# Colorado English Learners: Distance Learning Guidance



# **Colorado English Learners: Distance Learning Guidance**

The Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education (www.cde.state.co.us/cde\_english) has developed Distance Learning Guidance to address distance learning for English Learners (ELs) during school closures. 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 COVID-19 Resources for Schools (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 CDE COVID-19 Policy Guidance (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 instruction resumes, 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: <a href="Expressive Domains">Expressive Domains</a> of speaking and writing (wida.wisc.edu/resources/performance-definitions-expressive-domains) and <a href="Receptive Domains">Receptive Domains</a> of listening and reading (wida.wisc.edu/resources/performance-definitions-receptive-domains).

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 distance learning and teaching including free web-based resources to help keep students academically engaged. We recognize that the multitude of resources for distance 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 <a href="CDE Resources for Learning at Home">CDE Resources for Learning at Home</a> (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 distance learning, 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 co-planning review ACCESS data to focus instructional collaboration on specific language needs.
- 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:
  - o creating materials to complete assignments,
  - o generating visuals to accompany lessons, and
  - o 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:

<u>Kindergarten</u> (wida.wisc.edu/resources/can-do-descriptors-key-uses-edition-kindergarten)
<u>Grade 1</u> (wida.wisc.edu/resources/can-do-descriptors-key-uses-edition-grade-1)
<u>Grades 2-3</u> (wida.wisc.edu/resources/can-do-descriptors-key-uses-edition-grades-2-3)
<u>Grades 4-5</u> (wida.wisc.edu/resources/can-do-descriptors-key-uses-edition-grades-4-5)
<u>Grades 6-8</u> (wida.wisc.edu/resources/can-do-descriptors-key-uses-edition-grades-6-8)
<u>Grades 9-12</u> (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 <u>Remote Learning Resources for English Learners</u> (www.cde.state.co.us/learningathome/remotelearningresources#ell)

A list of Technology Resources and Considerations (www.cde.state.co.us/learningathome/gettingconnected)

## **WIDA Micro-Offerings**

To help navigate the unique challenges of teaching during distance learning, WIDA Professional Learning launched a new series of three micro-offerings.

- Tending to Multilingual Learners' Social-Emotional Well-being
- Considerations for Evaluating Online Resources for Multilingual Learners
- Multilingual Learners and Distance Learning

These 30-45-minute courses are open to anyone and are designed for educators who work with multilingual children and youth across a variety of settings. Visit the webpage to access all three courses: WIDA's Distance Teaching and Learning (wida.wisc.edu/teach/distance-teaching-learning?utm\_source=CR-

 $WW090220 \& utm\_medium = email \& utm\_campaign = WIDAWednesday \& utm\_content = text-Distance-Teaching-and-Learning)$ 

## **Ensure Social-Emotional Supports are in Place**

As some students return to in-person learning, while others remain at home or are part of a hybrid model, it is crucial to understand that students, like adults have been through and are still in a place of long term uncertainty and change. Parents and students alike may have fears about returning to school, and students who are distance learning may feel disconnected from their peers and the rest of the school community. These anxieties may be even greater for English learners and their families due to lack of proficiency in English and a possible lack of understanding all the rapid changes as schools open, then close, quarantine groups of students, etc. Parents and family members may be essential workers, working outside of the home in jobs that may feel less than safe. It is crucial to understand that until students feel safe and connected, learning English or content may be more difficult. Below are some tips to help teachers support students, parents, and themselves during this unprecedented time.



- Create a sense of normalcy for students
  - Teachers can enhance their relationships with students and create a culture of connectedness between students by maintaining consistency in classroom routines during distance learning. For example, if teachers have daily morning meetings during in-person instruction, consider how those meetings can be continued during distance instruction.
    - Consider strategies which can enhance online discussions such as providing clear participation guidelines, teaching students how to participate, and using visuals
  - Likewise, consider how the school's code of conduct, PBIS, and other initiatives that focus on school and classroom culture can be continued during distance learning
- Teach and model self-care options that balance consistency with honoring individual differences
- Build relationships through regular classroom meetings, phone calls, or journaling back and forth either through e-mail or US mail
- Check in with how students are feeling and their level of safety. Support them on managing their feelings. Create a support system that includes school psychologist.
- Schools should consider carving out time for teachers to collaborate with the school psychologist or social worker on how to talk with students about their feelings

# **CDE Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Resources**

#### **Well Being and Connection During COVID 19**

(www.cde.state.co.us/safeschools/wellbeing)

## Remote Learning Resources for SEL, Mental Health, and Behavior

(www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/selremotelearningresources)

#### **Resources for Social and Emotional Learning and Mindfulness**

(www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-sld\_resources\_socialemotional)

#### **SEL Resource for Parents**

#### **Draw Me Safe: Coloring and Conversation About a Pandemic**

(www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/draw-me-safe-coloring-and-conversation-about-a-pandemic)
American Red Cross: Taking Care of Your Emotional Health (available in multiple languages)

#### Helping Children Cope with Disaster (also available in multiple languages)

(www.redcross.org/get-help/disaster-relief-and-recovery-services/recovering-emotionally.html)

## **Mental Health Resources**

- UW-Madison's Department of Psychiatry provides a <u>COVID-19 Mental Health Resource Guide and Support</u>
  (www.psychiatry.wisc.edu/covid-19-mental-health-resource-guide-support/), including a <u>Guide for Families and</u>
  <u>Children</u> (www.psychiatry.wisc.edu/covid-19-mental-health-resource-guide-support/support-for-families-and children/)
- UW-Madison's Center for Healthy Minds provides a <u>COVID-19 Well-Being Toolkit</u> (centerhealthyminds.org/well-being-toolkit-covid19), discusses social distancing as "<u>an act of generosity and compassion</u>" (centerhealthyminds.org/news/covid-19-and-our-common-humanity)



- UW-Madison's Center for Healthy Minds provides <u>Meditación en Vivo, en Español</u> (centerhealthyminds.org/news/events/meditaci%C3%B3n-en-vivo-en-espa%C3%B1ol)
- School Safety Resource Center-Trauma (www.colorado.gov/pacific/cssrc/trauma)
- Wings Foundation (www.wingsfound.org/colorado-resources/)
- <u>The Center for Trauma and Resilience</u> (traumahealth.org) and <u>COACT Colorado</u> (coactcolorado.org/trauma)

# **Family Engagement, Partnerships and Communication**

## **Family Engagement: Reconnect with Families**

As distance learning continues, schools and districts must make every effort to reconnect with families of English learners in a language they understand. It is especially critical at this time that English learners and their families feel connected to the school community and are thoughtfully re-engaged with learning, regardless of the mode of instruction. Per federal Office for Civil Rights and Department of Justice statute, as well as Colorado state law, all essential school and district communication and information should be provided in a language that families can understand. Questions to consider when communicating with families are as follows:

- What worked during distance learning?
- What challenges were there? Was technology a challenge, and if so, how can the school/district help mitigate those challenges for this next school year?
- What challenges were observed by families/guardians? Students? Educators (both ELD and content)?
   Family/Cultural Liaisons?
- How was ELD provided during school closures?
  - o Did it mirror in-person school program?
  - o Did it occur on a regular schedule?
  - o What opportunities are there to improve upon ELD instruction during this school year?
- How was instruction scaffolded to provide access to grade level content?
  - o In what ways was the scaffolding effective?
  - o In what ways can scaffolding be improved upon?
  - Did the school provided dedicated time for ELD and content/grade level educators to collaborate (plan/deliver/evaluate) instruction?
- Have there been any major changes in household dynamics such as: divorce, sickness, loss of wages, a move, new or loss of family members in household?
- Is the student living in a multi-generational house, and what challenges and opportunities does that bring?
- What additional practical supports/wrap around services are needed?
  - Are families in need of daycare, meal services, or financial support?
- What additional academic supports are needed?
  - Would parents and other family members benefit from professional learning about the various technology and platforms the school is using for distance learning?
  - Consider a virtual library to support learning at home.
  - Would socially distanced home visits be welcomed?



- o What supplies/equipment is needed at home and/or school?
- o What instructions in the native language would parents and family members find helpful?
- How have previous translated instructions been helpful or not helpful? Has the level of content and language been appropriate for parents to understand?
- What additional Social-Emotional well-being supports are needed?
- What types of chronic stress have students and families been experiencing? And would the family be interested in counseling services?
- Are students and families feeling lonely and disconnected from the school? How can the school help everyone to feel engaged and connected while physically apart?
- New to Colorado families: student's instructional program in prior state(s) or countries, gaps in attending school, and educational experiences
- New to District/School families: student's instructional program in previous Colorado district(s) or school and educational experiences

# Develop, Build, and Enhance Family Partnerships to Address Student Educational Impacts

It is essential for districts and schools to continue to develop, build and enhance family partnerships to address student educational impacts during periods of distance and hybrid learning and disruptions to normal school and district operations. Families of ELs will benefit from an orientation to help them understand what instruction and learning is, how it will work (logistics), and the expectations for their child in each of the potential scenarios with sample schedules (phone, digital connection, and/or social distance home visit). Families of ELs need updates from the school about what instruction and school day (distance, in-person, and hybrid) will look like, including, but not limited to:

- Expectations of families role in each instructional model, how families ask questions/share concerns (office hours -online/phone/email/text)
- Expectations of students completing work, how work will be evaluated, how to ask questions/share concerns (office hours -online/phone/email/text)

Districts and schools should provide an overview of the technology that will be utilized during periods of distance and hybrid instruction. Districts and schools should introduce one piece of new technology at a time with appropriate supports, training, and materials in a language that families can understand about each piece of technology that will be utilized.

Collaboration across offices/departments to ensure meaningful, coordinated, and predictable communication in a language that families can understand is essential in fostering and building relationships with families of students.

## **CDE Family-School-Community Partnership Resources**

Districts and schools across Colorado are finding unique ways to partner with families during the COVID-19 pandemic. For a summary of how districts, schools, and community organizations are working together to assist families and students visit Colorado Family-School-Community Partnering During COVID-19 (www.cde.state.co.us/uip/fscp-and-covid-19). For a collection of initiatives from districts and schools about working with families and community partners for student learning visit 2020 Edition of Promising Partnership Practices (www.cde.state.co.us/uip/promising-partnership-practices-book-2020).



## **Additional CDE Family-School-Community Partnership Resources**

- The FSCP Key is a monthly newsletter sent to family partnership contacts around the state, and includes updates
  from the director of family partnerships, promising practices, and research. For the latest newsletter visit <a href="CDE's Family-School-Community Partnership">CDE's Family-School-Community Partnership</a> webpage at www.cde.state.co.us/uip/familyengagement.
- For A Preschool through 12the Grade Guide for Colorado visit P-12 FSCP Framework (www.cde.state.co.us/uip/p-12\_fscp\_framework)
- National Standards, Goals, and Indicators for Family-School Partnerships (www.cde.state.co.us/sacpie/nationalstandardsgoalsandindicators2l)

## **WIDA Family Engagement Resources**

These resources include professional learning, resources to promote and support family engagement, parent friendly information about the ACCESS assessment, and materials that educators can share with families. Several resources are available in both English and Spanish. Some resources are available in 13 different languages. For more information, visit <a href="https://www.wisc.edu/teach/learners/engagement?utm\_source=CR-WW090920&utm\_medium=email&utm\_campaign=WIDAWednesday&utm\_content=text-Family-Engagement">webpage for school and district resources to strengthen connections with families.</a>

#### Communication: 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, per state and federal laws. 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:

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



# Resources

#### **CDE Resources**

#### Student and Staff Wellness during distance learning

(www.cde.state.co.us/safeschools/wellbeing)

#### **Learning at Home: Resources and Guidance**

(www.cde.state.co.us/learningathome/remotelearningresources)

#### Protecting Student Privacy While Using Online Education Services and Other COVID-19 Privacy Guidance

(www.cde.state.co.us/dataprivacyandsecurity/protectingstudentprivacywhileusingonlineeducationservices)

# **Colorado Interim English Learner Identification Procedures**

(www.cde.state.co.us/cde english/coloradointerimenglishlearneridentificationprocedures)

#### **Colorado Interim English Learner Redesignation Procedures**

(www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/2020-2021interimelredesignationprocedures)

## **United States Department of Education Resources**

## **USDE Information and Resources for Schools and School Personnel**

(www.ed.gov/coronavirus)

<u>Coronavirus.gov</u> - 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**

(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-

ncov/index.html?CDC AA refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2Findex.html)

#### Office for Civil Rights News Room

(www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/newsroom.html)

## Considerations for Serving Multilingual/English Learners during School Reopening

## Aligning Structural and Instructional Practices to Promote English Learner Success During the 2020–21 School Year

from the Institutes of Education Sciences, Office of English Language Acquisition, U.S. Department of Justice, and U.S. Department of Education (www.ncela.ed.gov/files/webinars/DistLearn2Webinar\_FINAL\_07222020\_OELA.pdf)

#### CCSSO: Restart and Recovery: Serving English Language Learners During COVID-19

(www.ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/CCSSO\_Serving\_Eng\_Lang-v4.pdf)

# CCSSO: Restart and Recovery: Considerations for Teaching and Learning – System Conditions

(www. ccsso.org/blog/ccsso-releases-restart-recovery-considerations-teaching-learning)



<u>CCSSO: Restart and Recovery: Access and Equity for English Language Learner Students and Families During COVID-19</u> (ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/CCSSO\_Restart\_%26\_Recovery\_Access\_and\_Equity\_for\_English\_Learner\_v3.pdf)

<u>Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Students: Considerations for School Leaders in Response to the COVID-19</u>

<u>Pandemic</u> from Californians Together (www.californianstogether.org/supporting-for-immigrant-and-refugee-students-considerations-for-school-leaders-in-response-to-the-covid-19-pandemic)

Moving a DL/Biliteracy Program to a Distance Learning Platform: Suggestions and Examples from the Center for Teaching for Biliteracy (www.teachingforbiliteracy.com/sample-pd)

Online Learner Readiness Rubric developed by Michigan Virtual (micourses.org/resources/pdf/toolkit/Interactive\_OnlineLearningReadinessRubric.pdf)

<u>Offline Learning at Home: Ideas for English Language Learners</u> from Colorín Colorado (www.colorincolorado.org/article/offline-learning-ells)