

Long-Term English Learner Community of Practice Report

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Contents

A Message from the State Superintendent of Public Instruction	4
Foreword	5
Introduction: California's Long-Term English Learner Challenge and Opportunity	6
The Long-Term English Learner Community of Practice	9
Bakersfield City School District	10
Compton Unified School District	11
Elk Grove Unified School District	11
Escondido Union High School District	12
Salinas Union High School District	12
Innovations	13
Redesigning English Language Development Courses: Project-Based and Career Technical Education	13
Professional Learning/Coaching for Teachers: Integrated English Language Development	14
Mentorship	16
Reclassification Criteria and Process	17
Table 1: Innovations and Pilots in Context of Other Related Long-Term English Learner Focused Work	18
Common Implementation Challenges	20
Table 2: Challenges and Responses	20
Indications of Impact	23

The Community of Practice Design Thinking Process	24
Session 1: Kickoff, Introduction to Design Thinking, and Getting Started	25
Session 2: Defining the Challenges to Address	26
The Need to Build an Assets-Based and Affirming Culture for Long-Term English Learner Students	27
Long-Term English Learner Students Feeling Disconnected from Schooling	27
Inadequate Support for Long-Term English Learner Students Throughout the Curriculum	27
Confusion and Struggles Over Whether or What Kind of English Language Development Is Appropriate for Long-Term English Learner Students	28
Determining and Delivering Tier 2 Interventions to Support Long-Term English Learner Students	28
Session 3: Brainstorm Ideas in Response to Data and Empathy Interviews	28
Sessions 4 and 5: Implementation, Testing, and Iteration	32
Table 3: District-Identified Long-Term English Learner Challenges, Focal Statements, and Change Ideas	32
Session 6: Final Session: Feedback, Scale-Up, and New Lines of Inquiry	35
Reflections on the Process: 11 Lessons Learned	37
Recommendations	44
Ensure Quality Guidance and Technical Assistance to Local Educational Agencies	44
Build Field Expertise and Capacity	44
Engage Inclusive and Intentional Local Planning Efforts	45
Closing	45
Resources	46
California Department of Education Resources	46
Partner Resources	47
Acknowledgments	49

A Message from the State Superintendent of Public Instruction

I am delighted to present the Long-Term English Learner (LTEL) Community of Practice (CoP) Report. This report highlights the work of local educational agency (LEA) teams from across California that applied to be part of this CoP to improve outcomes for the LTEL students they serve. This report documents their process, successes, challenges, and next steps in their journey to use data and Design Thinking to improve the system to better serve students identified as LTELs.

In California, we recognize the assets that our diverse students bring with them to school. Multilingual learners, including LTEL students, bring the asset of a home language other than or in addition to English, enriching our classrooms and communities with their languages and cultures.

The English Learner (EL) Roadmap Policy guides our work to embrace and support multilingual learners, including LTEL students, with the mission to affirm, welcome, and respond to a diverse range of multilingual learner strengths, needs, and identities preparing students for college, career, and civic participation in a global, diverse, and multilingual world. Our system strives to meet the unique needs of multilingual learners, and we have special work to do when it comes to LTEL students. To that end, we are actively working to remove systemic barriers and enact the EL Roadmap's mission.

Here at the California Department of Education, we are using historic investments in public education to transform California schools so that all students, including LTEL students, have what they need to succeed and belong. By focusing on community schools, mental health, universal school meals, antibias education, and literacy and biliteracy by third grade, we support the whole child so California students have their basic needs met, and are safe, supported, and ready to learn. Universal pre-kindergarten provides California students with the strong foundation they need to succeed not just in early childhood, but throughout their educational trajectory. And we know that strong school and family partnerships are critical to supporting students, and we are dedicated to including immigrant students and families.



I would like to thank the LTEL CoP members and expert partners for sharing their work. I hope that it will serve as inspiration to LEAs across California as we work together to move the needle for all students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Thurmond". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Tony Thurmond

State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Foreword

Among the many things that make California a special place to teach and learn are its unique cultural and linguistic assets that enhance our school communities. With over 100 languages spoken in the homes of California public school students, the possibilities for developing multilingualism across the state are boundless.

California English Learner (EL) Roadmap Policy articulates a shared vision for multilingual learners to “fully and meaningfully access and participate in a twenty-first century education from early childhood through grade twelve,” resulting in attaining high levels of English proficiency, mastery of grade-level standards, and opportunities to develop proficiency in multiple languages. Through its four principles, the EL Roadmap serves as inspiration for California educators across the system to reimagine how they consider and respond to the strengths and needs of multilingual learners. An essential component of deepening EL Roadmap Policy implementation statewide and fulfilling the aspiration of a multilingual California is supporting educators in understanding the various typologies of multilingual learners so school systems may respond nimbly to the diversity of their students, including the unique experiences of long-term English learners (LTELs).

As outlined in this report, for LTEL students the stakes could not be higher. As they progress through their educational journeys, timely response is imperative to meeting the moment and ensuring they, too, can meaningfully access the full scope of educational opportunity during and beyond their kindergarten through twelfth grade years and graduate prepared for college and career.

The California Department of Education Multilingual Support Division is proud to partner with the local educational agencies (LEAs) involved in the LTEL Community of Practice (CoP), who committed to closely examining their local systems, coordinating a team approach, and using data to inform the design of structural changes to serve LTEL students. In this report, you will read about innovations—changes, big and small, on longer or shorter timelines—developed by districts that dedicated a year and a half of learning, thinking, sharing, and piloting ideas to respond to LTEL students in their school communities across the state. We have valued the opportunity to learn with each of them, as they learned from students, and find inspiration in the energy and spirit they devoted to this work. We are grateful to Sobrato Philanthropies for supporting this endeavor and for their commitment to understanding the ecosystem of service to multilingual learners. We extend thanks to Laura Hill-Bonnet, Annie Camey Kuo, and Steven Weiss, of the Center to Support Excellence in Teaching, Stanford Graduate School of Education, for facilitating the CoP, and Laurie Olsen who contributed content and documented our learning.

It is a pleasure to be able to share the work of the LTEL CoP. It is our hope that districts across the state review this report, find inspiration in the designs of other LEAs, and consider adopting or adapting any of these innovations to enhance the educational experiences of LTEL students.

Sincerely,

Alesha Moreno-Ramirez

Director of the Multilingual Support Division
California Department of Education

Introduction: California's Long-Term English Learner Challenge and Opportunity

Seventy years ago, federal civil rights law established the promise of equal educational access and opportunity for all. Through a series of subsequent guidance, rulings, and court cases, this promise was explicitly extended to language minority children facing a language barrier to access and participation in schools. This established the obligation of schools to teach English and provide supports for participation and access to school curriculum while a student is learning English, *until* that student reaches a level of English proficiency where those supports are no longer needed. In 1970, the Office of Civil Rights warned:

“Any system employed to deal with the special language skills and needs of national origin minority group children must be designed to meet such language skills needs as soon as possible and must not operate as an educational dead end or permanent track.”

A subsequent lawsuit on behalf of English learner (EL) students resulted in the 1981 *Castañeda v. Pickard* ruling, which further stated:

Schools have a fundamental legal responsibility to ensure that English learners do not “incur irreparable academic deficits” as a result of inadequate education programs while they are in the process of learning English.

Implicit in all of this is the understanding that the designation of “EL student” was never intended as a permanent status. Rather, over a period of time with the appropriate supports, students who enter schools as “English learners” without the English proficiency needed for access should be able to reach English proficiency adequate for full engagement, participation, and mastery of the school curriculum equal to that of their English-proficient peers. Based on research, the normative time to get to that point and be reclassified as English proficient is five to seven years.

Yet, since the mid-1990s, it has become clear that a significant group of EL students do not receive the support they need to reach that benchmark of English proficiency. These students remain in our schools for 8, 9, 10, 11, even 12 years without gaining the English proficiency they need, and many having accrued academic deficits as a result of not adequately comprehending or being able to access the curriculum across their years in school. If we do not address the specific strengths and needs of these students, they are in danger of school becoming an “educational dead end,” a “permanent track” in which they are incurring “irreparable academic deficits.” These are our students who are now formally designated as “long-term English learners” (LTELs).

In 2012, California became the first state in the nation to formally recognize and name this issue, passing legislation that set a definition of “LTEL students” in an attempt to better understand and serve this student group. Over the course of the next two decades, state policy has strengthened the commitment to monitor the extent of students designated as LTEL throughout the state, to address the needs of these students and prevent the creation of new generations of LTEL students. These policies are augmented by explicit attention to students designated as LTEL in the *California English Language Arts (ELA)/English Language Development (ELD) Framework* and in the principles of the California EL Roadmap Policy at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ml/roadmap.asp>, as well as more recent inclusion of LTEL students in the state accountability system.

Meanwhile, in districts throughout the state, educators have seemingly struggled with the challenges of providing appropriate academic support and targeted language development, closing accrued academic gaps, and reconnecting discouraged LTEL students. Counselors struggle with how to fit ELD courses and the extra academic support LTEL students need into high school schedules that already are filled with high school graduation requirements, electives, and college preparatory A–G courses. Administrators look with dismay at the lower graduation rates of LTEL students and wonder what can be done differently.

In response, teachers have experimented with alternative instructional approaches. Some districts have piloted specialized ELD curriculum meant to address LTEL student needs; a few county offices of education (COEs) have established communities of practice and networks of district teams to share experiences in understanding and responding to the needs of LTEL students; and research and advocacy reports have called attention to the need not only to serve students designated as LTEL but also to prevent the creation of long-term EL status. Awareness of the need to act has become fairly widespread, but understanding of effective action and the capacity to respond are still under development.

In the 2024–25 school year, of the state’s more than one million EL students, approximately 211,218 are identified as LTEL students—EL students who have been in US schools for six or more years without reaching levels of English proficiency to be reclassified and not adequately progressing toward English proficiency. An additional 130,000 EL students are considered at risk of being identified as LTEL.¹ In some districts, the proportion of EL students who are designated as LTEL students reaches 83 percent.

¹ The California *Education Code (EC)* identifies two distinct definitions of LTEL students, both of which are used for reporting LTEL data for different purposes. The data used in this report is based on the formal LTEL definition in *EC* Section 313.1. For purposes of the California Dashboard, a simplified definition classifies students as LTELs if they have not yet met reclassification criteria as English language proficient within seven years of initial classification. This results in somewhat different accounting of numbers of students designated as LTEL. In 2024, the *EC* Section 52052 (Dashboard) definition that includes EL students who have not attained English proficiency within seven years of initial classification identified 300,950 LTEL students, while the *EC* Section 313.1 (DataQuest) definition identified 211,218 LTEL students. For more information on these definitions, visit the CDE Long-Term English Learner (LTEL) Students - Accessing Educational Data web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/lteldef.asp>.

The Long-Term English Learner Community of Practice

In 2023, the California Department of Education (CDE) Multilingual Support Division (MSD) decided to convene a statewide Community of Practice (CoP) focusing on LTEL students. California is a diverse state, and it is a local-control state. There is no one-size-fits-all model that makes sense for the complex and diverse LTEL population, or for the diversity of district and community context. It was, therefore, important to the CDE that the CoP be designed to support locally grounded innovation among a geographically diverse group of local educational agencies (LEAs) working to strengthen effective secondary programs for LTEL students, and used as the basis for deriving lessons and recommendations for the field.

With support from Sobrato Philanthropies, the CDE contracted with the Center to Support Excellence in Teaching (CSET) at the Stanford Graduate School of Education to develop and facilitate an 18-month CoP aligned to the EL Roadmap Policy. The goals were:

- Increase awareness of LTEL students and their specific needs, including social–emotional, academic, literacy, and language proficiency;
- Engage in professional learning;
- Improve data literacy;
- Use data to identify local problems of practice within systems around LTEL students in grades six through twelve and develop local goals; and
- Encourage innovation by developing and sharing effective secondary EL program models and practice.

The CDE team was clear on the direction of the CoP: this was not to be a “sit and get” training about LTEL students. Rather, the CoP was intended to provide a space and a structure for a community of cross-role district teams to take an intentional pause to develop together an understanding of the LTEL students in their districts. Teams were tasked with investigating the issues from various vantage points to develop a comprehensive perspective on how their local systems were supporting LTEL students and consider what they might do differently to respond more effectively. The selection of CSET to facilitate the process was based in part on their expertise and experience in the areas of LTEL students and Design Thinking—an improvement approach that promotes understanding the user and designing innovative solutions to match the needs of that user. As applied in the CoP, the Design Thinking process entailed convening cross-functional collaborative teams, listening to students and

teachers, examining local data, engaging in thoughtful inquiry, devoting time to dialogue, building shared understanding, supporting innovative thinking, and piloting unique approaches to improvement. The premise of the CoP was that through a systems lens involving leaders, influencers, and decision-makers from district, site, and classroom, level setting with collective knowledge, and with structure and support, the conditions would be ripe for improvement to address how LTEL students are served locally. A call was sent out seeking teams from unified and secondary school districts serving students identified as LTEL to apply to participate in the CoP. The CDE sought to identify a select group of districts representing a variety of contexts, regions, needs, and sizes that were interested in exploring data and innovating to support LTEL students and were poised to implement change ideas of their choosing in response to their data. Despite grappling with recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, 57 LEAs applied. This was not a grant program, and LEAs would not receive funding other than to cover the costs of travel and participation. So, the degree of interest in participating serves as clear evidence of the extent of concern for LTEL students and a testament to widespread desire among districts to be engaged in a process to strengthen services and supports. The selection of the five districts that became the CoP was based on geographic representation, diversity of LTEL/EL student populations, evidence of engagement in responding to LTEL challenges, a demonstrated willingness and ability to try things and think outside the box, and ability to commit a cross-role team to participate across the 18 months of the process.

The following are the five districts that comprised the LTEL CoP.

Bakersfield City School District

Bakersfield City School District (BCSD) is a prekindergarten through grade eight urban/suburban district in Kern County, serving 29,256² students, 27.4 percent of them identified as EL students. One out of six students in grades six through eight is classified as LTEL. The district's vision is to "be a model of educational excellence, equity, inclusion, and innovation" and has set a district priority that "all EL students entering into BCSD in kindergarten are reclassified by grade five." The issue of LTEL students was raised in the context of a Federal Program Monitoring (FPM) review, and the goal in entering the CoP was to provide EL students with daily high-quality designated and integrated ELD instruction. As BCSD entered the LTEL CoP, administrators and coaches had already been engaged in professional learning on the EL Toolkit of Strategies for several years, and teacher cohorts were beginning the training. Principals were engaging in professional learning about the EL Roadmap.

² Data is based on DataQuest reports for the 2021–22 school year, when districts applied to be part of the LTEL CoP.

Compton Unified School District

Compton Unified School District (CUSD) is a transitional kindergarten (TK) through grade twelve urban district located in the south-central region of Los Angeles County. The district encompasses the city of Compton and portions of the cities of Carson and Los Angeles. The district currently serves nearly 21,249³ students at 36 sites, with 25.7 percent classified as EL students. As part of a district “turnaround,” there has been a concerted focus on LTEL students, including an EL Journalism Program for at-risk LTEL students, specifically designed LTEL courses, targeted and ongoing progress monitoring, and intervention plans for LTEL students. CUSD applied to be part of the LTEL CoP to learn more about research-based strategies and supports they might bring to the district to reduce the number of students classified as LTEL and at risk of being identified as LTEL.

Elk Grove Unified School District

Elk Grove Unified School District (EGUSD), located in southern Sacramento County, is the fifth-largest school district in California. The district serves 63,041⁴ students in TK through grade twelve across 68 schools. One-third of the district are “Ever ELs” (current or former EL students), and over 120 languages are spoken. EL students make up 16.6 percent of the district. The density of EL students varies across the geographic regions of the districts, but they are clustered primarily in one region of the district. Since 2017, the district has had an LTEL Task Force, but COVID-19 and an influx of newcomers shifted attention away from that work. Then, EGUSD was an English Learner Roadmap Implementation for Systemic Excellence (ELRISE!) Anchor District partnering with Sacramento COE on implementation of the EL Roadmap Policy. As part of that work, an elementary EL Summer School became the focus of training teachers on strategies to prevent students from becoming identified as LTEL students. Site EL Coordinators focused on monitoring designated ELD implementation. Courses were specially designed for LTEL students in grades seven through twelve. They applied to be part of the LTEL CoP seeking “space, research, community, and feedback” to reflect on what they were doing, plan, and improve what they offer for LTEL students, with the goal of LTEL students feeling engaged, heard, seen in school, and graduate with options.

3 Data is based on DataQuest reports for the 2021–22 school year, when districts applied to be part of the LTEL CoP.

4 Data is based on DataQuest reports for the 2021–22 school year, when districts applied to be part of the LTEL CoP.

Escondido Union High School District

Escondido Union High School District (EUHSD) is an urban/suburban union high school district in San Diego County serving 9,458⁵ students, approximately 17.2 percent of whom are EL-identified. EUHSD had established an EL program advisory committee of staff and community members to redesign their EL Master Plan and “move towards more liberatory practices for all students, but specifically our LTEL population.” For five years the district has been experiencing declining enrollment overall, but the EL population has increased by over 400 students. They joined the CoP looking for the space, the thought partners, and the organizational structure to help them design approaches to address their LTEL students. Prior to this, their focus had been on newcomers.

Salinas Union High School District

Salinas Union High School District (SUHSD) serves 16,525 students in grades seven through twelve in Monterey County. EL students comprise 23.5 percent of the enrollment, and 86 percent of those are identified as LTEL students. The district had invested in training teachers in the Gradual Release of Responsibility instructional model, use Constructing Meaning meant to support EL students in core content classes, and have focused on building capacity to deliver integrated ELD. They joined the CoP to be in conversations with other districts to gain insights and strategies to better serve their LTEL students, and to explore why many are not reclassifying and continue to struggle in core content classes.

Each LEA was instructed to put together a cross-role team of up to six members for participation in the CoP and serve as the mechanism for moving the work forward at their sites. The guidance was to include site administrators, an individual responsible for district data, representation from the district office, including the EL Coordinator or like role, and one or more representatives from other areas within the system. In addition, they were encouraged to consider including counselors, teacher leaders, coaches, or English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC) or District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC) representatives to promote coordination, collaboration, and intersectional influence.

Each district had traveled its own path to the decision to invest in this state-level collaborative work. They brought various areas of expertise and experience related to serving LTEL students and different spheres of influence. When they came together as a CoP in spring 2023, they were poised to continue their own journeys, and hungry for contact with other educators engaged in similar challenges and pursuits.

⁵ Data is based on DataQuest reports for the 2021–22 school year, when districts applied to be part of the LTEL CoP.

The CoP districts focused on four key areas of innovation. A brief description follows.

Redesigning English Language Development Courses: Project-Based and Career Technical Education

Redesigning English language development courses to incorporate project-based and career technical education meshed two needs: to create engaging, context-embedded, language-rich ELD focused on LTEL student needs and to improve the status of ELD from compensatory to exciting, rigorous, relevant, useful, and enriching.

In EGUSD, the redesign of ELD took the form of creating and piloting a course for middle school LTEL students that was Computer Science–Based ELD. Blending Career Technical Education (CTE) and ELD enables LTEL students to build awareness of a career pathway as the vehicle for strengthening their mastery of English in an authentic and academic context. Students engaged in robotics and coding, honing reading and writing skills along with oral language through collaboration and planning with peers and presentation skills per the *California ELD Standards: Kindergarten Through Grade 12* (CA ELD Standards) as they built, tested, and showcased their robots. Designing the course required collaboration between computer science teachers and the ELD teacher—and a great deal of learning about coding and computers on the part of the ELD teacher responsible for shaping and delivering the course. A “before” and “after” survey given to the eighth-grade students revealed that overall, students enjoyed the computer programming, were interested in learning more about it as a career pathway, appreciated the active engagement, had developed stronger English skills, and wanted to do more of these project-based ELD classes. The rousing success led to development of a second LTEL ELD course, this one Journalism ELD for seventh-graders, based on the model developed by the Center for Equity for English Learners at Loyola Marymount University. After initial creation of the curriculum and pilots, EGUSD is developing a pathway of such CTE–ELD courses from grade seven through, and into, high school. ELD teachers are being provided professional learning related to being able to replicate the courses (including tutorials on the career pathway content), and the district is working with Sacramento COE on issues of course certification and credits.

In Compton, the ELD course redesign effort used the basic foundation of English 3D curricular units. Teachers were familiar with delivering that curriculum, but teachers and students alike were expressing a desire for more active, engaging instruction. A small team took on the task of augmenting English 3D curricular units with an eye to relevance, active language development, and infusing project-based learning pedagogy. The first unit to be created was on voting rights and responsibilities. Students needed to do research (reading), work collaboratively with a team (oral language), and were charged with developing accurate, credible, and compelling presentations (writing, oral presentation skills) to give to classes throughout the school on voter registration and how the voting system works. It was an authentic and important task, in a presidential election year. It was just the kind of ELD needed—mirroring academic tasks LTEL students face throughout the curriculum, building language skills, and deeply collaborative, creative, and engaging. The success led to efforts underway now to build project-based learning into all units in the ELD curriculum.

Professional Learning/Coaching for Teachers: Integrated English Language Development

SUHSD has a tradition of investing in professional learning for teachers to strengthen support for EL students. COVID-19 pandemic disruptions, teacher turnover, changes in leadership in the district, and now increased urgency about LTEL students (a majority of their EL students, and a large number) all contributed to the CoP team focus on strengthening the engagement and rigor of instruction for LTEL students across the curriculum through integrated ELD. The approach was discipline specific so teachers could make direct application to the language demands of the content and standards they teach. Each academic department (ELA, math, science, social studies) was provided six sessions of professional learning following a standard agenda but was applying it directly to their content.

- **Session 1:** Why This? Why Now?: Grounding the work in the EL Roadmap Principle 1 (the need for assets-based and needs-responsive schools) and discussing “stereotype threat” and the assumptions that are made about EL and LTEL students specifically.
- **Session 2:** ELD Standards and Frameworks: Discussing what integrated ELD is, exploring the CA ELD Standards, and making connections to the content standards of the academic discipline (math, science, etc.) and classroom practices. The dive into the CA ELD Standards focused also on sharing practices pertaining to the communicative modes in Part I of the standards—Collaborative, Interpretive and Productive.

- **Session 3:** Learning from the Experts: Reading Chapter 2 from *Amplifying the Curriculum: Designing Quality Learning Opportunities for English Learners* and discussing the need for social interaction, active engagement, deliberate scaffolding, and quality learning opportunities across the school day.
- **Session 4:** Collective Understanding of Scaffolding: Grounded in Principle 2 of the EL Roadmap, which calls for standards-based instruction and intentional scaffolding toward mastery, teachers shared what they were presently using and discussed the many purposes of scaffolding.
- **Between Sessions 4 and 5:** Teachers jigsawed the CA ELD Standards, unpacked the skills needed to reach those standards, and wrote scenarios in which a particular standard could manifest in their content classes. This was done for every course. For example, chemistry teachers focused on the CA ELD Standards for a lesson on specific phenomena, ethnic studies teachers focused on CA ELD Standards for activities about the pillars of coloniality, eighth-grade history teachers worked through an activity focusing on the Constitution.
- **Session 5:** Scaffolding for Proficiency Level: Teachers applied knowledge of the CA ELD Standards and scaffolding to discuss how to scaffold for an ELD standard based on proficiency level, including how to remove scaffolds and help students own their learning.
- **Session 6:** Application to Instruction: Using the course curriculum, the group designed an integrated ELD lesson, intentionally selecting the ELD standard and appropriate scaffolds. Focusing on the disciplinary language demands of the content, teachers engaged in discussion of what it means for students to think about how English works in their discipline.

Following these series of professional learning, grade-level and discipline-specific teams were established to work together as Professional Learning Collaboratives for ongoing focus on addressing EL and LTEL students in their teaching. Teams included: ELA 7, ELA 8, ELA 9, ELA 10, ELA 11, ELA 12, Math 7, Math 8, high school (HS) Math 1, HS Math 2, HS Math 3, Social Science 7, Social Science 8, Ethnic Studies, World History, US History, Econ/Government, Science 8, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and, Agrisciences.

These professional spaces were designed for professional learning, but also as spaces where teachers could be collaborative, inspired, and generative with others. One of the issues identified early in the districts' work on LTEL students was how discouraged teachers felt. It was important to create mechanisms where they not only learned new strategies, but also felt supported and not alone, and where they could focus on what LTEL students were capable of doing—thus changing mindsets. As the passionate and amazing EL coach leading this work said: *"It is about a real standards approach, and about a student-responsive approach. It's not about here's a cookie-cutter strategy everyone should be doing. It's about the artistry of teaching, and the real purposes of teaching, about recognizing who your students are and being able to apply the scaffolds and invitations your students need to engage in rigorous grade-level content."*

Mentorship

Student voices in the empathy interviews conveyed both lack of understanding and some dismay about why they were classified as English learners and what they had to do to "pass the test" that would free them to take elective courses instead of ELD. This, plus students' expressed lack of connection to schooling, pointed the BCSD LTEL CoP team to design a mentorship system. Principals that were interested in trying a mentorship approach were recruited to pilot the effort. The differentiated ELD lead teacher or EL coordinator at the site organized the approach—seeking teachers, academic coaches, and staff who wanted to take on a commitment to meet monthly with a student (LTEL or at risk of being identified as LTEL) to review how they were doing academically and for a general check-in. Mentorship was done within the contract day. Site autonomy is a strong tradition in the district, so each school site designed their own approach for when and how the mentoring occurred. A site with a large number of LTEL students held an assembly to go over basics about the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) and process to reclassification, and individual meetings with mentors followed up with students individually about their own trajectory, status, and progress. Other sites left it up to mentors to schedule when and how they meet with their students. The point was not just, or even primarily, the progress review and goal setting toward reclassification; it was and continues to be about relationship building. As one team member expressed: *"If an adult takes the time to meet with a student and say, 'Here's where you are, let's talk about your goals and what it will take for you to get there, and let's work together to get you there!,' it's an act of connecting. It's not just about the goal setting and planning. It's about students knowing they are seen. It's about building a relationship so a student knows someone notices and cares and is looking out for them."*

Reclassification Criteria and Process

LTEL students are students who have been unable to meet reclassification criteria (available on the CDE Reclassification web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ml/reclassification.asp>) long past a normative time and appear stalled in progress. In almost all districts, the LTEL conversation includes some questioning of the reclassification criteria and process. BCSD had the most rigorous reclassification criteria in the county. They approached reviewing it through several angles. First, they reexamined Criterion 4 of the reclassification criteria which reads: *“Comparison of the performance of the pupil in basic skills against an empirically established range of performance in basic skills **based upon the performance of English proficient pupils of the same age**, that demonstrates whether the pupil is sufficiently proficient in English to **participate effectively in a curriculum designed for pupils of the same age whose native language is English.**”* The team observed that some of their LTEL students were in fact doing well in academic courses, and felt that perhaps this reclassification criteria level set by their district for Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) scores was holding EL students to a higher standard than many of their native English-speaking peers. Their criteria were normed on Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) and SBAC. They wanted a clearer local picture and sought to see how their English proficient students of the same age and grade level were actually performing on the assessments. This led to a recalibration of the district Criterion 4 to be normed and on par with actual native English-speaking students. The district also tackled a review and revision of their writing sample, which was a locally required part of the reclassification criteria and with which students struggled. Finally, they invested in adopting the use of the new Observation Protocol for Teaching of English Learners (OPTEL) as the instrument for the teacher observation criterion (Criterion 2). This new protocol was easier to use than the writing sample process had been and was more appropriately focused on language abilities and not just on writing. They found it to be a more robust, more equitable, and more authentic approach to observing student uses of language in academic settings—and also could more directly inform instruction and build teacher capacity to recognize and respond to language needs. This work on the *systems* level was an important complement to the mentorship and direct goal setting work with students. These were important contributors to the achievement of GREEN status for LTEL students in the most recent Dashboard, where BCSD shows 59.7 percent of their LTEL students making progress (compared to 45.8 percent statewide).

These innovations did not occur in a vacuum. Beyond the prototypes and pilots developed through the Design Process, the districts were engaged in many other aspects of building LTEL supports into their system. The pilots were part and parcel of a larger focus on LTEL students.

Table 1: Innovations and Pilots in Context of Other Related Long-Term English Learner Focused Work

District	Design Thinking Prototype/ Pilot	Other Related Long-Term English Learner Focused Work
BCSD	Mentorships	• District goal: Reclassification by grade five if enrolled in kindergarten • Data Chats with every school leadership team focusing on LTEL students as a specific subgroup • New custom data dashboard to monitor LTEL progress (Ellevation) • Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) Action: Provide tutoring for LTEL students • Monitoring that every EL student gets ELD daily • Professional learning for teachers on EL Toolkit, with specialists who walk classrooms, model lessons, and coach teachers • Professional learning for all administrators on the EL Roadmap Policy • Revision of Local Process and Criteria for Reclassification (replaced a local writing sample, instituted use of the OPTTEL for reclassification, revisited and revised academic cut scores to be based/normed for average scores of students at the grade level)

District	Design Thinking Prototype/ Pilot	Other Related Long-Term English Learner Focused Work
EGUSD	CTE–ELD new course creation at middle school	• Writing curriculum and courses/course pathways for LTEL students • EL Program Implementation Continuum framework used to assess system implementation of effective practices—including effective practices for LTEL students • EL Program Implementation Continuum measures quantitative and qualitative data points to assess effectiveness of implementation and is meant (in part) to create a common language and unified approach across sites • EL Summer School for students at risk of being identified as LTEL students (grades 3–6) • High school strengthened designated ELD for 11–12th graders (Expository Reading and Writing Curriculum [ERWC]) • Instructional Framework for multilingual learners with professional learning for teachers on implementing that framework
SUHSD	Integrated ELD and Tier 1 instruction for LTEL students—through robust subject specific professional learning and coaching	• Cluster LTEL students in academic classes (1/3 to 2/3) • Academic Language and Literacy course for LTEL students in high school • Academic Language Development LTEL course in middle school
Compton	Redesigned ELD infused with project-based learning and culturally responsive pedagogy	• Data Chats • Monitor grades quarterly—any D or F grades result in planning with the Language Appraisal Team
EUHSD	Data Chats and monitoring	• Leverage English Learner Progress Indicator (ELPI) on dashboard for visibility and urgency

Common Implementation Challenges

School districts are complex. Times are complex. And schools are not laboratory conditions for testing prototypes. Changing people’s understandings, mindsets, and practices is always complex. Changing systems is even more so. As the districts in the CoP pursued their plans, they understandably ran into challenges. Some of them had been anticipated. Leadership changes occurred in some districts, the COVID-19 pandemic was still creating turmoil in teaching and learning conditions, and staff turnover undermined efforts to build capacity. Plans had to pivot and morph in response. The common challenges identified by the CoP teams included the following:

Table 2: Challenges and Responses

Challenges	Responses
Changes in leadership and key positions. Those who committed to this focus on LTEL students were no longer in the district. There were new priorities and no institutional continuity of commitment.	This was the challenge that resulted in one district leaving the CoP—it simply was not the right time to try to engage in the work. Determining readiness is important—is this really the time we CAN do it? In those districts with changing leadership, the role of the LTEL team itself was important, as was the visibility and credibility of the effort because it was a project of CDE. Teams learned to put effort into articulating the WHY of the effort and their own individual commitments to the work. A clear written statement of purpose and commitment to the process at the beginning became an important tool to share with new leadership (“we agreed, we committed”). Giving new leadership an opportunity to add their own thinking and align the LTEL work to their priorities was important, even when it meant revising some initial plans.

Challenges	Responses
Lack of attention, awareness about LTEL students and/or lack of a wide sense of urgency.	While the LTEL team shared a focus and sense of urgency, others in some of the districts did not. It became part of the work of the team to be communicators throughout the district, to give the work visibility on agendas of key groups and meetings (e.g., board updates, reports to superintendent's cabinet). Data and use of student voice were used to continue to provide the rationale and the "why" for the work. Starting small in sites where there was leadership support enabled the work to move ahead. Then those involved in the pilots (students and teachers) were given forums throughout the district to share their excitement about what is different.
Problems in "selling" and building collective ownership for LTEL students ("Not my job"). <i>and</i> Reliance on just a few passionate, already-overextended, deeply committed people.	To some degree this was handled in the brainstorm and piloting phase by leveraging the expertise, energy, and power of those "sparks" who were already committed to the work and to LTEL students. However, as the pilot's efforts were honed and deemed successful enough to scale up, districts had to search for who and where in the system the next tier of adopters and implementers would come from. Having mechanisms to share the excitement and improved outcomes opened the door, but providing an infrastructure and systems of support was needed. This took the form of professional learning opportunities, coaching, creating networks of teachers to explore and try out aspects of the new approach, providing pay for planning work, etc. Districts used the School Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) and LCAP process to be able to fund specific additional pay. In one district piloting Data Chats and meetings with LTEL students (and a dearth of willing volunteer staff to do it), there are no positions in the system with designated job responsibility for working directly with LTEL students outside of regular classroom instructional duties. With few teachers stepping up to do it, the district will now turn to working with the union to modify job descriptions of counselors and EL specialists to clearly specify responsibility for progress monitoring meetings with LTEL students.

Challenges	Responses
Teachers feel discouraged, burned out. Exhaustion and overload across the system add to lack of interest and unwillingness to take on learning and trying new approaches.	In teaching LTEL students, many teachers feel discouraged, inadequate, and at a loss for what to do to make up for academic gaps and reconnect and motivate students' engagement in learning. This is on top of widespread exhaustion and burnout from the COVID-19 years. Asking them to learn and use new strategies, engage in new curriculum, and alter their pedagogy in order to better serve LTEL students turns out to be a hard sell in many cases. In most districts during the piloting phase, it is left to the innovators to do the work. Creating teacher professional learning networks within the school contract day where they are supported to learn and plan together with their peers has helped in one district.
Teacher turnover threatens investment in professional learning.	LTEL CoP participants explored providing special onboarding for new staff about the LTEL reality in the district/site and offering intensive summer professional learning opportunities for new teachers regarding working with LTEL students and the initiatives and strategies being emphasized. Other strategies considered were to direct EL coaches/teachers on special assignment (TOSAs) to model and support new teachers and to create video and online resources from LTEL professional learning that can be accessed by new teachers (and others).
Competing initiatives	Every district in the CoP has had multiple initiatives roll out over the past few years—each requiring leadership attention, resources, training, and changes in programs and practices in the district. To prevent LTEL work from being sidelined, helping leadership in the district understand the connection to LTEL students is important. Teams have shared LTEL data related to those initiatives (participation, outcomes, etc.), articulated the LTEL “angle” related to the purpose and goals of other initiatives, and offered expertise on LTEL students to support the implementation of those other initiatives. In one case, they recruited a key staff member for a new literacy initiative to be on the LTEL team.

Obviously, these are connected challenges. The strategies in response overlap. All of them require more from the LTEL teams than just planning and overseeing implementation. They are ambassadors, educators of others, advocates, and strategists.

Indications of Impact

One of the gifts and part of the power of Design Thinking is to acknowledge that meaningful change takes time and permission to not show immediate dramatic results in order to continue to pursue a concept or approach. It allows for time for an idea to be worked out in action, for tweaks to the approach, and for listening to and watching for what is and isn't working and responding to that information. The districts in the CoP were watchful for signals that reflected impact to confirm the system was moving in the right direction. By the end of the 18-month LTEL CoP process, BCSD saw increased progress and reclassification, with more LTEL students getting to overall Performance Level 4 on the ELPAC and then being reclassified. This resulted in achieving GREEN status on the Dashboard for LTEL progress. EUHSD reported students feeling more confident going into the ELPAC and showing improvements in their scores. The students in the EGUSD CTE–ELD class were able to make expert, enthusiastic oral presentations in English on their coding and robotics projects—breaking through what had previously been very little oral language use and marked disengagement. The students in Compton's new project-based ELD course expressed through surveys and interviews how much more engaging and useful the new ELD curriculum was. The SUHSD team saw their status on the Dashboard move out of RED status for EL students in both ELA and math.

The Community of Practice Design Thinking Process

The LTEL CoP began with a community-building virtual session and involved six formal convenings, including two in-person meetings in Sacramento and four virtual all-day meetings beginning in May 2023 and stretching until the end of 2024. The CSET at Stanford Graduate School of Education designed an 18-month process leading the LEA teams through a CoP focused on centering the strengths and needs of students identified as LTEL. Using local data as a starting place, the CoP teams took a systems approach to introduce innovative courses of action to better allow them to embrace and support these students. There are many improvement approaches used by LEAs that are data driven and human centered. This CoP used Design Thinking. Some other options include Improvement Science, Continuous Improvement, and Liberatory Design, among others.

CSET facilitated the CoP utilizing a Design Thinking framework. Design Thinking involves the following steps: Empathize, Define, Brainstorm, Prototype, and Iterate. The final session also addressed scale-up.

Session 1

- Introduction to Design Thinking
- Preparing for Empathy Interviews

Session 2

- Empathy Interviews, Quantitative Data, Journey Maps
- Defining the Challenges

Session 3

- Brainstorming Prototypes

Session 4

- Prototype Implementation

Session 5

- Prototype Iteration

Session 6

- Cross-District Feedback
- Scale-Up



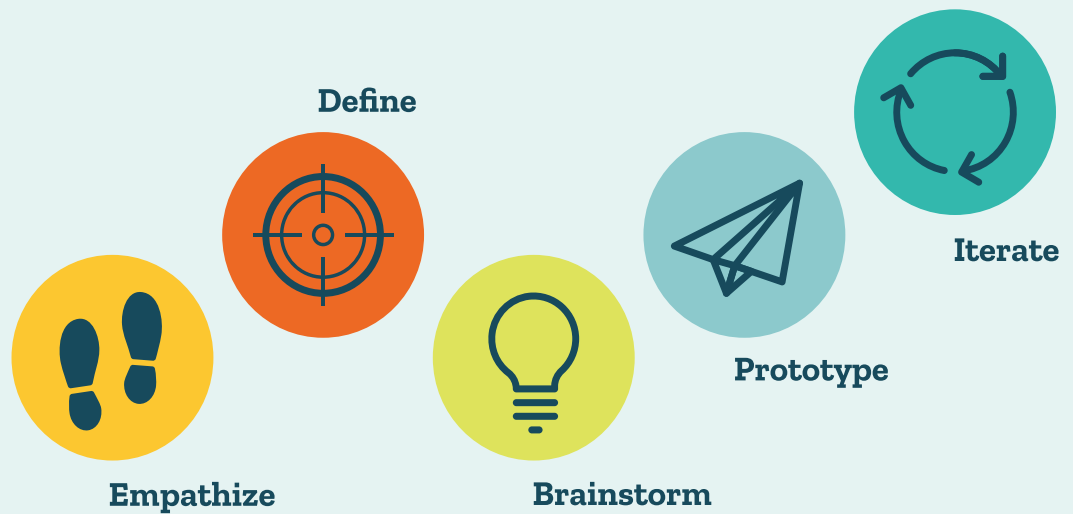


Image courtesy of Dr. Shelley Goldman, Emerita Professor (Teaching), Learning Sciences & Technology Design, Stanford Graduate School of Education.

In between sessions, teams pursued the work in their districts and were coached and supported by the CSET facilitators. As relationships developed between teams across the five districts, the periods of time between sessions were increasingly used to check in with each other, share progress and problem-solve.

Session 1: Kickoff, Introduction to Design Thinking, and Getting Started

The Design Thinking process begins with **Empathize**. This is the basic principle that to create meaningful innovation, you need to know your users and care about their lives. In this case, the users, or beneficiaries within the system, are LTEL students as well as the teachers and staff in the schools who are working to support LTEL students. The message behind the Empathize focus was clear: we are using local data to design innovative approaches for a student who is a designated LTEL, and we are designing for a district system and for educators seeking enhanced approaches to support their students designated as LTEL. So, we need to begin with understanding those youth. Empathizing is a listening and learning step. It also is meant to engage the heart and put the work solidly in human terms. In the urgent drive to identify and put in place technical solutions to complex important challenges, taking the time to pause to listen and empathize is not the most natural mode of operation in most school districts. The first assignment of the CoP, then, was for each member of the teams to conduct at least one empathy interview—with LTEL students, with staff, and/or with parents. The interview goals were to discover the interviewees' ideas and prior experiences, to ask the interviewee to share their current solutions, and to get the interviewee to tell stories and imagine their best scenario. An empathy interview is a conversation with a

user of a particular system with the goal of gaining insight into the user's experience. The California Collaborative for Educational Excellence Empathy Interviews Guide at <https://ccee-ca.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/2018-Empathy-Interviews-Guide.pdf> provides an overview of this process and a template to follow.

Session 2: Defining the Challenges to Address

Moving from empathy work to drawing conclusions involves collectively processing what was heard and the takeaways—and moving the data from the empathy interviews into a set of focal statements. This is the **Define** step, which involves determining the specific meaningful challenge to address, using quantitative EL data to surface additional inquiry questions and identifying historical precedents and prior solutions to understand the present context.

The second session introduced quantitative data to augment the heart- and human-level understandings emerging from the empathy interviews. Consultant José Silva, data scientist, prepared data dashboards for each team using state-available data to array graduation rates, A–G participation and completion,⁶ ELPAC progress, and CDE Dashboard data, to review and discuss. The intent of the data dashboard was to minimize distraction and make the LTEL student group and related outcomes visible. The focus was on what was surprising, intriguing, and compelling, and what other data might be needed. The data prompted productive dialogue, although most of the data was already known by at least some people in each team because teams had been directed to have their district data/assessment person facilitate evidence-oriented discussion. Several of the districts also prided themselves on being data driven.

Even so, taking the time to revisit their data added focus to their design process and emphasized a focus on local and timely context.

Innovations should be informed by understanding what has been tried in the past, what is and isn't working, and dynamics related to innovative change for EL students in each particular community and district. Every district and community has their own history and journey in how EL students have been incorporated and served. A journey map activity engaged teams in looking back on their own district histories of serving EL students, developing a collective picture of where their district is in terms of perceptions of EL students, assessments of the strength and efficacy of current practices and approaches and capacity for and openness to change. The purpose of the journey map is to co-construct a history of the district's journey in responding to EL students. The activity creates a narrative of institutional memory to remind and inform current teams responsible for EL education of paths that have been taken, shifts and changes, and lessons learned in the process of creating programs and serving EL students. It sheds light on why and how challenges have emerged and on dynamics impacting new change initiatives and assists in identifying strengths and resources that exist in the district for more effective practices. In these ways, the journey map served to provide context for the LTEL work moving forward.

⁶ For details on A–G requirements, see the CDE Courses Required for California Public University web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/hs/hsgtable.asp>.

By the end of the session, drawing on empathy interviews, data, and lessons from local history, the following set of LTEL challenges had been defined and discussed across the CoP.

The Need to Build an Assets-Based and Affirming Culture for Long-Term English Learner Students

Participants cited general deficit views among colleagues who are not as immersed in the work as them (“LTELs can’t do it; they won’t do it”) as an issue that impacts the climate for LTEL students and as a challenge that teachers face. Teams spoke of the need to build more awareness of LTEL students and urgency to address their needs and combat complacency about LTEL students’ lack of engagement and underachievement. Descriptions of dynamics in the districts indicated a continued need to build a collective sense of responsibility for LTEL students across the system.

Long-Term English Learner Students Feeling Disconnected from Schooling

Across the high schools and (to a lesser degree) middle schools, LTEL students express and demonstrate a lack of connection to school and a sense of not belonging. To teachers in classrooms, this presents as non-engagement and may be misinterpreted as “not trying.” Walking into the CoP, teams already identified the need to build stronger relationships with LTEL students and find ways to connect them more closely with school.

Inadequate Support for Long-Term English Learner Students Throughout the Curriculum

Evidence, including high course failure rates, shows that LTEL students often struggle academically, indicating an urgent need to provide responsive teaching across the academic program. Districts are aware of the requirement to provide integrated ELD across the curriculum. However, the challenge of actually building the capacity to ensure that scaffolding of instruction occurs across the curriculum to support LTEL engagement and success (integrated ELD) was on the minds of the LTEL CoP teams from the start. This is about both supporting teachers to develop skills and strategies that support LTEL students and the need to build a sense of collective responsibility for LTEL students. Questions raised by the teams included: “What are the best research-based strategies for LTEL students?” and “What are the professional development/learning resources related to LTEL students that speak to secondary teachers?”

Confusion and Struggles Over Whether or What Kind of English Language Development Is Appropriate for Long-Term English Learner Students

Providing appropriate designated ELD, which is required for all EL students, and the challenge of fitting ELD courses into the tight schedules of secondary schools was top-of-mind for several of the teams. They questioned whether designated ELD is appropriate and needed for LTEL students and whether there might be alternative approaches to delivering designated ELD that don't squeeze out opportunities to take the courses required for graduation or electives. Concerns were expressed about existing designated ELD curricula that don't directly address LTEL needs. Many questions were asked: "What is appropriate designated ELD for LTEL students?" "Do LTEL students need to be in a designated ELD class?" "Are there other ways to provide needed language support?" "Are the language issues of LTEL students basically about academic language?" "What are strategies for designing a master schedule to accommodate LTEL students' access to the full curriculum?"

Determining and Delivering Tier 2 Interventions to Support Long-Term English Learner Students

The districts in the CoP were either already using or had ideas for many different supports and interventions for LTEL students that might make a difference, including after school tutoring, TOSAs with a specific LTEL caseload, Data Chats, and EL summer school for students at risk of being identified as LTEL. However, questions were raised about appropriate staffing and scheduling for these supports and interventions, which forms of support were most effective for LTEL students, and how to recruit and actually get LTEL students to come.

Session 3: Brainstorm Ideas in Response to Data and Empathy Interviews

The third session focused on developing the prototype ideas to put into action. Based on the empathy work, the review of data, additional inquiry, the journey map review of what had been tried and was/wasn't working, and the definition of the challenges to be addressed, teams were ready to **Brainstorm** to create their ideas for prototyping and piloting. This began with visioning what an ideal response might look like to the needs and challenges that had been identified. The invitation and freedom to dream without yet being restricted by the pragmatics was highly valued by the district teams. They were then directed to craft Focal Statements as the basis of brainstorming responses. Using the sentence frame "____ needs a way to ____ because ____," teams worked to begin to define the kind of supports that may be needed.

For example, in summarizing an empathy interview, one district reported:

In our empathy interview with Julia, a tenth-grade English learner born in Sanger, we learned that while she really enjoys some of her classes, she sometimes feels that it is a struggle to keep up with her classwork. Not only does she have a part-time job, but she plays on the volleyball team, which practices three times a week and is the favorite part of her school day.

The Focal Statement based on that interview that moved the conversation toward design was:

Julia, a tenth-grade EL student who enjoys school but struggles with some classwork, needs help balancing her homework load with her after school responsibilities because she wants to excel in school and go to college when she graduates.

Some Focal Statements were very specific to individuals, but teams that heard very similar stories from multiple empathy interviews were then able to frame more general focal statements. Here is an example:

Focal Statement: Secondary LTEL students (no matter the school schedule) need ways to gain language acquisition while accessing engaging electives/content. We need to accelerate reclassification and provide engaging ELD that is invigorating, interesting, and regarded highly (by the whole school community).

Once they had their Focal Statements, it was time to “go wide” in brainstorming innovative solutions. The teams were instructed to give each other permission to think outside of the box, and with no restrictions. Teams had a strict time limit for brainstorming to prevent second-guessing ideas at this phase and to encourage open, unconventional thinking and limit self-editing. Then, having generated a wide set of possible solutions, the challenge was to prioritize and narrow the list down and right size what would be piloted as a prototype. The group was instructed to do the following:

- Categorize your ideas,
- Situate like ideas in clusters,
- Arrange from easiest to most difficult to implement,
- Individually vote on your favorite ideas,
- Rank solutions that are most “liked” and choose from them, and
- Always record your deliberations. You might come back to them again.

Through this process, teams came up with out-of-the-box ideas, many of which were not selected to move forward. However, the process of open and unrestricted brainstorming led to fresh ideas that many teams would not have otherwise considered. Some of the ideas that teams brainstormed were:

- Professional learning focused on academic language and literacy, including reviewing literacy standards.
- Create and promote the use of a common set of best teaching practices that are most effective for LTEL students and provide training or opportunities for site-based professional learning.
- Encourage instructional focus across content areas around explicit language instruction (like constructing meaning).
- Focused professional learning on language and literacy strategies that promote reading, speaking, writing, and listening for all teachers.
- Consider a seven-period day that allows for designated ELD support but also makes for more integration of EL students into elective classes.
- Strategic mentorship and more intensive one-on-one support for LTEL students that continue to struggle with passing the ELPAC.
- Use data to target LTEL students with Performance Levels 3 and 4 on the last Oral Language component of the ELPAC and who meet the ELA GPA requirement to test for the State Seal of Biliteracy.
- Provide professional learning on new revised reclassification criteria.
- Establish preventative measures for students at risk of being identified as LTEL students.
- Professional learning for staff on LTEL students: Who are the LTEL students? What aspects of the local system are contributing to students being identified as LTEL students?
- Create opportunities for parent involvement prior to students becoming identified as LTEL: How to support EL students.
- Establish targeted academies for LTEL students depending on need.
- Institute student goal setting.
- Revise reclassification to make the process more equitable.
- Implement a mentor program to help students reach their goals.
- Organize community workshops to promote collaboration between schools and families.
- Implement targeted professional learning specifically for teachers of LTEL students.
- Sit down with LTEL students to see which classes and/or teachers they are connecting with/ having more difficulty connecting to.
- Include well-designed and reality-based project-based learning in curriculum design.
- Schedule instructional time for students to do self-reflection on their learning, as well as offer feedback and suggestions for how to improve the experience.
- Create a team of people dedicated to curriculum development who demonstrate a passion and desire for good instruction that is rooted in reality and positivity.
- Empower strong teacher coaches to help support teachers in their instruction and in other areas that are needed to ensure a positive classroom experience.
- Provide time for teachers to meet solely for the purpose of sharing best practices. This would include meeting teachers from other sites who teach the same course, as well as those who are in different areas and subjects.
- Provide consistent professional learning for all content teachers (i.e., language objectives, Tier II, Tier III vocabulary, Part II of the CA ELD Standards, etc.).

- Establish focus groups and collaboration with student voice, especially at the high school level. Include students in the curriculum and learning experience design process (student input).
- Align student college and career aspirations with extracurricular experiences early, such as field trips (i.e., sending kids to places where they aspire to work or colleges they'd like to attend).
- Create more cultural inclusivity and awareness of activities and experiences.
- Establish continued collaboration with local universities and community colleges.
- Have Data Chats with students with goal setting.
- Identify mentors that align with student career interests.
- Create personalized learning plans for students.
- Celebrate progress by recognizing achievements and reinforcing a positive attitude toward learning.
- Integrate ELD classes with CTE courses and other electives of student interest.
- Create opportunities for teacher collaboration time focused on integrated ELD across content areas.
- Site leaders need an understanding of what good language development structures look like in the classroom.
- Build broad understanding of the EL Roadmap Policy.
- Offer professional learning with coaching cycles.
- Provide continuous classroom visits with feedback.
- Create a buddy system/mentor teachers.
- Create a reclassification progress tracker.

- Establish counselor check-ins with LTEL students.
- Market the State Seal of Biliteracy.
- Create intentional master schedules.
- Expose teachers to ELPAC test questions.
- Post reclassification info on district website and in course catalogue.

These are just a few of the many ideas that teams came up with during the brainstorm phase. While not all these ideas moved forward, the process informed each team's thinking and broadened their focus.

The change idea chosen needed to match the challenge, focus on the user and need, be meaningful and worthwhile, and be practical and doable within the capacity and conditions of the district. "Small enough to be manageable, but big enough to make a difference" was the mantra. Because one key element of Design Thinking is freeing a team to try things that might be "out of the box," the selection process is important. The choices for prototyping should be based on potential impact. It should ignite the team's sense of breaking new ground.

The facilitators encouraged teams to create a visual, a **Prototype** depicting what they were choosing to do. The graphic was to link what they had derived from the "heart work" of the empathy interviews that led to identifying the challenge they sought to address and then depict what they were actually going to try to do. Once this was done, the teams went back to their districts to actually implement and "test" their prototype—with a plan for what they would be looking at and looking for to let them know if and how their prototype idea was having the effects and impacts they had set out to accomplish.

Sessions 4 and 5: Implementation, Testing, and Iteration

As teams worked to implement their ideas, pilot their prototypes, and test the impacts, the CoP sessions became more focused on sharing across teams and offering feedback. Teams were learning through the process of trying out their prototype solutions, returning again to hear from the “users” through interviews, surveys, conversations, data. Design Thinking is iterative. The “test” process is important, as is the experiential process of trying out an idea. The following chart describes the selected challenges and the chosen prototype pilots of each team:

Table 3: District-Identified Long-Term English Learner Challenges, Focal Statements, and Change Ideas

District	Initially Defined Challenges	Focal Statements	Prototypes/ Actions/Pilots
BCSD	Building awareness of LTEL students, and inspiring action across the district Students didn’t know they were identified as EL, and weren’t reclassifying Teachers perceived LTEL students as unmotivated and disconnected—and wanted professional learning to engage their LTEL students Students were frustrated with the rigorous requirement for reclassification	District: Frustrated staff of LTEL students need clarity and ways to support their LTEL students who often become discouraged when they fail to meet all reclassification criteria Concerned BCSD administrators need ways to build understanding and urgency around the needs of LTEL students	Mentors for LTEL students at secondary sites and at risk of being identified as LTELs at elementary sites (mentor recruitment, student identification, matching process, mentor training, progress monitoring) Revise reclassification process Set site and district goals

District	Initially Defined Challenges	Focal Statements	Prototypes/ Actions/Pilots
Compton	Lack of EL engagement in classes D and F rates high	Students need a way to experience and demonstrate learning—within all classes—in relevant and engaging ways in order to promote a sense of self-efficacy	Reimagine LTEL ELD course content and design frameworks to increase student engagement—and student self-efficacy. And provide relevant, real-world, and authentic learning experiences for LTEL students. In response to student surveys, the revised ELD curriculum targeting LTEL students will incorporate project-based learning and include more group work, collaboration, writing, challenge, and relevance
EGUSD	How to fit in ELD without causing LTEL students to miss electives Not a strong sense of academic identity among LTEL students LTEL students under-represented in CTE pathways Decrease in A–G completion for LTEL students	Secondary LTEL students (no matter the school schedule) need ways to gain language acquisition while accessing engaging electives/content We need to accelerate reclassification and provide engaging ELD that is invigorating, interesting, and regarded highly (by the whole school community)	Create CTE–ELD Middle School Courses (including engaging content, computer science, and journalism, ELPAC prep and goal setting) Focus on middle school before it is too late First iteration: CTE–ELD courses for middle school Second iteration: Replicate process for high school with A–G approval

District	Initially Defined Challenges	Focal Statements	Prototypes/ Actions/Pilots
EUHSD	Low redesignation rates LTEL students not really on the radar Many teachers don't view language support as their job Sense of defeatism among LTEL students	Frustrated LTEL students need a way to understand their strengths and areas of growth across the ELPAC domains because the ELPAC is an annual extra expectation with little to no explanation or preparation Content area teachers need a way to integrate academic language development into their unit design because academic language development should be authentic to the context for student growth and to ensure that this is not "one more thing"	Series of mini-lessons and coaching conversations between students and instructional coach about ELPAC, focusing on score analysis and goal setting—with ELPAC preparation
SUHSD	LTEL/ELD seen as a "punishment" class by teachers and students ELD not rigorous or engaging enough LTEL discouragement and disengagement; desire to graduate on time but ELD courses take the place of graduation requirements	Empower educators with targeted professional learning and resources to effectively address the distinct needs of LTEL students By integrating research-backed differentiated instruction strategies and collaborative learning models, we aim to enhance teacher capacity and foster academic success among LTEL students	Professional learning and coaching to strengthen support for LTEL students instructionally across the whole curriculum (integrated ELD) in course-alike, subject-alike groups of teachers

Session 6: Final Session: Feedback, Scale-Up, and New Lines of Inquiry

All districts in the CoP were deeply engaged in continuing implementation of their pilots and testing the impact. The opportunity to share and provide feedback to each other was of particular value because the teams now had relationships with each other and were familiar with the intent, motivation, and journey that each had traversed in arriving at the approaches being piloted. The final session was also the opportunity to look ahead. Scale-up occurs once an idea has been piloted and tested sufficiently to merit expansion. It involves expanding supports to include additional LTEL students beyond the initial pilot group, onboarding additional teachers and/or school sites, and incorporating the ongoing work into district strategic planning and official guidance. Scaling up is best aligned with critical junctures of an academic year, i.e., when the master schedule is under development, as classes are being formed, or ahead of the start of a new school year. Within the 18 months of the CoP, none of the districts had arrived at full scale-up but were beginning the work of planning and moving toward scaling up. In fact, the way in which they had piloted their prototype ideas had the seeds of the strategy for scaling up:

Focus initially on one school site with the most EL students: By starting in a school site where there is a critical mass of LTEL students, the pilot could be built where there was already awareness and a sense of urgency. The notion was that once the “messiness and rough edges” of trying out a new approach had been worked out through the pilot, and the approach had been developed, tried, and tested, it could more easily be shared and scaled to schools with less sense of prior engagement with focusing on LTEL students. For example, EUHSD selected the high school with the most EL students as the site for piloting ELPAC test preparation and goal setting approaches for LTEL students. Once the approach is developed, it can be shared with other sites.

- **Why this is important:** With limited resources, starting at a single site can provide an opportunity to pilot a program and work out any kinks before scaling up. Focusing on a site with a large number of EL students allows the pilot to have the greatest impact and ensures that educators are already aware of the need to focus on LTEL students and feel the urgency of doing so.

Begin with the willing and the ready: In districts where school site autonomy is the standard, the piloting began at sites where the principal was interested and felt it matched their priorities. Strategically, the LTEL CoP Team and the district created many opportunities for other principals to learn from their peers about what was happening at the pilot sites and created open invitations for other sites to join in as interest developed. For example, BCSD started their mentoring pilot with a few school sites. At principals’ meetings, those principals were invited to share what they saw happening at their sites as a result of the mentoring and how they had locally structured the mentorship. Other principals became interested and began to adapt the model.

- **Why this is important:** Focusing on principals who are already taking on this work removes the added barrier of convincing someone that LTEL students should be a priority. The best way to bring more hesitant leaders along is to share successes peer to peer. The principals implementing pilot programs can use those successes to bring principals at other sites along.

Utilize the “spark” to create the model and work through the kinks: Each of the districts in the CoP were fortunate to have at least one person in their district and on their CoP teams who was “on fire” and already deeply involved in finding effective and innovative ways to support LTEL students as ELD teachers, coaches, or counselors. The choice to empower and support that momentum and expertise in order to design and pilot new approaches was a way to leverage expertise. For example, an ELD teacher in EGUSD was supported to engage others in designing a new approach to middle school ELD through a CTE–ELD curriculum, and then she took on piloting the class. In EUHSD, the ELD lead at one school took on design and piloting Data Chats. In SUHSD, an ELD coach/TOSA designed professional learning and coaching for teachers on integrated ELD strategies. For the “sparks,” doing the work with the support of the LTEL CoP team and with district support meant they were working in less isolation, and their work was more comprehensively supported. As one of those sparks described: *“The fact that I was doing this work with the district LTEL team behind me meant I had both time and directive to get what I had been trying to do in my classroom into a more formal approach and get it down on paper as curriculum—not just what I do with my own students, but as something with wider import that others could pick up and do as well.”* The role of those on the LTEL CoP team in district positions, in the words of one of the directors, was *“to remove barriers for our amazing sparks, and cheer them on.”*

- **Why this is important:** Identifying teacher or counselor leaders who are already doing this work and empowering them allows the team to build on the work already underway rather than starting from scratch. Teachers and counselors who are immersed in this work may already be aware of barriers and help the team identify and remove them.

Focus on middle school: Three districts made the strategic decision to focus on middle school. The rationale was both about the LTEL students and those at risk of becoming LTEL students (it is a crucial time to accelerate and catch them up so they can enter high school reclassified as English proficient) and about the system (middle school has more flexibility for innovation compared to the high school where high school graduation requirements and master schedules create more rigidity and challenges). EGUSD’s CTE–ELD course innovation was created and piloted in middle school, with plans to expand across the middle schools and then to build similar enriched ELD curriculum in the high schools. *“Middle school is right in the act of where we are creating LTEL students and then passing them along to struggle in high school. If we can reclassify them before high school, it’s due diligence and course correction.”*

- **Why this is important:** Focusing on middle school first gives districts the opportunity to help remove barriers to reclassification prior to high school, giving students more time to catch up on any academic losses they may have experienced and graduate from high school college or career ready. Middle school's flexibility may allow for greater innovation and serve as a lab to test practices that may be able to be scaled up or adapted for high schools as well.

Work toward building capacity: While the piloted efforts started small, some districts started early to think about building capacity to be able to expand down the road. In EGUSD, where one teacher was piloting new CTE–ELD courses and writing curriculum, a cohort of teachers was being lined up and brought into the process in preparation for replicating the course in the next school year.

- **Why this is important:** Systems change requires capacity building, and building in opportunities for CoP members to share their learnings and innovations with others will ensure that efforts are sustained and can be scaled up.

Reflections on the Process: 11 Lessons Learned

One of the purposes of this state LTEL CoP was to generate lessons to inform LTEL work throughout the state. The short, 18-month time frame and the purposeful design of promoting innovation was sufficient to generate and begin to implement new ideas, but it was not a sufficient time frame to arrive at new researched models of LTEL practice for immediate statewide implementation. The specific process that the LTEL CoP used, and the particular contexts and details of each district's journey, are not plug and play or necessarily appropriate to replicate for others seeking to improve their school systems' responses to LTEL students under dissimilar conditions or contexts. However, key lessons were identified that are generalizable to inform and guide other districts engaging in a journey to shape effective LTEL services and programs.

These lessons are connected. The first five lessons are about breaking the prevalent habit of calling a meeting to come up with solutions to an urgent problem—creating the plan then and there. Good planning is not an event; it is a process. Effective plans are local plans, based on knowledge about who the students are in a particular community and their experiences in the schools of that district and designed to work within the dynamics of the local context. These lessons are about creating the conditions for thoughtful, powerful, targeted planning that responds to the needs of LTEL students and local realities. And the last four lessons are about building the field of responsive and assets-based education that addresses the needs of LTEL students and prevents the development of another generation of LTEL students.

First, **taking the time to listen to the stories and perspectives of LTEL students and those engaged in trying to support them is the first step and an essential foundation for defining and shaping effective responses.** In the case of the LTEL CoP, empathy interviews were the vehicle, and every member of the LTEL planning team was engaged in conducting these interviews. Focusing not only on students, but also on the teachers and staff provided important information about which aspects of system practices had to be examined more closely and acted on. Notably, the interviews also deeply humanized the issue, providing additional context and motivation. In formal product development terms, this is beginning with the “user” perspective. Others simply label it the “heart” work. In the voices of participants in the LTEL CoP:

“Hearing from students changed everything for us. For district-level folks especially, it is a rare opportunity to actually hear LTEL voices, their dreams, their distress, their experiences. Starting our process by listening to them made the ‘why’ of our endeavor so clear.”

“What transformed our work from being a technical search for what would increase reclassification rates to focusing on connecting and engaging our students was stopping and listening to them. It steered us in new directions.”

“The empathy interviews were so powerful in helping us understand what we needed to do that we are taking it back as a practice. All of our principals in the district will be doing empathy interviews now with LTEL students and with teachers. It’s how we can build awareness and urgency and intent across the district.”

Second, **you need a team.** In too many cases, an individual or small group of staff that make up the EL or multilingual department take on designing and creating the programs and practices that LTEL students need but are unable to get the institutional support or conditions it needs for success, or even an individual ELD teacher who may take it on themselves to try to design a new curriculum for their LTEL students. The effectiveness of the plans and implementation begins with assembling **the right composition of people** around the table—a mix of expertise and perspectives and with sufficient reach and position to inform and support a change process. Who sits around the table to plan a response to LTEL students in a district makes a difference. For the LTEL CoP, putting together a mixed-role team, including representation at both the site and the district level, and ensuring EL expertise at the table was a requirement for participation. Reflecting on the impact of the LTEL CoP, there was widespread identification of these teams as a key factor in success. For EL leads and teachers, the fact that there was strong district presence supporting the pilot work was major. One coach who was piloting the new ELD course called for by the CoP team remarked: *“I can’t believe they are letting me do this and backing it! They have allocated funds for extra hours to develop the course and for the specific supplies for the hands-on materials I need. I have district support to innovate! And most important, I have a team that collectively*



understands and sees the importance of this pilot—for the district!” And from a district director of curriculum and instruction: “I think of myself as a champion of the champions, supporting people who are doing the work of piloting something we really need for our students.”

Third, time is a precious and hard-to-come-by resource in school districts. Everyone has a full plate of work to do and feels the pressure of more that should be done. The sense of urgency to solve problems often propels quick decisions, high expectations, and pressure to show immediate results. Those in the LTEL CoP almost unanimously spoke of the importance of having been given **permission to take the time to try new ideas and to reflect and revise**. In that process, there is permission to succeed and fail, succeed, and fail—to learn as you go. It gives time to see something through, and multiple tries to get something right. As one

CoP participant said: *“The process slowed us down, made us more intentional. It kept us from just jumping to a solution. We were urged to be thoughtful about what indicators would be that what we were trying was hitting the mark and thoughtful about observing impacts, and then redesigning as needed. And that helped us to stick with it. We didn’t just discard something because it didn’t show immediate success. It helped us be intentional.”* This was a relief and unlocked new openness to trying things outside of the box. As one team member said: *“We felt the excitement of the freedom and permission and support to be creative.”*

Fourth, providing a **protected space and adequate time to focus specifically on LTEL students** is needed—particularly in districts in which awareness and urgency about LTEL students is not widespread. The call to focus specifically on LTEL students needs to be backed up with the system providing the time for people to work together to learn and plan and assess. The LTEL CoP, by design, was specifically for LEAs to work on strengthening services for LTEL students. That was backed up by setting out 18 months of meeting time for the full CoP to come together, and the expectation that LEA teams would meet back in their districts to pursue their inquiries and pilots and dialogue. Allocating time is a system commitment of a precious resource. It represents the seriousness of intent and is what facilitates learning, design, and implementation to take place. Good planning and effective piloting of ideas cannot happen without sufficient time devoted to the process. Members of the LTEL CoP spoke about the power of getting away together as a team, and how seldom that ever happens in the course of regular practice in districts. Thoughtful dialogue, sharing of perspectives and concerns, understanding data and the needs/assets of EL students, and determining priorities cannot be accomplished in a rushed time schedule and with people entering and exiting. As one team reflected in their wrap-up: *“It was particularly important to be with others who share a passion and a focus on LTEL students—to just have a space where that could hold the attention, to feel as a team that this is what we were about.”*

Fifth, **connecting with people working on the same issues beyond one's own context is enlightening, supportive, and inspiring.** The LTEL CoP involved the participation of teams across five districts from throughout California. Purposely built into the design of the LTEL CoP were opportunities for cross-district dialogue, presenting work to each other, and getting and giving feedback. The teams comprised educators experienced in trying to lead systems change, and being part of a community with other districts facing similar challenges was both reassuring (“we are not alone”) and a source of perspective and strategy ideas. In summing up the experience of being part of the CoP, every team cited learning from and being inspired by the other district teams.

“My favorite part was talking to other districts. To feel ‘it’s not just us facing these challenges and grappling with trying to find our way. We are not alone!’”

“The CoP was a rare opportunity to sit down with other districts to hear about what they are doing, and also to realize that what we are doing is of interest and is useful to others. And the feedback and pushback have been super helpful to us as we’ve worked through our prototype and implementation. Because they are small, dedicated educators who care as much about getting this right as we do for our LTEL students—and they are really in the work, like we are.”

“I’d sum it up this way: mutual inspiration and allyship—that was key to what made this so valuable for us.”

Sixth, **it is important to reach out to and utilize external expertise and invest in professional learning.** There is a solid foundation of knowledge about effective approaches for EL students—including LTEL students. State and COE resources, professional learning resources, technical assistance organizations, and university centers all offer many building blocks for districts seeking to find what will work in their own context. In piloting new efforts, each district in the LTEL CoP reached out to learn what supports and models were available to learn from and draw on. Before designing a new CTE–ELD course, the teacher who took on that charge engaged in her own professional learning and exploration with key conferences, through the county office of education and with technical assistance providers. This round of an LTEL CoP included coaching and professional learning for diverse-role professional teams on creating systems improvement, but, by design, professional learning on instructional strategies for teacher practitioners was not the focus. Approaches to professional learning on instructional strategies and curriculum choices were determined by districts based on local needs. They voiced the importance of such professional learning and sought external expertise to inform and in some cases provide that support.

Seventh, **educators must build on the knowledge and experience of what has gone before and prepare for a long journey.** California's aspirational EL Roadmap Policy sets forth a vision and principles describing the schooling system we want and that EL students deserve. It is designed to orient us to engage in continuous improvement to move toward enacting that vision. The steps described in the LTEL CoP journey include innovating and piloting new, more responsive approaches to serving our LTEL students. Once designed, there is the implementation and continuous improvement task of giving those approaches life for all LTEL students in the district and adjusting the approaches to match emerging needs and changing contexts. In final interviews with team members of the LTEL CoP, every person spoke of how much more work is yet to be done—to build capacity, to create a more assets-oriented climate, to achieve vertical and horizontal articulation, and to prevent the creation of LTEL status. *"We are not yet where we want to be"* resounded throughout the final interviews with CoP team members. Given the tension between the urgency to address a long-standing problem of the system's continuing creation of LTEL students and the awareness that changing practices and attitudes of a school system is like (in the words of one of the CoP participants) *"changing the course of the Titanic,"* it is important that each district does not work in isolation to "discover" approaches that have already been tried and vetted as parts of effective comprehensive approaches to LTEL education elsewhere. Knowing what research has shown and accessing what others have done are important steps to support locally focused planning.

Eighth, **the state role is important in focusing attention and propelling action for LTEL students and providing leverage and credibility for the work of advocates for LTEL students within districts to design and implement more effective programs and services!** California's EL Roadmap Policy calls out the need to respond to the typologies and diversity within the EL population—specifically calling out the importance of addressing LTEL student needs. The prior efforts in four of the five districts to build awareness of educators about the EL Roadmap set a foundation and context for this newer focus on LTEL students. As one CoP participant explained:

"Because of the EL Roadmap training we did in the district, we had a common language now to talk about typologies and LTEL students, a language our administrators were familiar with from the EL Roadmap. They recognized this as state policy, and it gave us some framework of legitimacy. I'm not sure our LTEL work could have caught folks' attention in the same way if we hadn't been able to link it all so directly to state policy and the principles of the EL Roadmap."

The state data system compiles data on the number of students identified as LTEL and at risk of becoming LTELs to call attention to and inform practices throughout the state. Several CoP district leads spoke of the impact in their districts of having undergone FPM reviews that had identified LTEL students, lack of adequate ELD, and reclassification as issues needing attention, which provided both rationale and impetus to focus on LTEL students and seize the opportunity to participate in the LTEL CoP. The initiation of the LTEL CoP by the MSD at CDE was a further statement of

support from the state for districts to take on the work of designing and implementing approaches to better serving their LTEL students. The fact that the CoP was sponsored by CDE gave those working to focus on LTEL students in the districts not only the opportunity to participate in a state-level effort but also added credibility and visibility within their own districts for their work. Within the time frame of the CoP, California newly added LTEL students as a subgroup on the Dashboard and called for LCAPs to address what districts were doing to address their LTEL population. The urgency communicated by the state's Dashboard and LCAP requirements upped the sense of importance and relevance for the work of the CoP teams within their districts. From what had been a largely overlooked issue in most districts, LTEL students now had visibility.

Ninth, we know a lot about how to better serve LTEL students, but that knowledge base is not adequately disseminated or leveraged, AND there is still a need to build additional practice and program models. The districts involved in the LTEL CoP are proactive districts, and their involvement in this LTEL CoP was not the beginning of their efforts to better serve their LTEL students. The CoP was their opportunity to explore and break new ground in their ongoing work. They knew many aspects of what a comprehensive approach to responsive LTEL schooling should include. While implementation and capacity building might be challenges, what they should be trying to put in place wasn't a mystery to them: clear district placement and program guidance, data systems that support ongoing program monitoring, academic tutoring, scaffolding strategies and with integrated ELD across the curriculum, goal setting with students, language-rich elementary education that moves students to the English proficiency they need within six or seven years, etc. The knowledge base for all of that is solid. For districts, knowing the components of a comprehensive program and doing the hard work of implementation is already a huge task. But in addition to implementing what we know should be done, there are aspects of LTEL schooling that still need developing and questions that need answering. These include, for example:



- Models of curriculum for LTEL-specific ELD
- Research on the role of and how to leverage and reactivate home language among LTEL students who have not developed or used their home language at all in academic settings and are now struggling academically with insufficient English
- Guidance on a variety of delivery approaches for ELD for LTEL students within the tight time constraints of a high school program

Addressing these newer areas is beyond the scope of innovation for single districts and requires a more robust research-oriented and knowledge development effort.

Tenth, overcoming gaps and remediating harms that have accrued for LTEL students is only one piece of the challenge—**preventing the development of LTEL status must become a priority.** Two of the five districts in the LTEL CoP were high school districts, fielding a yearly flow of students identified as LTEL arriving in ninth grade from feeder districts. For those districts, stemming the creation of new generations of students with LTEL status feels beyond their locus of control, so their focus remains on what to do to remediate, repair, overcome gaps, try to accelerate movement toward reclassification, and honor the commitment to providing a program that fulfills graduation requirements and prepares LTEL students for college and beyond. The three districts that serve students from TK on all chose to focus the work of the CoP engagement on middle school and those students who were either already identified as LTELs or clearly at risk of becoming LTELs. Again, the task of repairing, remediating, and trying to accelerate movement toward English proficiency took center stage. But the chorus across all of these district teams was that none of this would be necessary if the elementary and early education system was really designed for and focused on preventing the development of LTEL status. In the words of a principal from an LTEL CoP team: *“It shouldn’t be like ‘Uh-oh, Houston, we have a problem.’ That’s not where the work needs to begin. It should be that we are building this spaceship to fly, the right way, from the very beginning. We should be preventing the problem from occurring at all.”*

Eleventh, **knowing what should be put in place for LTEL student success is less the challenge than how to build capacity, will, investments, and attitudes needed to implement what we know should be done.** The districts in the LTEL CoP had less difficulty imagining what they would like to put in place (and indeed in many cases knew what was needed) for their LTEL students than figuring out how to make it happen. *“It’s not so much about the WHAT; it’s about the HOW,”* said one of the participants. The lack of capacity, the reality of exhaustion, burnout, and complacency about LTEL students, and the persistence of entrenched patterns of practice that don’t serve EL students all complicate the challenge of creating a system that will repair gaps and harms accrued by LTEL students over seven and more years in our schooling system. In discussions with each other across districts, participants in the LTEL CoP were deeply interested in what others were innovating for their LTEL students, but equally so in how others were navigating the implementation challenges.

Recommendations

The state LTEL CoP was initiated and funded in part to generate lessons and recommendations for the field. Based on the lessons learned from the LTEL CoP, the following recommendations are offered by the author of this report.

Ensure Quality Guidance and Technical Assistance to Local Educational Agencies

Throughout California, a large number of districts have been identified for differentiated assistance based on their LTEL numbers and outcomes. This poses an important opening, opportunity, and responsibility to provide informed support and facilitation that will result in improved services and programs for LTEL students. Advocates and policymakers should work to ensure the availability of resources and direct the CDE to provide **guidance, training, and tools** for COEs to use to support the delivery of well-informed and useful differentiated technical assistance on improving LTEL outcomes.

Build Field Expertise and Capacity

In addition, the CDE and other state-level agencies and organizations should be encouraged and supported with resources to sponsor **multiple field building mechanisms** through which educators can share effective practices and implementation strategies that result in stronger LTEL outcomes. These field building forums might include, for example, convenings, symposiums, publications, and webinar series. Field building should engage researchers in codifying what is known about LTEL needs and effective responses and make these findings available to the field to support LEAs in developing evidence-based programs and services for preventing the development of LTEL status and serving LTEL students.

COEs and technical assistance providers should create **opportunities that support administrators, district staff, and others to come together in a shared focus on improving services and programs for LTEL students**. These mechanisms might include CoPs, networks, or symposiums, to provide opportunities for educators and school leaders to engage with each other for shared learning and mutual support around the commitment to better serve LTEL students and prevent the development of LTEL status.

Professional associations and COEs are encouraged to provide **leadership development** and support for superintendents and district leaders about understanding and leading the work of school improvement to prevent the creation of LTEL status and address the needs of LTEL students.

Engage Inclusive and Intentional Local Planning Efforts

To shape and lead local efforts to address the needs of LTEL students, it is recommended that districts **establish LTEL work groups, task forces, or teams** with a designated and ongoing role to coordinate, inform, and strategize how to build and move a focus on LTEL students within the district. These should be cross-role teams comprising site administrator representatives, someone responsible for district data, representation from the district office, including the EL coordinator, and one or more representatives from curriculum and instruction. In addition, teams might include counselors, teacher leaders, coaches, and ELAC or DELAC representatives. These teams should be provided the time, designated role, and resources to meet regularly to engage in inquiry and planning to strengthen LTEL services and programs. Based on the models of implementation science, design thinking, and other intentional improvement processes, this work should begin with accessing student and teacher voice and a deep dive into the data.

Closing

California is a national leader in building awareness of LTEL students and in the creation of a strong policy and accountability framework that directs attention to the need for action to address the needs of these students, who have been passed along and inadequately served for years of their schooling. The time is ripe to disrupt unproductive patterns of practice and neglect that lead to the creation of LTEL status, and it is time to invest in building capacity and support the work of creating the programs and services that will repair the accrued gaps and harms of those the system has failed, making it possible for LTEL students to gain the English proficiency they need and to graduate from our schools prepared for college, career, and participation in a global and multilingual world. In the words of one of the participants in the LTEL CoP:

"This is a moral imperative for us. We have to be absolutely focused on what it will take to deliver high-quality instruction and access for our LTEL students, and on building the pathways so that our multilingual learners are seen, challenged, and empowered to succeed."

Resources

California Department of Education Resources

- CDE **ELD Standards web page** at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ml/eldstandards.asp>

This web page includes the ELD standards, ELD video series, information, and resources to assist LEAs design, implement, and enhance integrated and designated ELD instruction for EL students.

- CDE **ELA/ELD Framework web page** at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rl/cf/elaeldfrmwrksbeadopted.asp>

This web page includes the ELA/ELD Framework that the State Board of Education adopted at its July 9, 2014, meeting. This is the final, edited digital version of the ELA/ELD Framework, published July 2015.

- CDE **EL Students with Disabilities web page** at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/sr/elpracguideswd.asp>

This web page includes the California Practitioners' Guide for Educating English Learners with Disabilities to provide guidance to teachers and specialists in grades TK/K–12 to help them appropriately identify and support EL students with disabilities (also known as dually identified students). The manual or guide will also assist leaders in developing and implementing policies and practices related to EL students with disabilities.

- CDE **EL Roadmap web page** at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ml/roadmap.asp>

This web page includes the EL Roadmap Policy, guidance document, and other resources.

- CDE **Improving Education: Research to Practice web page** at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ml/improvingmleeducation.asp>

This web page includes the publication *Improving Education for Multilingual and English Learner Students: Research to Practice* in its entirety as well as each chapter for individual study.

- CDE **LTEL CoP web page** at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ml/ltelcop.asp>

The CDE LTEL CoP web page includes an overview of the project, participating LEAs, and resources.

- CDE **OPTEL web page** at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ml/optel.asp>

This web page includes information about the OPTEL, a resource to support educators in monitoring and evaluating language use of EL students.

- CDE **Reclassification web page** at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ml/reclassification.asp>

This web page includes information on how a LEA determines whether or not an EL student has sufficient English proficiency to be reclassified as fluent English proficient.

Partner Resources

- **LTEL Toolkit** available on the California Educators Together website at <https://www.caeducatorstogether.org/groups/3sgAJZgT/view> (free account required)

The LTEL Toolkit is designed to provide educators, administrators, and support staff with research-based strategies, tools, and resources to accelerate academic achievement and language development for LTEL students. Grounded in the California EL Roadmap, this toolkit offers practical guidance to ensure LTEL students have meaningful access to rigorous instruction and the full curriculum.

- Californians Together ***Addressing the Needs of Long-Term English Learners: A Response to the 2024 California Schools Dashboard*** at <https://californianstogether.org/resource/addressing-the-needs-of-long-term-english-learners/>

With the November 2024 release of the 2024 Dashboard, LTEL students are now included as a new student group. This means that education leaders and community members can now view how LTEL students in districts and schools are performing across a variety of indicators, including those for academic achievement, college/career readiness, EL progress, chronic absenteeism, graduation rate, science achievement, and suspension rate. As school districts respond to address LTEL students based on the 2024 Dashboard results, this resource outlines several opportunities to consider.

- Californians Together ***Renewing Our Promise: Research and Recommendations to Support California's Long-Term English Learners*** at <https://californianstogether.org/resource/renewing-our-promise-research-and-recommendations-to-support-californias-long-term-english-learners/>

Renewing Our Promise by Manuel Buenrostro and Julie Maxwell-Jolly, PhD, Californians Together's newest LTEL report includes updated LTEL background and outcome information, research landscape summary, review of policy changes, survey results from 107 California school districts with the highest number and/or percentage of LTEL students, examples of successful strategies for serving LTEL students and those at risk of being identified as LTEL, and state and local policy recommendations.

- Californians Together ***Reparable Harm: Fulfilling the Unkept Promise of Educational Opportunity for California's Long Term English Learners*** at <https://californianstogether.org/resource/reparable-harm-fulfilling-the-unkept-promise-of-educational-opportunity-for-californias-long-term-english-learners/>

This report, authored by Californians Together and funded by the California Community Foundation, reports on data gathered from 40 school districts on EL students in grades 6–12 and calls on state policymakers and leaders to provide solutions for these students. It also outlines basic principles and promising approaches for school districts to meet the needs of LTEL students more effectively. Available in English and Spanish.

- **EL Roadmap Resource Hub** at <https://www.elroadmap.org/>

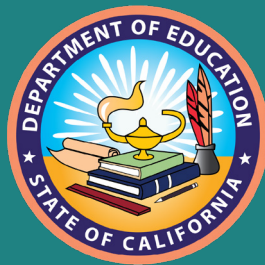
This web page compiles EL Roadmap resources from the CDE and partners in the field by audience: administrators, educators, teacher educators, policymakers, and families.

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Long-Term English Learner
Community of Practice Report