The Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education (CLDE) Office (www.cde.state.co.us/cde_english) has developed 2019-2020 Interim Distance Learning Guidance to address English learners (ELs) during school closures and distance learning. The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) will continue to work with the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) and the U.S. Department of Education (USED) to develop, modify, and evaluate interim guidance and policies that impact instruction of ELs during the suspension of in-person learning. CDE will continue the development of this document as new information and federal and state guidance are made available.

Districts and schools that have agreements with the Department of Justice and/or Office for Civil Rights related to English learners and programming for this group of students should work directly with those agencies to determine the appropriate instructional program to provide.

Creating Systemic Distance Learning Plans for EL Success

In these unprecedented times caused by the rapidly changing COVID-19 pandemic, many districts and schools have developed, or are in the process of developing distance learning plans. CDE has provided guidance (www.cde.state.co.us/safeschools) to districts to continue delivering high-quality educational opportunities to students, to the extent feasible through, among other options, distance learning and/or independent study. In the development of interim instructional plans, districts must make every effort to continue to provide instructional services that include English language development (ELD) and access to grade level content and instruction for identified English learners (ELs). Federal Office for Civil Rights and Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) laws, as well as Colorado state statute, require that districts and schools provide a program for ELs, distinct from literacy instruction, that supports EL students’ development of English, as part of Tier 1 instruction. In addition to providing ELD, districts and schools share an equally critical responsibility in providing access to grade level content and instruction. Grade level content needs to be provided with adequate scaffolds and supports that English learners need to access the grade level content being provided by distance programming. Districts should also consider how their interim professional learning is addressing the needs of ELs in distance programming.

Planning can be difficult given the constantly evolving COVID-19 pandemic. With that in mind, a district's distance learning plan for instruction of English learners should continue to evolve, both in the short-term and long-term. While many EL students have access to devices and the internet at home, districts/schools should consider whether its distance learning strategy would be effective and then consider how to provide equitable access to EL students without access. Equitable access does not require that all students receive instruction in the same format (e.g., online instruction). Districts should consider the individual learning needs of students in determining how to best meet individual needs. ELD plans will need to be adjusted as local circumstances change, with the focus on ensuring and improving equitable opportunities are provided to all students. For the most current guidance from CDE regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, visit the CDE COVID Policy Guidance Page at www.cde.state.co.us/safeschools/policyguidancefromcde.

While many English learners may benefit from accessing learning through alternative learning platforms, it is important to consider the unique learning needs and supports that are necessary for language development. Accordingly, although distance learning may provide a valuable alternative during uncertain times of physical school closures, it is important to evaluate a student’s progress toward language acquisition when in-person school sessions resume to determine whether a student may need additional ELD services and supports. CDE recommends using the WIDA Performance Definitions for progress monitoring of language acquisition, which can be found here for the Expressive domains at...
To help schools plan for educational continuity while the suspension of in-person learning is in effect, CDE has curated a list of best practices for remote learning and teaching including free web-based resources to help keep students academically engaged. We recognize that the multitude of resources for remote learning can be overwhelming so we have collected and organized material by content area and grade level that may be useful as educators develop plans for their students.

Resources for schools and districts regarding distance learning can be found at CDE Resources for Learning at Home (www.cde.state.co.us/learningathome).

**Distance Learning: Instructional Considerations for ELs**

**Integrate Learning in Authentic Ways**

Many school schedules are compartmentalized into educator specialization. While learning remotely, ELs might not be able to adhere to comparable schedules. Learning modules that integrate various kinds of content and learning can make organizing students’ at home schedules more feasible, while aligning to strong pedagogy for English learners. Keeping this in mind, educators can:

- Use thematic approaches to make connections across content. Multilingual Learners will benefit from learning that is integrated around a theme, rather than disparate topics that each require specific vocabulary, disciplinary language, or background knowledge.
- Encourage the arts as much as possible. Music, song, storytelling, drama, crafts, textile arts, and visual arts all provide enormous cognitive, emotional, and cultural benefits and can happen in any language.
- Embrace inquiry-, problem-, and project-based learning. Prompt students to brainstorm the questions they genuinely want to pursue, and prompt them to engage in authentic inquiry-based learning in the context of their everyday life. Invite students to find ways to address the problems they identify as needing their attention. The experiences they are having or creating for themselves in this current context can become part of the inquiry process. The more we ground learning expectations in questions and actions that are relevant to their lives, the more they will feel engaged and empowered by the experience.
- Give students multiple opportunities to demonstrate content knowledge. Students can create videos, draw and label pictures, or write paragraphs (with appropriate scaffolding) using academic language and demonstrating their new understanding of content.

**Find Natural Opportunities for Language Development**

English learners benefit from and develop language by using, practicing, playing, observing, thinking about, and discussing language. Encouraging any and all language use will help them sustain their home language practices and contribute to their development in English. With this in mind, educators can:

- Encourage students and families to have conversations, tell jokes and stories, sing, and play with language! Teachers can also guide families to observe and talk about how they use language in their home and community.
- Prompt students to watch programming and listen to the radio or podcasts in English and creatively use English closed-captioning or home language subtitles.
- Invite students to notice language in their environment (e.g., do cognate scavenger hunts on signs, ads, and other environmental texts while out walking [6 feet from others] in their community).

**Promote Collaboration between Core Content and ELD Teachers**

Co-Planning: Core content teachers should meet virtually with the ELD teacher with regular frequency (e.g., at least once a week) to plan their lessons and provide modifications to their lessons to best support ELs.

- When core content and ELD teachers plan their lessons together, content and ELD teachers can review and prioritize the lesson-level language objectives that ELs will need to support the content objectives at home.
- ELD teachers can develop their lessons around themes that support ELs’ academic language development, conceptual development, and comprehension.
- Working with content teachers, ELD teachers can set language objectives that are connected and consistent.
- Teachers can use videos or other virtual resources to link to the main lessons of grade-level curriculum. Some modifications to provide ELs access to the general curricula can include:
  - creating materials to complete assignments,
  - generating visuals to accompany lessons, and
  - adding other virtual platforms that support accessibility and accommodations for ELs.

**Consider Language Domains**

When designing instruction and activities for ELs, educators need to consider students' levels of language proficiency that would allow them access to materials and tasks while also providing students with opportunities to practice both their receptive (listening and reading) and expressive (speaking and writing) language skills. Educators may find it helpful to plan for language and content activities within the four language domains through the key uses of academic language: recount, explain, argue, discuss. These key uses help ELs leverage the use of high levels of language to communicate content learning.

To access the WIDA Can-Do Descriptors Key Uses Editions, please open the following grade-specific links below:

- **Kindergarten** at wida.wisc.edu/resources/can-do-descriptors-key-uses-edition-kindergarten
- **Grade 1** at wida.wisc.edu/resources/can-do-descriptors-key-uses-edition-grade-1
- **Grades 2-3** at wida.wisc.edu/resources/can-do-descriptors-key-uses-edition-grades-2-3
- **Grades 4-5** at wida.wisc.edu/resources/can-do-descriptors-key-uses-edition-grades-4-5
- **Grades 6-8** at wida.wisc.edu/resources/can-do-descriptors-key-uses-edition-grades-6-8
- **Grades 9-12** at wida.wisc.edu/resources/can-do-descriptors-key-uses-edition-grades-9-12

**Keep Existing ELD Program in Mind:**

- Instructional staff will need access to students’ ACCESS or WIDA screener scores in order to differentiate their instruction so teachers know what students can do at various levels of language development and can differentiate the English they are expecting students to consume and produce.
• Schools with Bilingual Education programs need to ensure that students are receiving instruction from teachers who have bilingual endorsements. Those teachers should provide instruction in both English and the native language other than English so that students’ content learning continues to take place in both languages during school closures.

• Schools with English as a Second Language (ESL) program models must ensure that English learners are being taught by teachers with a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education (CLDE) endorsements or experience in delivering ELD content, to ensure students’ English language continues to develop during school closures.

• Grade level content needs to be provided with adequate scaffolds and supports that English learners need to access the grade level content being provided by online/virtual programming.

A list of Remote Learning Resources for English learners can be found at www.cde.state.co.us/learningathome/remotelearningresources#ell

A list of Technology Resources and Considerations can be found at www.cde.state.co.us/learningathome/gettingconnected

Translation and Interpretation Services for Families and Students

Translation and interpretation services are critical for the health of the community, families, English learners, and schools. All essential information and communication coming from the school and/or district must be translated and/or interpreted for families that do not speak English. This includes information that is being communicated regarding the change in instructional programming and anything related to the COVID-19 situation that the school/district intends to communicate to all families.

Translation of essential information may be provided through phone calls, mailed documents, and through online translation services. District and school leaders should consider which staff or translation companies are normally utilized to translate documents and how those same people can continue to provide translation services through email or phone. There are also some online and phone translation services available here:

• Microsoft Translator at translator.microsoft.com/
  Host a chat room that allows for simultaneous translation of 100 participants into multiple languages at once
• Online Document Translator at www.onlinedoctranslator.com/en/
  Translate a variety of document types
• Remind at www.remind.com/
  Communicate with students and parents in their native language through text and email (some features come with a cost)
• Skype Translate at www.skype.com/en/features/skype-translator/
  Host a traditional Skype video conference and then activate the free translate feature
• Talking Points at talkingpts.org/
  Communicate with students and parents in their native language through text and email, free for teachers
• ClassDojo at www.classdojo.com/
  Free communication platform which includes a translation feature
Resources

CDE Resources
Student and Staff Wellness during remote learning
(www.cde.state.co.us/safeschools/wellbeing)
Learning at Home: Resources and Guidance
(www.cde.state.co.us/learningathome)
Protecting Student Privacy While Using Online Education Services and Other COVID-19 Privacy Guidance
(www.cde.state.co.us/dataprivacyandsecurity/protectionstudentprivacywhileusingonlineeducationservices)

United States Department of Education Resources
USDE Information and Resources for Schools and School Personnel
(www.ed.gov/coronavirus)
Coronavirus.gov - Offers the most up to date information about this rapidly evolving situation
(www.coronavirus.gov/)
Resources and Updates from Center for Disease Control and Prevention
Office for Civil Rights News Room
(www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/newsroom.html)

WIDA Resources
ACCESS for ELLs Interpretive Guide for Score Reports
(wida.wisc.edu/resources/access-ells-interpretive-guide-score-reports)
Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Interpretive Guide for Score Reports
(wida.wisc.edu/resources/alternate-access-ells-interpretive-guide-score-reports)
Alternate ACCESS Interpretive Speaking and Writing Rubrics
(wida.wisc.edu/resources?keys=rubrics&utm_source=CR-WW032520&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=WIDAWednesday&utm_content=text-Speaking-and-Writing-rubrics)
Teaching Multilingual Learners Online
(wida.wisc.edu/memberships/isc/newsletter/teaching-multilingual-learners-online?utm_source=MK-WN032620&utm_medium=wisclist-email&utm_campaign=WIDANews)
Using ACCESS Score Reports - For Teachers
(wida.wisc.edu/resources/finding-your-students-superpowers-using-access-score-reports?utm_source=CR-WW032520&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=WIDAWednesday&utm_content=text-infographic-for-educators)
Parent Guide for ACCESS Score Reports
(wida.wisc.edu/resources?keys=&field_type_target_id%5B354%5D=354&utm_source=CR-WW032520&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=WIDAWednesday&utm_content=text-Parent-Guide-for-ACCESS-for-ELLs-Score-Reports)
Parent Guide for Alternate ACCESS Score Reports
(wida.wisc.edu/resources?keys=%22parent%20guide%22&field_type_target_id%5B331%5D=331&utm_source=CR-WW032520&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=WIDAWednesday&utm_content=text-Parent-Guide-for-Alternate-ACCESS-for-ELLs-Score-Reports)