisition during extended time away from school. Moreover, assessment results may reflect a student's insufficient access to instruction due to the lack of technology and/or variations in teachers' ability to provide language-related support during remote instruction. When unfinished learning is the result of students not receiving instruction or other factors, educators should be careful not to assume learning difficulties, the need for amplified language supports, or the need to change academic programming.

Greater Inclusion of All ELs

The impact of school closures and the pandemic have been disproportionately harsh on EL families. The effects underscore the importance of including ELs in any district effort to assess unfinished learning. Occasionally, English learners at lower levels of English language proficiency and students with interrupted formal education (SIFE) are excluded from formal diagnostic/benchmark assessments or, perhaps, even formative assessment activities used in the classroom. These practices, which may be well-intentioned and used in the absence of valid and reliable instruments, limit the information educators need for instructional planning and progress monitoring. Every effort should be made to assess all English learners on the same grade-level content, with appropriate accommodations and assessment instruments, as non-ELs are assessed.

Including all ELs will also require an understanding of and access to disaggregated data on various language groups to allow for better instructional strategies and necessary supports. Districts will need to closely monitor students to determine language development needs after multiple months of school closures, especially of—

- ELs who were "disconnected" or had low attendance during remote learning;

- ELs who prior to school closures were at lower levels of English proficiency, and who were less likely to practice English socially or academically with peers, siblings, and other family members during remote learning;

- ELs who have not been reclassified in the absence of ELPA scores but who may be at higher levels of proficiency;

- Former ELs who were reclassified in the weeks preceding school closures; and

- Provisionally placed ELs who enrolled during school closures. Guidance from the U.S. Department of Education indicates that students who were placed when formal language screening was not possible should be closely monitored to ensure they receive language-related supports, if needed, until formal screening can take place.[29]

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29 U.S. Department of Education. (2020, May 18). *Providing services to English learners during the COVID-19 outbreak.* https://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/covid-19-el-factsheet.pdf

Linguistic screeners. When schools closed in March 2020, districts ceased conducting formal language screeners and administering annual assessments of English proficiency (ELPA). Some districts completed ELPA assessments, while others had not. In the absence of English proficiency scores from either formal screeners or annual progress assessments, some districts considered using linguistic screeners that were typically used for initial identification to assess general levels of language proficiency to help determine instructional needs. Not all ELs or potential ELs should be administered a linguistic screener, however. Instead, districts should focus on determining which students, from the categories listed above, would benefit from linguistic screeners based on multiple measures (e.g., engagement in distance learning, writing samples, formative assessments, teacher observation, etc.).

Strategic Timing of Assessments

As discussed in greater detail in *Addressing Unfinished Learning After COVID-19 School Closures,*[30] the timing of diagnostic and baseline assessments should be considered carefully. As schools reopen in SY 2020-21, the temptation to determine through testing where students are academically and what they need will be high. A focus on immediate assessments, however, may produce less valid results as students need time to reacclimate to school. For English learners who faced challenges in accessing remote learning or were disconnected from schools, premature assessment results may reflect lost opportunity and non-academic needs more so than true knowledge gaps. Rather, formative and diagnostic assessments administered after students have settled into school for some period and have begun tackling grade-level content might be more useful. Districts can help students reacclimate to school and assessment practices. For instance,

- In cases where students lack familiarity with virtual testing platforms, districts might devote time to computer literacy at the beginning of the year, while students are acclimating, prior to administering computer-based assessments; and

- In cases where students are unfamiliar or uncomfortable with speaking into microphones, districts might develop a list of appropriate technologies and suggestions for using them to practice skills needed for online assessment.

An Asset-Based Approach to Understanding ELs

The knowledge that students possess from past instruction and life experiences is relevant to accelerating instruction and addressing unfinished learning. Consequently, assessments should highlight what students know, rather than solely emphasizing knowledge gaps. This will provide teachers with valuable information about EL's current knowledge and what assets they bring to new learning. Careful consideration should be given to ensuring that English learners have opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge through a variety of methods. This means that—

- Assessment activities and tasks should be situated in culturally responsive contexts that elicit from ELs their experiential knowledge while supporting their English with appropriate linguistic accommodations, such as linguistic frames, visuals, etc.; and

- Rubrics and score reports should show a progression in performance levels, pinpointing what a student already knows, helping educators to focus on how to bridge toward grade-level content expectations.

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30 Council of the Great City Schools. (2020, June). *Addressing unfinished learning after COVID-19 school closures.* https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/313/CGCS_Unfinished%20Learning.pdf

Strategic Scaffolding and Linguistic Accommodations

The valid assessment of content knowledge for ELs is contingent on the provision of appropriate linguistic accommodations. In the same way that English learners may need linguistic-related accommodations and supports to access content during instruction, ELs may also need access to tools or supports—such as linguistic frames and visuals—to demonstrate the full extent of their learning during closures. Technologies for the assessment of English learners should therefore contain embedded tools for scaffolding (e.g., interactive dictionary with visuals, text-to-speech readers, linguistic frames, multiple response modes, etc.) in addition to general supports consistent with Universal Design for Learning Principles that maximize appropriate language engagement and content learning.[31] Moreover, guidance and professional development are necessary to build teacher capacity to strategically select and use scaffolds in dynamic ways to meet changing student needs.

Careful Selection of Standardized Assessments

Assessing the dual trajectory of grade-level content knowledge and English acquisition is best done through formative assessments that feature the language demands of the respective content area rather than assessing language skills out of context. Nevertheless, districts often find themselves having to select assessments (for formative assessment or other purposes) for all students, including English learners, from somewhat limited options. We suggest the following considerations for determining assessments to be used with ELs—

   a. *Whether assessments were piloted and validated specifically for English learners.* If they were not, one cannot assume that assessment results will be valid for ELs or will provide accurate information to guide instructional next steps.

   b. *The efficacy and familiarity of testing modalities for ELs.* If the assessment relies on technological modalities and features that are unfamiliar to ELs, EL participation may reflect this unfamiliarity more than unfinished learning. Also, if the assessment equipment, the program, and/or the scoring algorithms are not calibrated with ELs in mind, and thus, are unable to recognize responses by English learners at various language developmental stages, the measurement will not be valid.

   c. *Alignment to college- and career-readiness standards* is necessary—not just alignment to English language development (ELD) standards.

   d. *Embedded supports and linguistic accommodations.* Some assessment platforms have built-in supports and accommodations. These are valuable if they do not compromise the intended cognitive demand of the assessment items.

Family Engagement

Under normal school operations, communicating effectively with families is an important component of supporting student success. During the COVID-19 closures, however, the need to inform and engage parents has become critical. Parents and families have gone from being valuable stakeholders to being essential partners in the work of educating students. Specifically, parents and families will be responsible in the coming school year for—

- **Navigating schedules and services.** In the coming school year, schools will likely open with new, unfamiliar schedules. If hybrid instruction takes place on alternate days, for example, EL parents will need to know how and when their children will receive required English Language Development instruction, as well as content classes. EL parents may not be able to help students with English language development, but they can help ensure students sign on to virtual learning and complete their homework if they know the schedules, services, and classes.

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31 See "#4. Ensure inclusion of each and every learner" (pp. 5-6) in Addressing Unfinished Learning After COVID-19 School Closures (CGCS, 2020).

- **Connecting to remote learning.** Parents will provide required supports to their younger children to keep assigned devices safe and charged and will assist them in connecting to district learning platforms. If remote instruction takes place synchronously, parents will need to follow the schedules designed for their child to engage with teachers. If asynchronous instruction is provided, parents will need to help manage their child's time to ensure that, within the flexible schedule, they are signing on to do the work.

- **Creating environments conducive to learning.** Parents will also be responsible for finding adequate space and time for English learners to study. This may be a challenge for EL families, since many of them are under-resourced, live in close quarters, and have older ELs caring for younger siblings.

In other words, the stakes for effective EL parent engagement have never been higher. At the same time, the rich diversity of languages spoken by EL families in urban districts—over 50 in many school districts—and the likelihood that EL families are less familiar with the U.S. school system add further complexity to the work of establishing effective communications.

School districts, therefore, need to tailor their communications strategies for EL families that may experience language barriers and/or for whom the U.S. school system is unfamiliar. To begin with, districts should bridge language barriers by developing comprehensive language assistance plans. However, effective communication with EL families requires more than translating documents and providing interpretation; it also requires a cultural understanding of EL families and their developing familiarity with the U.S. school system to ensure messages are conveyed in a manner that is relevant, and therefore, well understood. These two dimensions of effective communication with EL families are discussed below.

Translation and Interpretation

The translation and interpretation services provided by school districts should, ideally, be part of a districtwide language assistance plan, best developed with a focus on customer service. Districts that have systemically implemented these plans have made progress in building the capacity of disparate departments to address EL needs—rather than relying solely on the EL office to meet such needs. This is important because EL families need to communicate with all departments in a school district. A districtwide language assistance plan can provide a clear direction for communicating with EL families. It can also help determine resource needs. For example,

- One district's enrollment center hired bilingual customer-care associates, and its campus police hired bilingual officers to build relationships.

- Another EL office trained staff in other departments on the various tools used to communicate with EL families, including web-based and text-based applications and the use of telephonic three-way interpretations.

Managed system for translation and interpretation. The quick pivot from in-person to remote instruction because of the pandemic created an unprecedented need for translation and interpretation services. While many districts had documents that needed translation, most instructional materials had not been translated because they were used in classes with teacher-provided EL supports. The remote learning environment led to the creation of numerous new documents on how to access online learning materials and how to understand the new learning schedule, etc. All these instructional guides had to be translated, because there was no teacher available to provide guidance, and districts had to rely on parents to guide their children in accessing instruction from home. Coordinated, well-targeted, and quality translation and interpretation services became necessary for meaningful EL family engagement.

In most districts, the EL office handles districtwide translation and interpretation services. These offices experienced an unprecedented surge in requests for translation and interpretation services from an expanding array of district departments. Districts that had a formal centralized process for handling such requests were better equipped to handle the surge. These procedures typically involve having a dedicated link for submitting requests, an expected timeframe to carry out the translation, and parameters to determine which documents are prioritized.[32] A centralized translation process allows districts to better determine demand, and thereby, accommodate staffing and/or contractual requirements and corresponding budget needs.

A centrally managed system for language access also facilitates quality control as well as the effectiveness of tools for EL families. For example, in addition to providing materials that are translated into various languages, districts and schools should provide curated information to EL families that is focused and relevant. To assist in effective outreach—

- Salient information should be communicated in a succinct manner and might include well-designed graphics, videos in various languages, and straightforward instructions. Lengthy, densely written memos or letters, even if translated, are less effective in conveying important messages, especially when they include directions that families are expected to follow.

- Messaging from multiple offices should be consistent and, if possible, closely coordinated to avoid inundating EL families with multiple instructions.

Finally, a systems approach to meeting the language needs of EL families allows districts to review, evaluate, and invest in technology and tools that best serve entire school communities.

### Cultural Competence and Responsive Community Engagement

Effective engagement of EL families requires not only an understanding of linguistic differences, but the broader cultural characteristics of EL and immigrant communities. Several factors make these EL communities more unique and complex than native English-speaking communities. For instance, one or more languages—other than English—may be the primary language spoken at home or in the community; EL families may include U.S.-born individuals as well as immigrants; and EL families are more likely to be multigenerational. EL families may also have varying levels of education. Although many children in EL families may be in U.S. schools, the adults are less likely to be familiar with the U.S. school system. Moreover, in EL families, the parental role may fall on multiple individuals beyond the parents. Older siblings, especially those who are more proficient in English, may take on parental roles in helping younger siblings navigate the school system or help with homework. Oftentimes, grandparents or aunts and uncles may step in to help.

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32   For example, Shelby County uses a centralized request form for translation and interpretation services. Shelby County Schools. (n.d.). *Interpreter/translation request.* Retrieved July 14, 2020, from http://www.scsk12.org/esl/form?PID=1545.

Engaging EL families, therefore, requires that districts and schools develop communication systems that allow for two-way interaction to gain a better understanding of priorities, needs, and interests unique to EL families. Districts and schools create and sustain the trust of EL communities by responding to their needs in a dignified manner that is well-tailored and timely. Some of the culturally responsive ways in which Council-member districts have sustained EL community engagement include—

- **Channels of communication (outbound).** Identify effective channels of communications that are culturally responsive and respectful in reaching EL families. For example, EL families, which may not have email addresses, are less likely to read an email or go to links embedded in an email. EL families who access the internet are more likely to use their mobile phones, so district websites need to be formatted accordingly for easy viewing. Also, EL families may be more comfortable with social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, or text-based applications like WhatsApp.[33] Announcements on local radio and TV, postings in stores where EL families shop, laundromats, as well as ads in neighborhood newspapers in various languages are additional ways to reach EL families. Engaged EL parent leaders who are trusted by their communities can be important partners. Districts can also harness the power of 'word of mouth' by cultivating EL parent leaders and providing them with timely and accurate information to be shared with their respective communities.

Responsive EL Community Engagement
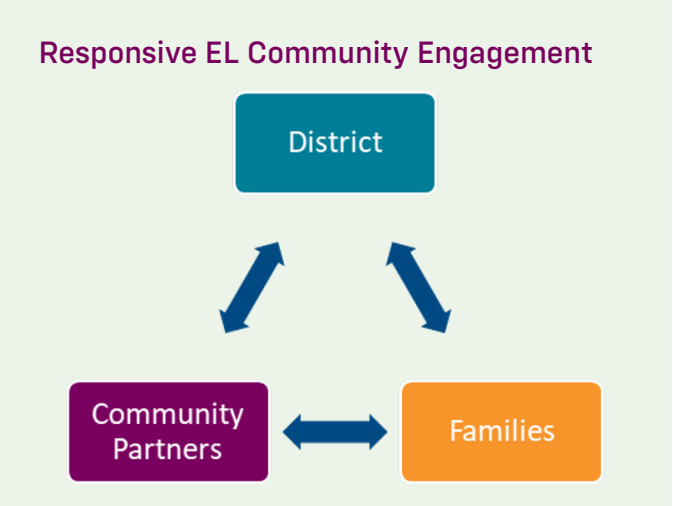
- **Tools for communication (inbound).** Identify the tools and modalities that EL families are most comfortable with before surveying or communicating with them. For example, EL parents may be more likely to respond to surveys provided through mobile phones, a district or school's Facebook page, or a telephonic hotline where they can reach a live person who speaks their language. Districts that have initiated Facebook pages in specified languages have found it to be a useful way to support two-way, ongoing, and timely communications with parents.

- **Community partnerships.** Establish ongoing partnerships with community based- or faith-based organizations that serve EL community groups to share important information, serve as cultural interpreters, and listen to community concerns. Nurture these partnerships to sustain a reliable network that can withstand staff turnover and support effective communications with families in different groups.

Culturally responsive, two-way communications with EL families allows school districts and schools to construct accurate depictions of EL families' experiences with their respective school district. These depiction are important to understand EL student and family experiences in designing responsive programs and supports as well as measuring their effectiveness in meeting EL needs. EL offices that engage in ongoing cross-departmental collaboration bring their understanding of the EL community to other district offices to help ensure that the EL experience is considered in all endeavors of the school district. For example, EL families will be nervous if districts begin asking for more personally identifiable information to access online programs or receive devices. Similarly, EL families are worried that any benefits they receive would be considered "public charge," and thus have adverse implications for immigration.

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33 Depending on how recently families arrived in the U.S. and app restrictions or availability in certain countries, some families may only be familiar with a small number of apps that are possibly not mainstream in the U.S. (e.g., WeChat in China).

Appendix A

Priority Education Experiences for ELs

FOCUS AREA	PRIORITY EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES & SUGGESTED STRATEGIES	
FOCUSED LANGUAGE STUDY (FLS) Dedicated time for targeted English language development	*STUDENT EXPERIENCES*	■ Continued opportunities to interact and use language in meaningful ways. For newcomers, small groups for synchronous instruction can be particularly helpful. ■ Strategic scaffolds (language frames, visuals, videos with captions, etc.) support student access and engagement with grade-level content. Students can record (audio and video) or write responses to be sent to teachers. ■ ELs at all levels of English proficiency are engaged in rigorous, grade-level content, with the necessary just-in-time scaffolds as well as timely and clear feedback on how to improve respective academic language.
	TEACHER ACTIONS	■ Teachers record read-alouds or lessons using videos with subtitles/captions, or audio when video is not possible. ■ Save pre-recorded content to flash drives for students who have connectivity challenges. ■ Plan instructional lessons and activities with strategic student groupings to foster equitable participation of ELs with different levels of proficiency. ■ Focus on providing instruction and practice in all four modalities (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).
	PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS	■ Collaborate with general education teachers to align the instructional language focus with grade-level units of study and lessons, focusing on vocabulary and particular language structures of the content areas. ■ Strategically group students heterogeneously with a range of no more than three proficiency levels. ■ Prioritize small group work for synchronous instruction, focusing on clarifying and extending important content, revealing how the English language works, and attending to foundational skills.

FOCUS AREA	PRIORITY EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES & SUGGESTED STRATEGIES	
DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC ACADEMIC LANGUAGE EXPANSION (DALE) Integrated language instruction in the context of grade-level content	*STUDENT EXPERIENCES*	■ Learn how to use tools and scaffolds, such as linguistic frames and dictionaries, to express thinking about grade-level content. ■ Receive linguistic support to access content in asynchronous and synchronous ways (e.g., recorded mini-lessons to be accessed immediately prior to content instruction as well as after for review, small group video conferencing to preview language demands of grade level content, etc.). ■ Have opportunities for extended academic writing and discourse that allow learning of the different linguistic structures and genres used by the content area. ■ Have access to multi-media resources (e.g., video, audio recordings, text, etc.) to learn grade-level content. ■ Engage in projects, assignments, and tasks that involve representing concepts in multiple ways to express understanding and to share with classmates, including in home languages.
	TEACHER ACTIONS	■ Implement lessons that explicitly attend to the language demands of content and tasks in coherent ways that continue to build content knowledge. ■ Provide models of academic English use for learning standards-based content. ■ Create engaging remote learning. For example, provide virtual "cliffhangers" to motivate students to return to the virtual environment (climax of a story, interesting question or answer to a question, and activities that can be safely done at home), assignments to go around the home to collect artifacts, conduct interesting research, etc. ■ Schedule small group and one-on-one time with students to clarify, answer questions, gauge understanding, and provide social-emotional support.
	PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS	■ Collaboration of EL and general education teachers to develop engaging, rigorous content lessons that include purposeful development of academic language of the content area. ■ Collaboration of grade-level teams to research and create repository of curated online materials for instruction. ■ Apply concepts of universal design to lesson planning and execution–multiple means of engagement, of representation, of action and expression, and meaningful formative assessment.

FOCUS AREA	PRIORITY EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES & SUGGESTED STRATEGIES	
INDEPENDENT LEARNING AND PRACTICE Integrated language instruction in the context of grade-level content	*STUDENT EXPERIENCES*	■ Activities that promote and encourage meaningful interactions with siblings, parents, or extended family at home. ■ Activities that balance screen time with other activities and, if possible, include outdoor activities. ■ Activities that encourage students to share the grade-level work they have produced (e.g., record themselves in video or audio, pictures, etc.).
	TEACHER ACTIONS	■ Provide information, narrated PowerPoints, images, video, and audio files on a flash drive, particularly where there are connectivity barriers. ■ Plan for ways to collect and give feedback on student work that has been completed at home (e.g., take a picture, text a response, collect at distribution sites for food, packets, etc.). Build accountability into the independent activities for completed work. ■ Encourage families to read, speak, and write in their home language. ■ Establish robust communication with parents using available technologies.

Appendix B

Executive Summary of 2009 Report, *Succeeding with English Language Learners*

The 2009 Council report on ELs[34] shed light on the complex interaction of organizational, structural, instructional, and staffing issues behind the achievement of English learners. The study examined the experiences of diverse districts that had differing levels of success at raising EL student achievement from 2002 to 2006 to identify potential strategies for EL instructional reform in school districts as well as factors that may hinder progress. Dallas, New York City, St. Paul, and San Francisco were selected for the study based on sizable EL enrollment (ELs at least 10 percent of total enrollment and at least 9,000 ELs) and 3rd or 4th grade EL achievement on state reading/ELA assessments. These districts were compared to two unnamed districts that had similar demographics but did not demonstrate progress on EL achievement during the study period. The historical, administrative, and programmatic context and district-level strategies to improve EL achievement and reduce disparities between ELs and non-ELs were examined through a review of materials and site visits for interviews and focus groups. Despite the diversity of districts included in the study, the practices in improving districts were consistent.

The report identified seven districtwide practices that were promising in realizing program improvements for ELs to scale.

A. **Comprehensive Planning and Adoption of Language Development Strategies for ELs.** The EL program reform was an integral part of a larger district reform initiative that included EL instructional strategies with an explicit focus on supporting academic language action.

B. **Extensive and Continuous Support for Implementation.** Implementation of reforms was a long-term commitment of time and resources.

C. **A Culture of Collaboration and Shared Accountability.** A shift in culture that sustained increased collaboration at the central office and school levels for the success of all students.

D. **Hybrid Models of Instructional Management and Local Empowerment.** Managed instruction and school-based accountability for student progress was coupled with some flexibility and autonomy for school leaders.

E. **Strategic School Staffing.** Strategic deployment of EL teachers, coaches, specialists to support quality instruction and consistency across schools.

F. **High Quality, Relevant Professional Development.** Professional development initiatives that target not only EL teachers but all teachers of ELs as well as principals and school administrator. Professional development efforts tended to be rigorous and long-term, providing educators with hands-on practice with effective strategies for teaching ELs.

G. **The Use of Student Data.** Districts had a data-driven culture that expanded the accessibility, quantity, and types of student data available to educators to make informed decisions about instructional response to student needs.

H. **Reallocation and Strategic Use of EL Funds.** EL program improvement efforts benefited from increased funding beyond EL-categorical funds and the strategic reallocation of existing resources.

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34 Horwitz, A. R., Uro, G., Price-Baugh, R., Simon, C., Uzzell, R., Lewis, S., & Casserly, M. (2009, October). *Succeeding with English language learners: Lessons learned from the Great City Schools.* Council of the Great City Schools. https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/35/Publication%20Docs/EL_Report09.pdf

In addition to identifying the promising practices, the 2009 report identified limiting factors that impeded district efforts to improve the achievement of English learners—

- **No Coherent Vision or Strategy for the Instruction of ELLs Systemwide.** Neither comparison district effectively articulated or communicated a vision for the kind of instructional programming it would pursue on behalf of ELLs. The instructional needs of ELLs appeared to have been an afterthought.

- **Site-Based Management without Support, Oversight, or Explicit Accountability for Student Progress.** There was a widely expressed feeling that schools in the comparison districts were "on their own," with no clear articulation of ELL instructional models, no system in place to support or monitor the implementation of adopted programs, and little accountability for ELL results.

- **Lack of Access to the General Curriculum.** In the comparison districts there was no system in place for ensuring that ELLs had access to the core curriculum or were being taught to the same standards as other students.

- **No Systematic Use of Disaggregated Student Data.** There was no clear strategy in either comparison district for tracking the academic progress of ELLs or making student assessment data available to schools and teachers in a meaningful, timely way.

- **Inconsistent Leadership.** High turnover in district leadership positions made it nearly impossible to sustain a coherent instructional program or reform agenda.

- **No Systemic Efforts to Build ELL Staff Capacity.** The comparison districts did not have a coherent strategy for building ELL staff capacity through the identification and placement of qualified ELL teachers, targeted professional development, or the strategic deployment of qualified instructional aides.

- **Compartmentalization of ELL Departments and Staff.** ELL staff at both the district and school levels appeared to work in isolation from other instructional departments and programs. This resulted in the ineffective use of funds, less access to instructional resources and training, and the general sense that ELL staff and teachers—alone—were responsible for the achievement of ELLs.

- **The ELL Office Lacked Capacity and Authority.** The ELL offices in both districts at this time lacked the authority and resources to take strong leadership roles on ELL issues.

Resources

Instructional Support for Educators

Boston Public Schools. (2020, March 25). *Digital learning for English learners during school closures.* https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yxPEO3Pbhzg7PSdVwh9eHbnMpYn6B8iZlkMdfKTc17M/edit

 Boston Public Schools prepared an *English Learner Teacher Virtual Teaching Guide* that includes general considerations for online learning and a wealth of resources, including supplementary supports and resources for ELs with disabilities.

Chinn, K. (2020, May 12). *Supporting ELLs through distance learning* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKXOXrpXP0M&t=334s

 Oakland Unified School District produced an instructional video with accompanying slides and a summary document that includes tips for educators as they plan and implement online learning for ELs. Slides can be found at: tinyurl.com/DistanceLearning4ELLs. A summary document is located at:
 https://docs.google.com/document/d/17oVcD649mE2ag_jhf7sUNRP4SfdRuzUFg83Vinl7D6c/edit.

Empatico. (n.d.). *Home-to-home connections.* Retrieved July 22, 2020, from https://empatico.org/at-home/connect.

 Empatico is a free tool for connecting classrooms around the world through video. It now has resources available to facilitate connections at home between families with children ages 6-11 to provide opportunities for peer-to-peer socialization to help children to break through isolation and experience togetherness.

Fresno Unified School District. (2020). *Continuity of learning.* Retrieved July 22, 2020, from https://www.fresnounified.org/learningguides#educators

 The Fresno Unified School District website includes webinar recordings and "on demand training videos" of distance learning PD for educators.

Understanding Language. (2020, June). *Formative assessment process in remote learning environments webinars.* https://ell.stanford.edu/content/FA-process-remote-learning-webinars

 Understanding Language at Stanford has produced two one-hour virtual sessions to give guidance on using the Formative Assessment process to support language and content development as well as social emotional learning in remote and non-remote environments.

School District Webpages and Supportive Resources for EL Families

Austin Independent School District. (n.d.). *Refugee/immigrant resources.* AISD Learning At-Home. Retrieved July 14, 2020, from https://sites.google.com/austinisd.org/aisd-learning-at-home/refugeeimmigrant-resources?authuser=0

 Austin Independent School District has developed a webpage for EL families with help videos in various languages for accessing distance learning.

Boston Public Schools. (2020). *Multilingual library for English learners.* Retrieved July 22, 2020, from
https://sites.google.com/bostonpublicschools.org/boston-public-schools/week-4-april-6-april-10/multilingual-library-for-english-learners

To support parents at home, Boston Public Schools has compiled a list of online bilingual resources for them to watch and use with their child or children. They can watch stories read in their native language or access books to read together.

Broward County Public Schools. (2020). *Continuing education opportunities for students.* Retrieved July 22, 2020, from https://www.browardschools.com/learningnevercloses

Broward County Public Schools has a comprehensive webpage for continuous learning in the event of school closures. It includes links to "Five Steps to Getting Started with Broward County Public Schools Distance Learning" in several languages and a host of information, videos, and supports for students, parents, and teachers.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. (2020). *EL parent & community outreach.* Retrieved July 22, 2020, from
https://sites.google.com/cms.k12.nc.us/el-parent-community-outreach/home?authuser=0

Charlotte-Mecklenburg's parent-friendly website includes immediate translation to Spanish and clear links leading to everything from community resources to language and technology help, resources for learning at home, free food options, COVID-19 updates, and more.

Fresno Unified School District. (2020). *Continuity of learning.* Retrieved July 22, 2020, from
https://www.fresnounified.org/learningguides

Fresno Unified School District's website has a variety of resources to support distance learning, including a *Continuity of Learning Guide* (for all families) that includes daily schedules by grade level to help families provide structure for their children and distance learning support for English learners. The site also includes a listing of supportive technology tools (https://www.fresnounified.org/learningguides/Pages/english-learners.aspx).

Immigrant Connections. (2020, May 14). *Google Classroom and more in multiple languages.* Retrieved July 20, 2020, from https://www.immigrantsrefugeesandschools.org/post/google-classroom-and-more-in-multiple-languages?postId=5eb992f422f75e0017ade2bc

This resource provides links to short tutorials, in a variety of languages, on how to use digital platforms, including Google Classroom, Zoom, Seesaw, Canvas, and ClassDojo.

Switchboard. (2020, March 10). *A round-up of multilingual resources on COVID-19.* Retrieved July 22, 2020, from
https://switchboardta.org/blog/a-round-up-of-multilingual-resources-on-covid-19/

This blog post contains fact sheets, posters, multimedia resources, and links to live updates in multiple languages about COVID-19, its symptoms, and how to prevent it. Key CDC resources are listed first, followed by materials from other sources organized by type. (Sources include federal, state, and local government agencies and selected nonprofit organizations).

Student-Friendly Web Resources

Dallas Independent School District. (2020). *At-home learning.* Retrieved July 22, 2020, from
https://sites.google.com/dallasisd.org/athomelearningplans/home

Dallas Independent School District's *At Home Learning* portal incudes instructional videos, access to lessons, summer learning, and virtual field trips. Also included is a link for students and parents to obtain help and to give the district feedback on its performance.

Instructional Technology

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service. (2018, October). *National Study of English Learners and Digital Learning Resources, Educator Toolkit: Using Educational Technology—21st Century Supports for English Learners.* Retrieved July 20, 2020, from https://tech.ed.gov/edtech-english-learner-toolkits/educators/

The U.S. Department of Education has developed a toolkit for all educators—including teachers and administrators—who want to use digital learning resources to help their English learners gain proficiency in English and meet academic goals.

Translation/Interpretation Support

Shelby County Schools. (n.d.). *Interpreter/translation request.* Retrieved July 14, 2020, from http://www.scsk12.org/esl/form?PID=1545

Shelby County Schools has developed an interpreter/translation request form to ensure timely access to information and interpretation services in a variety of languages.

Tulsa Public Schools. (2020). *Parent notification of language assistance services.* Retrieved July 22, 2020, from https://www.tulsaschools.org/about/teams/language-cultural-services/parent-notification-of-language-assistance-services

Tulsa Public Schools has a Language Assistance Plan, including an Assistance Request Form available in English and Spanish, as well as bilingual assistance contact information.

Other Resources

Council of Chief State School Officers. (2020, May 27). *Restart & recovery: Serving English language learners during COVID-19.* https://ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/CCSSO_Serving_Eng_Lang-v4.pdf

As part of its Restart & Recovery resources, the Council of Chief State School Officers compiled resources for providing supports to traditionally underserved students, including English learners. This document is a compendium of resources developed by states and a number of organizations for supporting English learners during remote and virtual instruction.

Digital Learning Resources and Support Tools for English Learners

This list contains examples to illustrate the application of technology and is not intended as an endorsement by the Council of any product or program. Tools are mentioned as examples according to the features they offer, as it is understood that technology is quickly adapting, and new tools are constantly appearing in the education space.

Speaking and Listening

- **Speech to text:** Provides means to express ideas, enhance literacy development, and practice pronunciation. *[Microsoft 365, Google Read & Write, Google Docs Voice – Typing, etc.]*

- **Closed captioning of PPTs and presentations:** Provides visual support to listening, allowing for greater access to content and academic language. *[Microsoft 365, closed captioning capabilities on YouTube (English, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, or Spanish), etc.]*

- **Echo feature (response to speech):** Provides practice of pronunciation, grammar, and oral expression. *[Amazon Echo, Google Home, Apple HomePod, etc.]*

Interaction/Collaboration

- **Flash disks, cellphones (text, translate, camera, etc.):** Provides visuals and examples at a distance in addition to a way to submit work.

- **Video making/editing/publishing:** Provides visual and audio support for introducing new concepts, extending learning, and ways to demonstrate learning. *[Screencastify (Chrome extension), YouTube, Flipgrid, Loom (video messaging), etc.]*

- **Virtual meeting with small group breakouts:** Provides forum for small-group instruction and increased opportunities for participation. *[Zoom, Google Meet, Go to Meeting, Uber Meets, Microsoft Teams, Schoology, etc.]*

- **White board or discussion board:** Provides a space for academic discourse, collaboration, and interaction.

- **Instant or real-time translation:** Provides students support using native language and generally facilitates comprehension. *[Google, Microsoft, Zoom, etc.]*

Reading Complex Text and Supporting Literacy

- **Text to speech:** Provides ELs access to more complex text and grammar as well as opportunities to hear enunciation and pronunciation while reading. Can also help with comprehension. *[Microsoft Office 365 Immersive Reader, etc.]*

- **Screen reader:** Provides auditory and visual supports to access complex text for learning new content. *[Microsoft Office 365, Apple VoiceOver, Google TalkBack on smart phones, Immersive Reader on OneNote, etc.]*

- **Dictionary:** Provides just-in-time definitions, synonyms, and translations to support comprehension and writing. *[Microsoft 365, Google Read & Write, etc.]*

- **Picture dictionary:** Provides just-in-time visual support for introducing vocabulary and new concepts in addition to extending learning and understanding. *[Google Read & Write, Microsoft Office 365 Immersive Reader (available in several languages and includes parts of speech feature for many of them), etc.]*

Writing Activities

- **Dictionary:** Provides just-in-time definitions, synonyms, and translations to support comprehension and writing. *[Microsoft 365, Google Read & Write, etc.]*

- **Picture dictionary:** Provides just-in-time visual support for introducing vocabulary, new concepts, and extending learning and understanding. *[Google Read & Write, Microsoft Office 365 Immersive Reader (available in several languages and includes parts of speech feature for many of them), etc.]*

- **Text summarization:** Provides support for text comprehension, research, and writing. *[Google Read & Write, etc.]*

- **Shared/collaborative writing:** Provides ability for multiple students to share a document to co-write, to annotate, and add comments. Allows teachers to provide feedback in real-time. *[Google Docs, Microsoft SharePoint, Microsoft OneNote, etc.]*

- **Word/text prediction:** Provides writing support to enable students to focus on conveying content as they learn spelling. *[Google Read & Write, etc.]*

- **White board or discussion board:** Provides a space for academic discourse, collaboration, and interaction. *[Zoom, Padlet (virtual post-its), Microsoft Teams, etc.]*

Instructional Delivery and Access to Content

- **Videotaping or live-streaming:** Provides access to students across the district classes taught by teachers and students alike who need to maintain physical distance due to health concerns. *[Canvas, Microsoft Teams, etc.]*

- **Video-making/editing/publishing:** Provides visual and multimodal support for introducing new concepts, extending learning, and demonstrating learning. *[Screencastify (Chrome extension), YouTube, Flipgrid, Loom (video messaging), etc.]*

- **Learning platforms:** Provides ways for students to engage with learning and content uploaded/curated by teachers. *[Schoology, Canvas, Seesaw, Nearpod, etc.]*

- **Content-area video and reading passages:** Provides access to grade-level content for ELs. *[BrainPOP, Common Lit (thematically arranged readings and compelling EQs), TED-Ed lessons, etc.]*

- **Check for understanding:** Provides ways to increase engagement and opportunities to check for understanding. *[NearPod, etc.]*

- **Digital books:** Provides sharing of anchor charts, general resources, and performance tasks across schools. *[Book Creator, etc.]*

Family Communication

- **Family engagement platforms:** Provides ways for schools to communicate with families using tools they may regularly use and that have easy-to-use interfaces and translation features. *[ClassDojo, Talking Points, WhatsApp, etc.]*

Appendix E

Matrix of Digital Resources

MATRIX 1: Digital Learning Resources

The term **Digital Learning Resources (DLRs)** refers to digital resources such as applications *(apps)*, software, programs, or websites that engage students in learning activities and support students' learning goals. There are three categories of DLRs: digital academic content tools, digital productivity tools, and digital communication tools. DLRs as defined here do not include the hardware or infrastructure needed to use the digital resources.

DLR Category	Definition	Category	Types and Examples
Digital Academic Content Tools	Software, applications *(apps)*, programs, or websites that offer academic content resources and/or engage students in activities to learn academic content or skills, including, but not limited to, language and literacy content or skills.	**Designed learning activities**	■ *Interactive tutorials or lessons (adaptive and other)* that guide students in learning and demonstrating new content or skills, such as an interactive lesson on the life cycle of a butterfly or a math tutorial on fractions. ■ *Practice and assessment tools that provide activities to review concepts and skills,* such as a math app that provides multiple opportunities to practice addition skills. ■ *Dynamic modeling or simulation tools,* such as a physics simulation that lets students manipulate virtual equipment, change parameters, and see the results. ■ *Virtual worlds* that immerse a student in a fully interactive environment, such as one that allows a student to roam in a period of past history or explore a desert environment.
		References/resources	■ *Dictionaries, encyclopedias, e-books, topic blogs, and/or topic-focused websites* that serve as information resources, such as an online encyclopedia that offers students pictures, facts, and videos about mammals or a digital dictionary. ■ *Visual and auditory topic-related resources* such as a *YouTube* video on earthquakes and plate tectonics.
		Language resource tools	■ *Translation tools* that assist students by providing a translation to another language. ■ *Articulation tools* that assist a student to accurate production of a language, such as by showing images of how a sound should be produced and/or by letting a student record and listen to his/her own voice to compare with the model.

DLR Category	Definition	Category	Types and Examples
Digital Productivity Tools	Software, applications *(apps)*, programs, or websites that students use to plan, document, organize, and analyze content. They do not contain academic content.	**Presentation tools**	■ ***Presentation and publication tools*** that allow students to demonstrate what they have learned about a topic or to publish a digital story about a memorable day. These may include music, images, and/or video.
		Word processing tools	■ ***Word or text processing tools*** that enable students to create, edit, and print documents such as in creating a newspaper based on topics from history class or reporting on a field trip.
		Information analysis tools	■ ***Spreadsheet and data analysis tools*** that allow students to organize and analyze information, such as tracking local rainfall over time or analyzing and summarizing factors that led to the migration from the American Dust Bowl to the West in the 1930s.
		Information organization tools	■ ***Concept-mapping tools*** that let students visually represent relationships among sets of information, such as creating a mindmap of the American Revolution or a concept map for the causes of the Civil War. ■ ***Story templates*** that assist students to communicate a narrative using text and/or images, as in retelling a story they have heard.
Digital Communication Tools	Software, applications *(apps)*, programs, or websites that students use to communicate, collaborate, network, or present information. They do not contain academic content.	**Asynchronous/ synchronous text communications**	■ ***Discussion boards or forums*** that provide platforms for students to post reactions and/or comments and share perspectives, such as in providing analyses of a novel they have read and sharing feedback on their peers' analyses. ■ ***Emails, text messaging, chats,*** for example, using a chat function to share peer feedback on a report.
		Reflection tools	■ ***Blogs or student journals*** that allow students opportunities to share and/or reflect on their learning experiences, such as a student who uses a journal entry to reflect on her understanding of particular math concepts.
		Video-conferencing/ meeting tools	■ ***Videoconferencing or meeting tools*** that provide a remote means of seeing and speaking with others in real time, such as in enabling a science class to see and talk with NASA experts, or allowing students in a Spanish dual-language class to see and share a geography game with Spanish-speaking peers in Mexico.
		Project collaboration tools	■ ***Document or project-sharing tools*** that provide an online platform where students can work on products together, as in jointly editing a shared book report.

Multiple individual DLRs can be combined in an Integrated DLR Set

DLR Category	Definition	Category	Types and Examples
Integrated DLR Sets	A structured combination of individual DLRs to provide a complete core or supplemental curriculum. Often, DLR sets are licensed as a package by a school district.	**Core Curriculum Integrated DLR Set**	For example, a math program for grades 6–8 that combines visual lessons with embedded assessments, productivity tools, and flexible class management tools into one package.
		Supplemental Integrated DLR Set	For example, a math intervention for at-risk students in grades 6–12 that provides tutorials, practice activities, and progress monitoring tools to inform instruction.
Note: This summary matrix was adapted from Zehler, Annette M., Yilmazel-Sahin, Yesim, Massoud, Lindsey, Moore, Sarah C., Yin, Chengbin, and Kramer, Kat. (2012, April). *Technology-based resources in instruction of English learner students.* Poster presentation at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Vancouver, British Columbia.			
Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service. (2018). *National Study of English Learners and Digital Learning Resources.* Washington, DC: Author.			

MATRIX 2: Digital Support Features

Digital Support Features are specific embedded features in digital learning resources (DLRs) that assist students in understanding or communicating the content and/or activities provided in the DLR. This is a preliminary list to prompt further discussion among developers and educators.

Support Feature Category	Definition	Category	Examples
Visual Support Features	Provide visual images or other visual supports to assist a student in understanding and/or communicating a concept or idea.	**Visual definition**	Links to a video or image(s) providing a visual definition of a concept or word.
		Interactive visual features	Manipulable visual representation of a concept, such as a graphing calculator feature integrated into a DLR, providing representations of concepts based upon information that a student enters.
		Closed captioning	Text shown on the video screen provides print as well as audio that is useful for English learners still developing their ability to understand spoken English.
Auditory Support Features	Provide speech or other use of sound to assist a student in understanding and/or communicating a concept or idea	**Auditory definition**	Allows students to click on a word to hear a definition of a concept or word.
		Text-to-speech for text selection	Reads aloud text such as a selection on academic content, a story, directions for a lab experiment, or math questions; might include options to play, pause, adjust the volume, and/or control the speed at which the text is read. The language used may be English or another language, depending on the materials used.
		Text-to-speech for highlighted word	Allows readers to hear an individual word or phrase.
		Record and replay voice	Enables students to record their voice; replay it so that they can hear their own voice, perhaps make adjustments to and/or practice pronunciation, practice their part in a presentation, or save for sharing with others.

Support Feature Category	Definition	Category	Examples
Translation Support Features	Provide embedded functions to translate from one language to the other, in either speech or print, and for either a word or limited text.	**Spoken word translation**	Enables a student to hear a spoken translation in his/her home language of an unfamiliar English word.
		Printed word translation	Enables a student to view a written translation in his/her home language of an unfamiliar English word.
		Spoken text translation	Enables a student to hear spoken statements in one language as spoken in another language.
		Printed text translation	Enables a student to view a section of text in one language as written in another language.
Collaboration Support Features	Embedded functions that students use to communicate, collaborate, work, or share information about academic content.	**Document sharing**	Allows multiple students to share a digital document and use annotation tools to add notes or comments.
		Collaboration based on proficiency level	Allows students to collaborate with peers according to their proficiency levels (e.g., peers at the same Lexile reading comprehension level).

Note: This matrix is a preliminary summary of supports created for the toolkits based on insights gained through the NSELD research.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service. (2018). *National Study of English Learners and Digital Learning Resources.* Washington, DC: Author.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service. (2018, October). *National Study of English Learners and Digital Learning Resources, Educator Toolkit: Using Educational Technology—21st Century Supports for English Learners*. Retrieved July 20, 2020, from https://tech.ed.gov/edtech-english-learner-toolkits/educators/.

Appendix F

Working Groups and Members

Assessing & Addressing Unfinished Learning Work Group

Atlanta Public Schools	Margaret McKenzie
Baltimore City Public Schools	Maria Reamore
Buffalo Public Schools	Nadia Nashir
Duval County Public Schools	Ingrid Carias
Fresno Unified School District	Elizabeth Fralicks
Guilford County Schools	Mayra Hayes and Soledad Lardies-Dunst
Jefferson County Public Schools	Eli Beardsley
Kansas City Public Schools	Stephanie Easley
Los Angeles Unified School District	Lydia Acosta Stephens
Metropolitan-Nashville Public Schools	Vanessa Lazon
Newark Public Schools	Marisol Diaz

Family Engagement/Communication & Translation and Interpretation

Atlanta Public Schools	Joana Garcia, Margaret McKenzie, and Sally Luna
Austin Independent School District	Alejandro Góngora
Bridgeport Public Schools	Ana Sousa-Martins
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	Charlotte "Nadja" Trez
Clark County School District	Lisa Medina
Duval County Public Schools	Ingrid Carias
Guilford County Schools	Adriana Gullo and Jackie Martinez Vesga
Jefferson County Public Schools	Eli Beardsley
Los Angeles Unified School District	Lydia Acosta Stephens
Metropolitan-Nashville Public Schools	Vanessa Lazon
Milwaukee Public Schools	Sarah Borges
Minneapolis Public Schools	Leticia Guadarrama
Newark Public Schools	Marisol Diaz
Shelby County Schools	Debra Frantz
Tulsa Public Schools	Laura Grisso

EL Student Engagement

Anchorage School District	Natalie Moten
Atlanta Public Schools	Margaret McKenzie
Bridgeport Public Schools	Ana Sousa-Martins
Buffalo Public Schools	Nadia Nashir
Columbus City Schools	Michael Sain
District of Columbia Public Schools	Maria Joie Austria and Nicole Ugel
Fresno Unified School District	Elizabeth Fralicks
Guilford County Schools	Alicia Serrano
Indianapolis Public Schools	Jessica Dunn
Jefferson County Public Schools	Eli Beardsley
Los Angeles Unified School District	Lydia Acosta Stephens
Oakland Unified School District	Nicole Knight
San Francisco Unified School District	Miguel de Loza
Seattle Public Schools	Teresa Boone
Shelby County Schools	Debra Frantz
St. Paul Public Schools	Yeu Vang
The School District of Palm Beach County	Francisco "Harvey" Oaxaca
The School District of Philadelphia	Allison Still
Wichita Public Schools	Shannon Benoit

Technology and Opportunities to Practice Listening and Speaking

Atlanta Public Schools	Margaret McKenzie
Birmingham City Schools	Glorious Bates
Bridgeport Public Schools	Ana Sousa-Martins
Buffalo Public Schools	Nadia Nashir
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	Charlotte "Nadja" Trez
Fresno Unified School District	Elizabeth Fralicks
Guilford County Schools	Beth Biester, Bob Egan, and Randall Saenz
Houston Independent School District	Anna White
Jefferson County	Eli Beardsley
Los Angeles Unified School District	Lydia Acosta Stephens
New York City Department of Education	Kyle McDonald
Newark Public Schools	Marisol Diaz
Portland Public Schools	Veronica Magallanes
The School District of Philadelphia	Allison Still

The Council of the Great City Schools
Returning to School Series

Guidelines for Supporting Technology-based Learning Environments

July 2020

Financial Issues in the Reopening of Schools During the COVID-19 Crisis

June 2020

Addressing Unfinished Learning After COVID-19 School Closures

June 2020

Ensuring a Data-Driven Approach to Reopening Schools After COVID-19

Recommendations for Research and Assessment
June 2020

IDEA Best Practices During the COVID-19 Crisis

Spring 2020

Addressing Mental Health and Social-Emotional Wellness in the Covid-19 Crisis

A Resource Guide for School Districts
Spring 2020

Operational Issues in the Reopening of Schools during the COVID-19 Crisis

Facilities, Transportation, and Security
June 2020

Assessing Language Proficiency during Extended School Closures

Sample Questionnaires

Read and download reports at https://www.cgcs.org/corona.

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