NOVATO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

# Essential Practices for ELL Achievement

In the current context of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), our English Language Learners are expected to meet the same academic demands as their peers, with a new emphasis on using sophisticated language to articulate thinking and reasoning in ways that are specific to each subject area. The challenges are great, but so are the opportunities. The following essential practices summarize our theory of change to ensure our ELLs are on track to graduate college, career, and community ready. They are designed to both guide and hold accountable all NUSD educators as we take **collective** responsibility for the academic, linguistic, and socio-emotional needs of our ELLs.

**We are guided by three belief statements:**

- **ALL educators are responsible for the language development of ELLs.**
- **English Language Learners bring tremendous assets to their learning and that of the community.**
- **English Language Learners *can* achieve at high-levels and graduate college, career, and community ready.**



## 1. ASSET-BASED APPROACH: Leverage the linguistic and cultural assets of our students and ensure that students are active contributors to their own learning and that of their community.

- Provide rigorous bilingual education programs for ELLs aimed at fostering biliteracy (e.g., One-way or Two-way Dual Language).
- Educate the community on the merits of and criteria for the California Seal of Biliteracy. Encourage ELLs to set a goal for the attainment of the Seal of Biliteracy (e.g. 9th grade plan). Award students who meet the criteria.
- Foster the teaching community's awareness of the linguistic and cultural assets students bring and use these to inform instructional delivery (e.g., tapping into prior knowledge and experiences, making explicit connections between material and students' home cultures). See ideas here and use our asset-based cards in PD and coaching.
- Provide opportunities and strategies for students to leverage their home language as a resource for learning regardless of language program.

**For high school:**

- Increase offerings of World Language Advanced Placement (AP) courses**.** Offer heritage language classes such as EPH (Español para Hispanos) as a bridge to AP courses.
- Provide high school pathway options that leverage and develop students' bilingual and biliteracy skills (e.g., Bilingual Education Pathway, Bilingual Health Pathway).
- Provide opportunities for dual enrollment in community college courses such as translation and interpretation and medical Spanish.

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## 2. **WHOLE CHILD:** Leverage family and community supports. Activate resources to address the unmet, non-academic needs that hinder ELLs' ability to thrive in school.

- Ensure there is a welcoming and nurturing environment that builds inclusiveness and encourages risk-taking.
- Address issues of bullying and exclusion on the basis of language and culture through anti-bullying curriculum and Restorative practices.
- Partner with social service and mental-health organizations to integrate school and community-based support for long-term and newcomer ELLs and their families. Ensure services are culturally sensitive.
- Engage families as active participants and contributors to the school community.
- Provide families accessible and thorough information and engage them in making informed decisions about program options for their children.
- Ensure families are aware of district and community-based resources available to them and are connected with staff at the site-level.
- Support newcomer families in understanding the U.S. school system and in becoming advocates for their children.
- Utilize the afterschool program to provide extended learning and increased opportunities for student engagement and language development.



## 3. **ACCESS & RIGOR:** Ensure all English Language Learners have full access to and engagement in the academic demands of Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, and California's 2012 English Language Development Standards.

- Ensure instruction for all ELLs is aligned to grade-level standards in all content areas.
- Provide complex texts and tasks for ELLs in all content areas that engage ELLs in all four levels of Depths of Knowledge (DOK).
- Enrich and amplify instruction so that all students are supported with appropriate levels of scaffolding and rich, multiple entry points into a curriculum that emphasizes depth over breadth.
- Ensure ELLs receive **both** English Language Arts and English Language Development.
- Minimize isolation of ELLs; maximize inclusion in mixed fluency-level settings and groupings.
- Provide high-quality instructional and support services to ELLs with disabilities in alignment with their IEPs. CDE-California Practitioners' Guide for Educating English Learners with Disabilities (Chapter 2)
- Engage ELLs in first-hand experiences that make the path to college and career tangible and achievable.

**At high school:**

- Ensure ELLs have full access to A-G credit-bearing classes.
- Ensure ELLs have the opportunity to enroll in a Linked Learning Pathway.

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## 4. **INTEGRATED and DESIGNATED ELD:** Ensure ELLs receive daily Designated ELD and Integrated ELD in every content area.

- Provide **Integrated ELD** that:
    - has clear articulation, instruction, and assessment of content and language objectives.
    - provides students appropriate levels of language-focused scaffolds in content area instruction.
    - intentionally develops students' academic language and literacy specific to each discipline (language of math, science, history, etc.)
    - requires ample oral and written production of language.
    - intentionally incorporates the High Impact Language Practices (fortify complex output, academic discussion, use complex text) into content-area instruction. Teach conversation skills and provide opportunities to practice.

- Provide daily **Designated English Language Development** that:
    - is aligned to the California ELD Standards, emphasizing Part II, How English Works.
    - focuses on communicative purposes, not on discrete grammar instruction.
    - addresses speaking, listening, reading and writing.
    - is explicitly connected to grade-level content, topics, and texts.
    - includes systematic development of academic vocabulary.
    - requires students to spend **at least 50%** of instructional time producing oral and written language.

- Provide ALL teachers school-wide professional development and on-going coaching on language instruction: California ELD Standards, ELA/ELD framework, focused language study, developing language and content objectives and designing aligned instruction, high impact language practices, ensuring equitable participation, and using appropriate levels of scaffolding.

- Provide opportunities for teachers to work together to identify the language demands in the content area standards and curriculum.

## 5. **DATA-DRIVEN DECISIONS**: Make programmatic, placement, and instructional decisions for English Language Learners that are grounded in regular analysis of evidence.

- Use student-focused observation to collect qualitative data and to monitor engagement, participation and language use of ELLs in the content classes.
- Ensure ELLs are placed in courses based on **multiple** factors
- Establish clear entrance and exit criteria for ELD or intervention courses and use data to make ongoing, flexible placement decisions.
- Engage all ELLs and their families in reflection and goal-setting at least 2x/year.

- Monitor progress of ELLs and recently reclassified students (within the last four years) to ensure they are on-track to college and career readiness. Provide targeted support and intervention as appropriate.
- Partner with Resource Specialists and psychologists to ensure timely and accurate identification of students with disabilities.