

# Issues from the National Conversations on Educating English Learners for the 21st Century

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September 21, 2011

## 1. ASSESSMENT FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

- 1.1. Content assessment has not included ELs in piloting or norming processes for assessment development
- 1.2. Tests are generally given in the language of instruction (English) only
- 1.3. Identification and appropriate placement of ELs would enhance assessment performance
- 1.4. Issues related to linguistic modifications and academic English needed as part of the common core standards assessment

### Recommendations:

1. Develop national standards for EL identification and definitions of English learners, and appropriate placement
2. Develop native language content assessments for the top five most spoken languages
3. Federal level requirement that standards-based content assessment should include ELs in the norming group
4. Include linguistic modifications in the development of common core assessments

## 2. ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

- 2.1. Exited “former” English learners are not disaggregated and publicly reported as a demonstration of success
- 2.2. Variances in state to state standards and “exit criteria” undermine EL accountability
- 2.3. Unfair/uneven application of accountability status/sanctions based on EL test results for AYP
- 2.4. Improve monitoring on language instruction educational program implementation and effectiveness
- 2.5. Compare educational performance of ELs in bilingual programs and English-based programs for accountability and effectiveness

### Recommendations:

1. Publish former ELs data and give “credit” for success of program based on the results
2. Increase monitoring of language instruction educational program implementation and effectiveness
3. Publish the results of language instruction educational programs based on type of program and degree of effectiveness/success

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## **3 STANDARDS: COMMON CORE CONTENT STANDARDS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY STANDARDS**

- 3.1 Inclusion of ELs instructional needs in the common core standards as states adopt standards
- 3.2 No national English Language Proficiency Standards
- 3.3 No national native language development standards for the top five language groups
- 3.4 Infusion of national English Language Proficiency Standards into the common core standards
- 3.5 Aligning Early Learning with ELL K-12 Education

### Recommendations:

- 1. Include ELs in policy on implementation of the common core standards as they are being developed, not as an afterthought
- 2. Develop national English Language Proficiency Standards on the same scale as the common core standards
- 3. Develop national native language development standards for the top five language groups (based on number of speakers in the language group)
- 4. Ensure that national English language proficiency standards are aligned to the common core standards
- 5. Align Early Learning standards and ELP K-12 Standards that are developmentally appropriate

## **4 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- 4.1 Prepare all teachers and administrators to teach and make decisions for the benefit of ELs
- 4.2 Only one in five teacher preparation programs includes a full course on teaching ELs
- 4.3 No administrator certification programs include any EL based course requirement (cultural diversity classes are insufficient)
- 4.4 In-service course work in teaching strategies and evaluation of ELs are inconsistent throughout school districts/states
- 4.5 Need a different perspective on ESL classes
- 4.6 There needs to be opportunity for educators to meet across school and district lines
- 4.7 Schools need to be encouraged, and models provided, to free-up time for teachers to meet
- 4.8 Create an online information website to develop teachers' cultural competencies
- 4.9 Teachers need to learn what their students' parents school experiences were like and what the parent might possibly be telling the student about school

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- 4.10 Pre-service teachers must be taught the skills and expectations that prepare them for involvement with the community and parents.
- 4.11 Collaboration of school boards, superintendents and administrative personnel to develop and implement rigorous teacher preparation programs in meeting and working to meet the needs of diversity of EL students in the 21st Century.
- 4.12 Provide professional development for all teachers, administrators and family support staff working with young ELs around language development and second language acquisition.

## Recommendations:

- 1. All teacher training programs should contain more than one course on teaching/evaluating ELs
- 2. All administrative certificate programs must contain a course in decision making/program selection (specifically language instruction educational programs for ELs)
- 3. All in-service teachers must take EL coursework
- 4. EL coursework should be a qualifier for the designation of “highly qualified teacher” without regard to content area of expertise
- 5. ESL classes should be part of the “mainstream” of core classified courses, not treated as an “elective”

## **5 LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

- 5.1 Models of effective LIEPs
- 5.2 Guidance on LIEPs
- 5.3 Alignment of LIEPs with content and English language proficiency standards
- 5.4 Measurement—how good is good

## Recommendations:

- 1. States should provide models of effective programs and implement such programs
- 2. Feds and states should provide guidance on what an effective language instruction educational program should look like, how it can be replicated and how to evaluate effectiveness
- 3. Administrators deciding on which program(s) to implement should consult ESL/Bilingual Education experts before implementing a program
- 4. All language instruction education programs should be aligned to not only the English language proficiency standards but the content standards to ensure that ELs will succeed in core academic classes
- 5. There should be effective collaboration between content teachers and EL teachers as part of the requirements of the language instruction educational programs

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6. Upon implementation there should be regular intervals of monitoring programs and feedback provided (two-way) about the students' progress and ways of improvement in the delivery of such programs

## **6 POLICY**

- 6.1 ESEA reauthorization
- 6.2 Federal funding
- 6.3 Leadership for the EL initiative
- 6.4 Broadening the definition of language education
- 6.5 EL high school and graduation criteria
- 6.6 Multilingualism Initiative
- 6.7 Status of teachers

### Recommendations:

1. Promote multilingualism for all students throughout the country
2. Define "success" not just as a student exiting a program but beyond that to college completion or entering the work force successfully
3. When creating a content assessment include ELs in the norming process, standard format assessments maybe insufficient for this population and more authentic assessments are needed
4. Content assessment results should not be used to evaluate teacher performance regarding ELs because the assessments themselves are not valid and reliable in evaluating ELs academic achievement/progress
5. Charter schools should be held accountable for practice, policies and funding for ELs' recruitment and participation in such schools
6. Legislation needs to be grounded in the ESL/bilingual research, not ideology
7. Apply research-based educational leadership practices to support the implementation of an EL change initiative
8. More explicit monitoring of the use of Title I and Title III funds for ELs

## **7 CIVIL RIGHTS OF ELS**

- 7.1 Civil Rights and National Origin (ELL) Student
- 7.2 Educating ELs as a Civil Rights Issue

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7.3 OCR and ELs

7.4 OCR Civil Rights Work and Case Processing

## Recommendations:

1. Streamline the process of complaints and compliance for OCR
2. Deter discriminatory practices, where it is not practiced effectively (non-discriminatory practice)
3. Monitor and provide guidance/technical assistance in charter schools that do not actively recruit ELs and provide EL services when ELs are present in such schools (at all levels; district, state, federal)
4. Create a more responsive means in identifying ELs for services that the parents can understand
5. Request that OCR provide clearer, more complete/detailed descriptions of resources in technical assistance calls
6. Obtain information from various resources to request OCR to revisit districts in an effort to maintain accountability

## **8 ELS AND EARLY LEARNING**

8.1 Early Childhood Bilingual Education

8.2 Oral Language Development PreK-1

8.3 Planning an English Language Program for Incoming Kindergartner

8.4 Preschool ELs

## Recommendations:

1. Develop standards for oral language assessments and markers of progress.
2. Develop new ELP assessments that are developmentally appropriate instruments for Pre-k and kindergarten levels.
3. Young EL students need intentional vocabulary instruction to promote content/concept development, and content/concept based vocabulary, phonemic awareness and native language support. to promote cognitive development and learning.
4. National organizations must develop EL/SpEd guidelines for identification of young ELs who are in need of special education services.

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5. Use parents in classroom and community organizations to supplement the native language support.
6. Educate parents and communities regarding the value of primary language, and provide guidance, support, and resources.

## 9 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT/ENGAGEMENT

- 9.1 Empowering EL Students and Their Families
- 9.2 Parent Engagement
- 9.3 Parent Involvement
- 9.4 Parent Involvement - Best Practices
- 9.5 Parents as Stakeholders

### Recommendations:

1. Building trust between parents and schools through cultural understanding by all school staff not just teaching staff
2. Communication with parents needs to move away from literal translation
3. Create a directory of organizations including a description of the organization in different languages that are helpful to parents. These directories should be given to parents and explained to them in the language they understand.
4. Educators must also be aware that the literacy level of some immigrant families may not be conducive to written communications; TV and radio may be more effective means of communicating

## 10 RESEARCH

- 10.1 Establishing a Current Research Agenda - Looking towards the Future
- 10.2 Secondary Education - Key Programs and Research

### Recommendations:

1. Establishing a current national research agenda that takes into account what we already know regarding best practices and effective programs/methodology and identifies areas of need.
2. Foster research collaborations between higher education institutions and school districts
3. Make research available to school districts, teachers, parents and communities- many do not have access to 'research journals' (website, ERIC etc.).

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4. Funding for developing and mentoring of new scholars (such as past Title VII fellows programs under IASA)
5. Study the various types of school and district dynamics specifically, on how emergent bilinguals are being educated along the various demographics (large vs. small schools/districts, urban vs. rural/suburban etc.) and identify successful models by characteristics and success ratios for educating ELLs at the public schools.
6. The 1996 National Academy of Science produced study on reaching emergent bilinguals in elementary settings and now replication of this study should be done at the secondary level. Also explore the effectiveness of various implementation models at the secondary level, i.e., leveling students by proficiency or not? How do 1 year/short-term/"newcomer" programs compare to 4 year programs in terms of results?
7. More research is needed to identify effective practices for ELLs in pre-K.
8. Create a national network of resources and research on Early Childhood / Bilingual issues, with localized sites that are sensitive to community values with responsive input from varied organizations.

## 11 ELS AND SPED

### 11.1 ELs and Special Education

### 11.2 ELLs in SPED

#### Recommendations:

1. Develop assessments that are able to distinguish between language acquisition barriers and cognitive disability, and also assist to identify what type of intervention/ services are required by the student. Approach the evaluation of the whole child centering on processes or influencing factors not present in the traditional assessment formats.
2. Require the coordination of efforts between ESL and Special Education teachers in order to provide the student with the best collaborative services.
3. Develop a standard assessment to be given by qualified professionals in order to prevent under and over identification of ELs as students with disabilities.
4. Address what standards and language proficiency trajectories are appropriate for ELs with disabilities.
5. Develop a way to ensure that placement services effectively identify the appropriate resources the student needs and ensure the student's parents/guardians understand their child's entitlement to services/resources.