

Guidance for Defining and Implementing Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) Programs

October 2019



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*and Transitional Bilingual Education*

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# Introduction to TBE[[1]](#footnote-1)

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This guidance begins with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s (DESE’s) [academic vision for all students.](http://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/)DESE grounded this vision in the belief that all students should experience a high-quality education, and it reflects the Commonwealth’s commitment to the academic success and immense potential of English Learners (ELs). Additionally, this guidance

Under state and federal law, English learners must be taught to the same academic standards and be provided the same opportunities to master such standards as other students (G.L. c. 71A, § 7; Equal Educational Opportunities Act, 20 USC § 1703(f); Title III of ESEA, as amended by ESSA, § 3102). Instruction provided to ELs must be meaningful and appropriate for their English language proficiency. level.

emphasizes the importance of maintaining an

asset-based approach that builds on the cultural and

linguistic strengths ELs bring to their school experiences.

We have an imperative to support ELs in our schools,

and we must continue to work to eliminate the existing

equity gaps experienced by ELs. The most recent data

demonstrates persistent access and equity gaps for ELs

when compared to their non-EL peers[[2]](#footnote-2):

* One in seven EL students drop out of high school, a rate that is nearly 3 times the average dropout rate.
* ELs are 70% more likely to be assigned to teachers rated “Needs Improvement” or “Unsatisfactory.”
* ELs are assigned to inexperienced teachers (those with less than three years of experience) 36% more often.
* ELs are assigned to teachers who do not hold the appropriate license for the class 2.59 times as often.

Governor Baker signed into law [An Act Relative to Language Opportunity for Our Kids](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2017/Chapter138) (LOOK Act) on November 22, 2017. The law provides districts with more flexibility as to the language acquisition programs[[3]](#footnote-3) they choose to meet the needs of ELs, while maintaining accountability for timely and effective English language acquisition.

State law and regulations[[4]](#footnote-4) require providing students classified as ELs an appropriate English learner education through a sheltered English immersion program or an alternative instructional program that meets the requirements of federal and state law (collectively referred to as “English Learner Education Programs”). Alternative instructional programs are defined as programs that, “include, but shall not be limited to transitional bilingual education and dual language education.”[[5]](#footnote-5)

There is ample evidence that bilingual education programs[[6]](#footnote-6) such as dual language programs are effective for both ELs and native English speakers[[7]](#footnote-7). Currently, less than 3% of ELs in Massachusetts are educated in bilingual education programs**.**

# Purpose and Audience

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DESE is issuing this updated guidance to assist school district personnel in planning and implementing Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) programs. TBE is an ELE program whereby the native language of the EL is used to support the student’s development of English and content learning and is then gradually phased out of instruction as a student’s English proficiency increases. Ultimately, its goal is for ELs to achieve long-term academic success through English- medium instruction[[8]](#footnote-8) in general education classrooms. TBE programs may be initiated at any level, including middle and high school, but it should not be used as a method of instruction for a student’s entire academic career.

**Purpose**

This document may be used as a tool for districts to plan TBE programs and ultimately to improve the education of ELs in TBE programs. More specifically, this guidance has the following purposes:

* Increase clarity about TBE programs.
* Identify essential linguistic and instructional features of TBE programs.
* Improve TBE program design, delivery, and ongoing evaluation to support ELs to meet college, career, and civic standards as described in the [Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html)

**Audience**

The primary intended audience for this guidance is district and school leaders and teams responsible for building, improving, and evaluating TBE programs and for developing the systems and strategies to support best practices.

A secondary audience includes educators seeking to deepen their understanding of TBE programs. Information in this guide may also be useful for family liaisons, community organizations, and parents/guardians who wish to learn more about how TBE programs are developed and structured.

# Dual Language Education Design Elements

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## **A Background in Program Foundations:**

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### **Castañeda**

Important federal and state laws, court decisions and policies shape TBE programs as we know them in Massachusetts today. In 1974, the United States Supreme Court affirmed the rights of ELs to have equal access to a meaningful opportunity to participate in educational programs in *Lau v. Nichols*.[[9]](#footnote-9)  In the *Castañeda v. Pickard* case in 1981, a court established a three-pronged test for determining the soundness of a program serving ELs, and whether schools are taking "appropriate action" to address their needs as required by the Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA).[[10]](#footnote-10)

|  |
| --- |
| **The Foundation: Castañeda’s Three-Pronged Test**   1. **Sound Theory:** The educational theory underlying the language assistance program is recognized as sound by some experts in the field or is considered a legitimate experimental strategy. 2. **Effective Implementation:** The program and practices used by the district are reasonably calculated to effectively implement the educational theory adopted by the district. 3. **Student Growth:** The program succeeds when producing results indicating that students’ language barriers are being overcome. |

*Castañeda* test does not mandate that a district or school use a particular method, language of instruction, or type of ELE program.

DESE recognizes three ELE program types as sound under prong one of the *Castañeda* test:

* [Two-Way Immersion (TWI)](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/guidance/default.html)
* Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE)
* [Sheltered English Immersion (SEI)](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/guidance/default.html?section=sei)

The Castañeda test serves as a foundation for the development of all ELE programs, including TBE programs. It can be a powerful tool for helping districts design, evaluate, and improve all ELE programs.

### **A Background in Program Foundations: Bilingualism, Bilingual Education and Dual**

### **Language Education (Sound Theory: Prong One)**

There is mounting evidence of the economic and cognitive value of bilingualism. Reviews of the research on bilingual education[[11]](#footnote-11) show that the most successful outcomes in English achievement, as measured by norm-referenced standardized tests, occur among ELs who receive instructional support in their home language.

Further, sustained and consistent bilingual education instruction benefits both English learners and native English speakers, and leads to achievement measured in English that is similar to or higher than that of matched groups who were in English mainstream programs[[12]](#footnote-12). Likewise, there is a sizeable body of research on the social benefits of bilingualism at both the individual and societal levels. “Indeed, language learning is not only a means to improve communication, but more importantly a key avenue to promoting global understanding.”[[13]](#footnote-13)

Bilingual education is an umbrella term for many types of programs, including TBE and dual language English learner education programs in which students receive instruction in the native language of the English learner to support the student’s development of English and content learning.

According to research, the term dual language program refers to any program that provides literacy and content instruction to all students through two languages and that promotes bilingualism and biliteracy, grade-level academic achievement, and sociocultural competence—a term encompassing identity development, cross-cultural competence, and multicultural appreciation—for all students. Dual language programs can be either two-way immersion[[14]](#footnote-14) or one-way immersion[[15]](#footnote-15).

Unlike in dual language programs, in TBE programs, native language instruction is gradually phased out as a student’s English language proficiency increases. Transitional BE programs may be initiated at any level, including middle and high school, but it should not be the method of instruction for a student’s entire academic career.

Two important principles of bilingual education contribute to successful programs.[[16]](#footnote-16)

* First, bilingual approaches should be consistently used when working with ELs in order to allow students’ cognitive and social emotional development to be continuous.[[17]](#footnote-17)

As students are learning English and doing school work in English, they are engaged in age-appropriate learning tasks in their home language that are cognitively challenging and encourage critical thinking.

* Second, bilingual education programs take advantage of the phenomenon of *transfer,* in which students use the knowledge and skills developed through one language when learning in another language. Bilingual educators leverage this phenomenon by strategically building on and extending skills and content learned in one language while teaching in the other language.[[18]](#footnote-18)

The goal of transitional bilingual education is to help transition a student into an English-only classroom as soon as appropriate. The **goal is not** for students to become biliterate.

* A bilingual education teacher instructs children in subjects such as math, literacy, science and social studies in their native language while the student also becomes more English proficient, so that once the student is transitioned to an English-only classroom, the student has the knowledge necessary to attain grade-level content and skills in all subject areas.

Research has shown that many of the skills learned in the native language can be transferred easily to the second language later.

A Transitional Bilingual Education program is a teaching model with two foci:

1. To ensure that students master educational content in their home language;
2. To assist students in becoming fluent in English.

The idea behind this program is that students who are first fluent in their native language are more capable of then becoming fluent in English. The skills they learn in their native language can be translated into English.

### **Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) Program Design and Elements**

### **(Prong One):**

TBE programs enroll ELs who speak a common home language. It is important to recognize that ELs may vary in a number of other important areas, including country of origin, home language literacy experiences, prior schooling experiences, individual learning needs, and level of English proficiency.[[19]](#footnote-19)

TBE programs can start or end at any grade level, according to individual student performance patterns and needs, and based on district policy.

As such, TBE programs have the flexibility to support more transient student populations. Generally, programs that target early exit from TBE (early-exit programs) transition students to Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) programs. Students from early-exit models are still English learners (ELs) and should receive EL services.

Students with an overall score of 1.0-3.4 on the [ACCESS for ELLs](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/access/) require significant support to access the content area instruction delivered in English. Such students should remain classified as ELs. For more information, please refer to the Guidance on Identification, Assessment, Placement, and Reclassification of English Language Learners.

Students with an overall score of 3.5-4.1 on the ACCESS for ELLs require continued language and instructional support to access content area instruction delivered in English. Such students should remain classified as ELs. TBE programs that target late exit students (late-exit programs) reclassify[[20]](#footnote-20) English learners (ELs) as Former English Learners (FELs) and transition them to a general education classroom. FELs do not receive EL services but their academic progress is routinely monitored for 4 years.

### **Essential Features of Effective TBE Programs (Effective Implementation:**

### **Prong Two):**

TBE programs are designed to respond flexibly to students at different English proficiency levels, who are fluent in their home language. Typically, in TBE programs, initial content and literacy instruction is in the student’s home language, paired with systematic and sequential ESL instruction.[[21]](#footnote-21) Teachers leverage students’ linguistic and cultural resources to support language and literacy development and grade-level-appropriate content learning.

In TBE programs, initial instruction occurs primarily in the home language, with a small amount of English instruction that increases from year to year until students are able to successfully achieve in classrooms where the sole language of instruction is English.

The amount of time used for content instruction in the home language and English varies according to the students’ English language proficiency and grade levels. The ratio of home language instruction progressively decreases as the ratio of English instruction increases, until instruction in the home language is phased out altogether.

**Key features include:**

1. Clear articulation of the role and use of students’ home language and English to support language and literacy development and mastery of grade-level content;
2. Integration of students in the TBE program to the largest extent possible without compromising the integrity of their education; and
3. High academic expectations for all students.

**The following chart is a breakdown example of instructional time in both languages for students whose home language is Spanish:**

**Instructional Time**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Grade Level* | *Spanish* | *English* | *Daily English* |
| Kindergarten | 90% | 10% | 45 Minutes |
| First Grade | \*50% | \*50% | 3.5 Hours |
| Second Grade | \*10% | \*90% | 6 Hours |

**\*Percentage reflects what instruction will be at the END of the academic school year.**

Students in TBE programs come from different schooling experiences and have developed cognitively and culturally different ways of understanding and interpreting the world around them. Instruction needs to encompass and address students’ cultural, learning, and social-emotional (e.g., trauma and acculturation) experiences. Academic growth, while expected of all students, is accessible for TBE students through cognitively challenging and meaningful academic work in students’ home language along with content taught through English.

When instructing in the students’ home language, teachers should acknowledge the educational practices from students’ native countries and cultures. Instructional plans should bridge what students know and can do from their former schooling experience to their schooling experience in the United States. Building upon the student’s language and cultural assets is essential to a smoother and more effective transition into general education.

**What you should know about TBE:**

* The goal of TBE programs is for students to achieve long-term academic success through English-medium instruction in general education classrooms.
* Due to the passage of the LOOK Act, there is no longer a legal requirement for a waiver to be obtained for students to be able to attend TBE programs.
* TBE programs enroll ELs from a single home-language background, though there will be a range of levels of proficiency in both English and the home language due to prior literacy and learning experiences and other factors.
* Language of Instruction: General education curriculum is learned through two languages until the student is able to learn in English only. Initial instruction is typically in the student’s home language with a gradual transition to increasing levels of English instruction. The desired outcome is high levels of academic achievement in English. Therefore, sufficient time is required to achieve this outcome. Although the home language is used for instructional purposes, the transitional nature of the program does not support the further development of the students’ home language. TBE programs can be initiated at any level, including middle and high school.
* Duration of the program: Students typically enter the program at their time of entry into the district, which typically coincides with their time of identification as ELs. Students exit the program when they demonstrate sufficient proficiency in English to perform grade-level work in the general education classroom.
* Example of language use in TBE early and late-exit bilingual:

| Early-Exit Bilingual | Late-Exit Bilingual | Sheltered English Immersion |
| --- | --- | --- |
| The partner language is used about one-third of the time in kindergarten and first grade with a rapid phase-out thereafter. In grade 2 or 3, students are transitioned to Sheltered English Immersion classrooms. | The partner language is used about one-third of the time in kindergarten and first grade with increasing amounts of English instruction thereafter up to about sixty percent or almost exclusively in grades 5 and 6. | Involves almost exclusive use of English also known as Sheltered English Instruction. |

* Results from studies conclude that students in TBE early-exit are transitioned to Sheltered English Immersion classrooms by grade two or three and students in TBE late-exit are transitioned to Sheltered English Immersion classrooms by grade five or six. Transitioning late-exit students to Sheltered English Immersion instruction classrooms abruptly compromises the integrity of the late-exit model and makes the late-exit program similar in implementation to early-exit. A study from Ramirez (1991) concluded that in late-exit programs, at-risk students in terms of socio-economic status appear to be gaining on students in the general population. Students who received the strongest opportunity to develop their home language skills realized a growth in their English reading skills that was greater than that of the norming population used in his study.”
* Ramirez found that students in late-exit sites who were abruptly transitioned into almost all-English instruction in the early grades (in similar fashion to early-exit students) seemed to lose ground in relation to the general population between grades 3 and 6 in mathematics, English language and reading. This is evidence that suggests that when ELs receive most of their instruction in their home language, they should not be abruptly transferred into a program that uses only English.
* Ramirez also discovered that parents of children in the late-exit bilingual programs are more aware that their children have homework and more likely to help them with it. According to Ramirez’s report, "this is attributed to the fact that the greater use of the child's home language makes it possible for parents to participate and support their child's learning." (Cummings & Genzuk, 1991)[[22]](#footnote-22)
* Ramirez’s report demonstrates that sustained promotion of children’s home language can be an effective route both to academic excellence and literacy in two languages, and it has refuted the notion that intensive exposure to English is the best way of teaching language to minority children. (Cummings & Genzuk, 1991)

# Instructional Models for Elementary and Secondary Levels:

# (Prong Two)

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## **TBE Program Models (Early Exit vs. Late Exit Models):**

Within the TBE classroom, there are two main models of instruction dependent on the students' language proficiency:

The main goal of the *early-exit model* is to expedite the acquisition of the second language so that ELs can be integrated into classrooms with native speakers of English. This model uses ELs' first language as a foundation for building English language competency. Students receive instruction in both languages to progress academically and prepare to transfer rapidly to a mainstream classroom with English native speakers of English in an SEI setting. The program can last from one to four years, usually from kindergarten to third or fourth grade. As students' competence in English increases, it gradually takes the place of the first language, so English is often taught at the expense of the first language. As a result, ordinarily students do not exit the program truly bilingual.

**Implementation of Early-Exit Bilingual Programs**

ELs who share the same first language are grouped in the same classroom. They have bilingual teachers who teach content subjects such as math and science in either the students' first language or in English. Districts may vary in the amount of first-language instruction that is utilized; however, the degree to which the ELs’ first language is spoken in the classroom depends on the proficiency level of the ELs who generally require more instruction in their native language at earlier grade levels. In kindergarten, the average length of instruction in the first language may be approximately one hour to 90% of the school day. The amount of time spent teaching in the first language is then reduced in grades 1 and 2. Although ELs may be instructed in the language arts of both first and second languages simultaneously, instruction in reading in the second language doesn't typically begin until students meet the standards for reading in their first language. As ELs make progress in their second language, it becomes increasingly incorporated into the core content curriculum, gradually taking the place of the first language. A key component of the program is to teach the students’ culture, and this is done through classroom activities and materials.

The main goal of the ***late-exit model*** is to facilitate understanding of all core content subjects while maintaining use of the students' native language, allowing a greater transitional period during which students acquire the second language at a slower pace. Unlike the early-exit model, more time and attention is given to mastering literacy in the students' home language to support new learning in the second language. Students typically spend a greater deal of time--especially in elementary school--learning in their native language. In late-exit transitional programs, the transition may take up to six years. The more closely ELs’ prior experiences and background knowledge align with the academic and other expectations of U.S. schools, the more likely it is that the ELs can move through the program quickly. Students who may have limited or interrupted formal education (“SLIFE”) need more time. A gradual transition of at least four to six years is may be optimal to provide these students with the necessary support for academic success.

**Implementation of Late-Exit TBE Bilingual Programs**

Like in early-exit programs, ELs who share the same first language are grouped in the same classroom and they have bilingual teachers who teach content subjects such as math and science in either the students' first language or in English. Both languages are used in the classroom; however, unlike early-exit programs, instruction in content areas is conducted in the first language for a longer period of time. A key difference between early- and late-exit programs is that late-exit programs generally span five to seven years, whereby it is more likely that students become truly bilingual when they exit the program. As ELs make progress in their second language it gradually takes the place of the first language. Like early-exit programs, a key component of the late-exit program is to help ELs to be proficient in their native language and bridge the academic gap between themselves and English only students.

No matter the model, TBE programs can start or end at any grade level. They have the flexibility to support more transient student populations, as the program design allows students to enter at any time and exit at any time according to individual performance patterns.

# Instructional Practices (Prong Two):

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TBE program teachers should strategically develop plans for the use of two languages for content and language/literacy instruction. They make curriculum content learned in one language accessible in the other language (*transfer*). Making connections between what students learn in each language is a core practice in both programs to enhance learning. Language is a means of communication that students need to learn to use appropriately across a wide range of social and academic contexts. Literacy development is an interactive process of making meaning from text. However, the extent to which each language students use (as well as the purpose for that use) is different in each program.

Student characteristics that inform the pathway[[23]](#footnote-23) designation for students are:

* prior schooling,
* background knowledge, and
* evidence of traumatic experiences

The closer the student’s prior experiences and background knowledge align with the academic and other expectations of U.S. schools, the more likely it is that they can move through the program at a more rapid pace. Students who do not have these characteristics may need more time. Some ELs have experienced significant trauma prior to their arrival in the United States that may affect their trajectory through the program. For these students, appropriate social emotional supports related to their traumatic experiences are essential to give them access to the curriculum.

“Children experiencing some type of trauma are likely to struggle in school with language and communication, attentiveness to classroom tasks, regulating emotions, and engaging in the curriculum” (see [Trauma Sensitive Schools](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/tss.html)).

That said, ELs in TBE programs must receive instruction in all of the following areas:

* English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction to help develop students’ English language proficiency;
* All core subjects (math, science, social science) provided in both English and the native language; and
* And all other programs available in their districts.

**English as Second Language (ESL) also referred to as English Language Development (ELD)**

In TBE programs, there must always be time devoted to the explicit instruction of the language forms and features of English. Transitional bilingual programs tend to use the term “ELD” to refer to the English language instructional component of the program, because all students, not just ELs, receive English language instruction (in addition to content delivered in English). The state currently uses the term “ESL.”

The exact structure and format of this instruction varies based on program model. ESL is a required component for all ELE programs to meet the needs of ELs participating in the district’s TBE program. (For more information, please refer to the following:

1. Next Generation ESL Project: Model Curriculum Units and

2. Guidance on Identification, Assessment, Placement, and Reclassification of English Language Learners).

**In Massachusetts, instruction for ELs in a TBE program should be designed around two main building blocks:**

TBE Program

A two-component program model

**TBE**

Taught by core academic teachers (CATs) who hold the Bilingual Education Endorsement (BEE). See 603 CMR 7.15(9)(c)1.a.(“ A core academic teacher responsible for the instructional component provided in a language other than English must hold the Bilingual Education Endorsement.”)

**English as a Second Language (ESL)**

Taught by ESL-licensed teacher.

Additional linguistic support ELs need through systematic, explicit, sustained focus on language and literacy in the context of the [Frameworks](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/).

Occurs for a specific amount of time each day or week, as determined appropriate by the school, according to the student’s needs.

# Support and Resources: (Effective Implementation: Prong

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Administrators, teachers, and staff in TBE programs should understand and support the mission and goals of the program. All program personnel should have a deep understanding of the theoretical rationale of transitional bilingual education and be able to implement the chosen program model with fidelity.

Additionally, it is crucial that supervising administrators, teachers, and specialists have appropriate Massachusetts licenses and endorsements. These personnel and support staff (e.g., office staff, assistant teachers, and parent liaisons) should also have knowledge of sociocultural competence as well as the educational theory of bilingualism and biliteracy. TBE programs should be made up of diverse communities of linguistically and culturally aware educators who come together to reflect, support, and learn from each other as they negotiate and monitor the similarities and differences across instruction in two languages and cultures.

**District Commitment: Actions and Policies to Enact**

A district-level commitment to supporting TBE is essential. Districts can demonstrate this commitment by establishing policies that are inclusive of the goals and essential elements of the program. Examples of this commitment include the following:

* Carefully reviewing demographic data to consider trends and changes in linguistic populations;
* Providing assessment instruments to assess students in both languages of instruction;
* Ensuring that there is a commitment by staff to the program goals at the district and school levels;
* Allocating appropriate and equitable funding for teacher hiring and training, curriculum and classroom materials, initial program planning, and resources for parent engagement;
* Providing training relating to sociocultural competence, such as training related to racial and linguistic equity;
* Equitably meeting the needs of TBE programs through all district-level departments (student services, curriculum, professional development and human resources);
* Appointing school leaders who have the training and expertise to develop and articulate a clear vision for the program;
* Providing ongoing professional development specifically designed for TBE administrators, teachers, and staff;
* Creating a well-established parent information center, including trained bilingual/multicultural staff, to meet with parents to discuss and explain TBE program options; and
* Making written materials with the definition and program features of TBE programs available to parents in all partner languages.

**School Leadership**

TBE programs generally operate as a strand within a school. Collaboration among TBE, TWI, ESL and SEI teachers is important for integrating the TBE program into the school. In districts where a DLE program is available, parents have the right to submit a request for their children to move to the TWI program upon exiting TBE, regardless of the DLE program’s school location. Please look [here](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/resources.html?section=transfer) for the form parents are required to fill out.

It is important to have culturally and linguistically knowledgeable school leaders (e.g., principal, assistant principal, instructional coach) who are responsible for the day-to-day decision-making and operation of the TBE program. In some cases, the principal may designate a TBE program coordinator who supervises and oversees the program. First and foremost, school leaders should possess the commitment and confidence to facilitate the success of the selected TBE program model. The principal, program coordinator, instructional coaches, and teacher leaders should have knowledge of second language development as well as bilingual education theory and research. They should also have the ability to navigate cross-cultural differences and intergroup experiences, the awareness of how to build equity across languages, and familiarity with instructional methodologies and effective classroom practices in a TBE setting.

**Teacher and Administrator Qualifications**

One critical consideration in launching a TBE program is the hiring and placement of qualified bilingual education teachers. As in any quality education program, teachers must possess knowledge of the subject matter, curriculum, instructional strategies, methods of differentiation, and assessment.

A core academic teacher assigned to provide instruction in a bilingual setting to an EL in a language other than English must be properly qualified in the field and grade level of the assignment, and hold the [Bilingual Education Endorsement](http://www.doe.mass.edu/licensure/endorsements/bilingual-ed.html). A core academic teacher assigned to provide instruction in a bilingual setting to an EL in English, as well as certain administrators supervising/evaluating core academic teachers in bilingual settings with ELs, must also be properly qualified in the field and grade level of the assignment, but may hold either the Bilingual Education or SEI Endorsement.

# Family and Community

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Districts must inform parents and guardians of ELs of their child’s rights to language supports that will allow the child to participate meaningfully in school programs and activities. At the intake process, language assessment specialists should meet with parents and explain the results of the intake bilingual assessments, either in the home language or in English, and discuss the program and recommendation for placement in the TBE program. Parents should have the opportunity to ask clarifying questions about the TBE program and visit the TBE program. As part of this process, TBE leaders and teachers provide additional opportunities for parents to learn more about the U.S. education system, e.g., describing the structure of the typical school day, curriculum content and goals and existing resources in the district as well as school-wide expectations. Additionally, just as students may experience trauma, families may need social-emotional support to help their children succeed in school. Schools can serve as a conduit for families to access community resources.

Parents should have access to information about what constitutes a quality, well-implemented TBE program so they can support the program and their child’s successful participation in the program.

At the time of enrollment, parents of students in TBE programs should be informed that instruction in the home language is a support to stay on track with academics while learning English and that continued development of the home language is not a goal of the program.

Examples of parent education may include: transitional bilingual education curriculum and instructional nights; provision of TBE program handbooks; and specific parent and community trainings in areas such as English language acquisition in the primary grades, promoting bilingualism for students with special needs, understanding the benefits of bilingualism and biliteracy, differences between additive and subtractive ELE programs and avenues for parent/teacher partnership in a TBE program. Information for families on bilingual education is available from a number of websites in a number of languages.

TBE programs offer parents and community members the opportunity to interact at the school and district levels with trained bilingual staff who are proficient in their home languages. In building school/family partnerships, it is critical that school authorities encourage parents of students who speak the partner language to be involved in school governance, such as school-site councils. Parents of students who speak the partner language should also be recruited to be involved in the school’s volunteer program, in the identification and integration of resources from the community, and in the overall advocacy of the program’s goals and success.

**Implementing TBE programs for ELs (Effective Implementation):**

As in other ELE programs, districts must annually assess ELs’ language proficiency and academic achievement to determine whether such students are able to do regular schoolwork in English, and to remove the English learner classification once ELs demonstrate the ability to do regular schoolwork in English.

Another term used to refer to the process of removing a student’s EL classification is “reclassification.” Exit from EL status is a high-stakes decision because a premature exit may place a student who still has linguistic needs at risk of academic failure, while unnecessary prolongation of EL status (particularly at the secondary level) can limit educational opportunities, lower teacher expectations, and demoralize students. ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 is the state’s language proficiency assessment, and districts must first consider the results of ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 to identify students as candidates for reclassification. School-based teams may also consider other relevant data to determine whether students can perform ordinary classroom work in English, and whether or not such students should exit the ELE program (see [Guidance on Identification, Assessment, Placement, and Reclassification of English Language Learners](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/guidance/default.html?section=guidance)). It is a violation of EEOA if districts fail to exit ELs from a language acquisition program after they have acquired English proficiency.

**Exiting Process in TBE**

Given the diversity in TBE program models, the individual trajectory for students to exit the program will vary as it is dependent upon student’s acquisition of English proficiency.

Districts must develop a process that supports students transitioning from the TBE program to an SEI classroom and, upon reclassification as Former ELs, to general education classrooms.

In districts where a TWI or SEI program is available, parents have the right to submit a request for their children to move to the TWI or SEI program not only upon exiting TBE, but also at any point in their child’s education.

Assessment and Accountability: (Prong Three)

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As with all educational programs, assessment and accountability take place at the state, district, program, and student levels. The focus of assessment at each of these levels varies, but overall assessment is essential for ensuring the quality of programs, growth of student learning, guiding instruction, and program and professional development.

Utilizing both formative and summative assessment provides a complete picture of student learning over time.[[24]](#footnote-24) Teachers should be skilled in using a variety of formative assessments to document the language and literacy development of their students, differentiate future instruction, and provide immediate feedback to students. Districts should be flexible in their interpretations of summative assessments that were designed for monolingual populations and programs. A resource for understanding formative and summative assessments can be found in the [WIDA Bulletin Focus on Formative Assessment](https://wida.wisc.edu/grow/pl/us-based-pl/formative-language-assessment).

TBE programs use assessment for a variety of purposes including identification and classification, progress monitoring and reclassification. At the outset, assessments in both English and the home language are used to accurately determine baseline language and literacy levels as well as academic content knowledge of participating students, in order to identify needs and build upon strengths. During the time of home language instruction, both literacy and content assessments in the home language should be administered along with summative and formative assessments in English. By the time of program exit, assessments are conducted almost exclusively in English. In order to be reclassified as fully English proficient and transition to a general education classroom, students must demonstrate both advanced levels of academic English proficiency as well as grade-level academic achievement (i.e. proficiency in MCAS ELA) as measured by standardized assessments. Please refer to the [Guidance on Identification, Assessment, Placement, and Reclassification of English Language Learners](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/guidance/default.html)

As noted earlier, the LOOK Act creates a new opportunity for districts to consider the programmatic needs of ELs. DESE encourages all districts to take stock of their current English Learner Education programs to ensure they are optimal for supporting ELs to develop their English language skills while they access grade-level content. For more information, please refer to this [Quick Reference Guide (QRG).](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/resources.html?section=proposal)

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# Appendices

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[Appendix A. Glossary of Key Terms](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/programs/tbe-app-a.docx)

[Appendix B. Side-by-Side Comparison Guide of Two-Way Immersion and TBE](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/programs/tbe-app-b.docx)



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Jeffrey C. Riley

Commissioner

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1. Chapter 71A of the General Laws, as amended by Chapter 138 of the Acts of 2017, defines “alternative instructional programs” for English Learners as programs that, “include, but shall not be limited to transitional bilingual education and dual language education.”\*

   \*“Transitional bilingual education” programs are designed to allow English learners to achieve long-term academic success through English-medium instruction in general education classrooms; provided, however, that the native language of the English learner is used to support the student’s development of English and content learning and is then gradually phased out of instruction as a student’s English proficiency increases; and provided further, that “transitional bilingual education” may be initiated at any level, including middle and high school, but shall not be intended as a method of instruction for a student’s entire academic career. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See, for example, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine’s [Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English: Promising Futures](https://www.nap.edu/catalog/24677/promoting-the-educational-success-of-children-and-youth-learning-english) (2017) as well as [DESE’s Policy Brief: Teacher Equity Gaps in Massachusetts](http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/reports/2017/10teacher-equity.docx) (2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This guidance document is intended to address transitional bilingual education programs (TBE) as defined in G.L. c. 71A, § 2. The Department has posted guidance on [two-way immersion](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/guidance/default.html) and anticipates issuing guidance in the future relating to one-way immersion programs. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. G.L.c.71A, § 4 and state regulations 603 CMR 14.04. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Dual Language Education programs are programs “designed to promote bilingualism and biliteracy, cross-cultural competency and high levels of academic achievement for both native English speakers and English learners from a single language background; provided, however, that students shall develop and maintain their first language while adding a second language and shall receive the same core curriculum as all students in the state; provided further, that the instruction for such students shall be provided in two languages throughout the program; and…may begin in the early grades, including pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, and may continue through the secondary level.” M.G.L. c. 71A, § 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Bilingual education programs involve teaching academic content in two languages, English and another language. Program types determine the varying amounts of each language used in instruction. Bilingual education programs include dual language education or two-way immersion and transitional bilingual education programs, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71A, § 2, and any other bilingual program types that may be approved by the Department. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Howard, Sugarman, & Christian, 2003; Lindhom-Leary, 2001; Steele, et al., 2017; Thomas & Collier, 2012 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. “English-medium instruction is one that uses English as the primary medium of instruction—particularly where English is not the mother tongue of the students.” [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. *Lau v. Nichols*, 414 U.S. 563 (1974). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. *Castañeda v. Pickard*, 648 F.2d 989 (5th Cir. 1981). See also: see: [English Learner Tool Kit for SEAs and LEA](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/eltoolkit.pdf)s, chapter 2; [Guidance on Identification, Assessment, Placement, and Reclassification of English Learners](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/guidance/?section=guidance). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. August, McCardle, & Shanahan, 2014; August & Shanahan, 2006; Genesee et al., 2006; Lindholm-Leary & Genesee, 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. August, McCardle, & Shanahan, 2014; Genesee et al., 2006; Howard, Christian, & Genesee, 2004; Jepsen, 2009; Lindholm-Leary & Genesee, 2010; Steele et al., 2017; Thomas & Collier, 2012; Thompson, 2015; Umansky & Reardon, 2014 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Della Chiesa, B., J. Scott and C. Hinton (Eds.), 2012

    Languages in a global world: Learning for better cultural understanding (p. 472). OECD Publishing, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264123557-en> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Two-Way Immersion (TWI) programs typically include approximately an equal number of students who are monolingual or dominant in English at the time of enrollment and students who are monolingual or dominant in the partner language at the time of enrollment. There may also be students who have proficiency in both languages at the time of enrollment. In TWI programs, no less than one third and no more than two thirds of the student population are monolingual or dominant in either English or the partner language at the time of enrollment. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. One-Way (OWI) programs serve more linguistically homogeneous groups of students. One-way dual language programs in which all students are proficient in the partner language but not in English at the time of enrollment have historically been called developmental bilingual programs. They use both languages to teach content, and they help students develop proficiency in English while maintaining and continuing to develop their skills in their home language. One-way dual language programs in which all students are monolingual or dominant in English at the time of enrollment have historically been called foreign or world language immersion [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Cummins, J. (2012). The intersection of cognitive and sociocultural factors in the development of reading comprehension among immigrant students. *Reading and Writing*, *25* (2012) 1973—1990. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. García, O., Johnson, S. I., & Seltzer, K. (2016). *The translanguaging classroom: Leveraging student bilingualism for learning.* Philadelphia, PA: Caslon Publishing. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Thomas, W. & Collier, V. (2012). *Dual language education for a transformed world*. Albuquerque, NM: Dual Language Education of New Mexico—Fuente Press. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. [WIDA Bulletin Focus on language & Culture, May 6, 2009, Volume 1, Issue 2](https://edu.wyoming.gov/downloads/federally-funded-programs/title-iii/wida-focus-language-and-culture.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. <http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/guidance/default.html?section=guidance> [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. “Sequential ESL Instruction means that first language and ESL complement each other and also overlap. Sometimes literature refers to bilingual learners as “sequential bilinguals” which means individuals who learn one language at birth and acquire a second language at some point in their lives.” [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Cummings, J., Genzuk, M. Analysis of final report longitudinal study of structured English strategy, early-exit and late-exit transitional bilingual education programs for language-minority children: Reprinted from the California Association for Bilingual Education Newsletter, Vol. 13, No. 5, March/April, 1991. Retrieved from: http://www-bcf.usc.edu/~genzuk/Ramirez\_report.html. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Learning pathway is a chosen program, taken by a learner which allows them to grow linguistically and academically. Current practice acknowledges two transition models as pathways: early-exit and late-exit. However, best practice endorses a student-centered approach to determine an effective pathway for students “to perform ordinary classroom work in English without significant instructional support”, e.g., without adapted or simplified language structures or materials. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. <http://www.ccsso.org/resource-library/formative-assessment-examples-practice> [↑](#footnote-ref-24)