

The California English Learner Roadmap: A Vision for Sustained Implementation

THE IMPERATIVE

In 2017, the California English Learner Roadmap (ELRM) was adopted by the State Board of Education – a landmark policy that outlines a set of guiding principles leaders at the state and local level should follow to ensure our state’s English learners (ELs) and dual language learners (DLLs) can access the opportunities and supports they need to thrive in school from early childhood through 12th grade. Many EL/DLL advocates – including several of the Multilingual Education Policy Partners (MEPP) – have been focused on supporting ELRM implementation across all system levels since then, through technical assistance to schools and districts, the development of resources at the state level, and legislative and budget advocacy.

Unfortunately, implementation of the ELRM across the state has been uneven for several reasons. Without sustained and strategic investments to support awareness building and implementation at the local level, access to high-quality educational opportunities and strong outcomes for ELs and DLLs will continue to be uneven and inequitable. A comprehensive state implementation plan encompassing both long-term infrastructure supports and budgetary allocations does not currently exist. And, with increasing federal threats to critical funding supports to California’s immigrant students and communities, the importance of the ELRM’s first principle – ensuring schools are creating welcoming and safe spaces that are responsive to their needs – is more critical than ever.

Now, eight years after adoption, California’s leaders must commit to a comprehensive, sustained, and statewide implementation of the ELRM that ensures the long-term success of ELs and DLLs across all of California.

IMPLEMENTATION EFFORTS TO DATE

- The primary effort directly addressing English Learner Roadmap implementation has been through two rounds of Educator Workforce Investment Grants (EWIG), totaling \$20 million, intended to support professional learning around ELRM implementation.¹ The latest round provides funding through June 2025.
- Several bills have been signed into law to support multilingual learners more broadly since passage of the ELRM policy [including the Bilingual Teacher Professional Development Program (BTPDP), Pathways to Success Grant Program, and Teacher Residency Grant Program²], though they aren't specific to ELR implementation or targeted at ELs or DLLs in early learning programs.
- In 2019, a Dual Language Instruction (DLI) Transition Team was assembled by Superintendent Thurmond to develop short-term and long-term goals for dual language instruction based on the California Department of Education's (CDE) existing commitments around multilingualism. The goals center around developing infrastructure and capacity to: 1) operationalize CDE's various multiliteracy initiatives; 2) build the bilingual teacher pipeline; and 3) improve the accountability system to better communicate EL/DLL outcomes. However, implementation and monitoring efforts related to these goals are unknown.
- Most recently, in September 2024, the Governor signed AB 2074, calling for the state to develop a statewide implementation plan with the support of an advisory committee.³ While the current 2025-26 state budget proposal includes funding for one CDE staff position, significantly more funding for additional staff capacity is needed to carry out the statewide implementation plan and provide regional support.

¹ The EWIG was established by the 2019-20 Education Omnibus Trailer Bill (SB 75) to support professional learning grants across several possible areas, including implementation of the EL Roadmap policy. A second allocation was made in the 2022-23 budget through AB 185. Two grantees – Californians Together and California Association for Bilingual Education – have received funding across these periods to support educator training through EL RISE! and Multilingual California Project, respectively (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ml/ewigelrmpolicy.asp>).

² The BTPDP allocates grant funding to LEAs for teacher professional development in order to expand the bilingual teacher workforce (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/profile.asp?id=6237>). Pathways to Success awards one-time grant funds to LEAs to establish or expand dual language programs (https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220SB952). The Teacher Residency Grant Program supports partnerships between LEAs and teacher preparation programs to expand, strengthen, and create teacher residency programs in designated shortage fields, including bilingual education

³ https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB2074.



WHAT WE HOPE TO SEE FROM STATE LEADERS

A strong **statewide infrastructure** must be created and maintained to sustain English Learner Roadmap implementation long term, and it must be adequately supported by **state funding mechanisms**. State leaders should:

Establish clear implementation goals and develop the infrastructure to achieve them.

1. Develop a statewide implementation plan:
 - a. Implement the requirements of AB 2074 by developing a statewide plan for ELR implementation by November 2026 that is led by the California Department of Education (CDE). Ensure the plan a) includes measurable goals and monitoring, and b) is co-developed with state, regional, and local interest holders currently engaged in implementation efforts.
 - b. Revisit the DLI Transition Team's recommendations as part of the statewide planning process.
2. Build regional professional development infrastructure and capacity [within County Offices of Education (COEs) and districts/Local Education Agencies (LEA)]:
 - a. Map and share out the current landscape of professional support being provided to LEAs to identify existing supports and gaps in support (and potentially implementation).
 - b. Uplift/widely publicize professional development and technical assistance tools already developed by current EWIG grantees that incorporate resources tailored to different practitioner audiences and ELRM principles.
 - c. Develop guides alongside COEs to help districts strategize how to use various funding sources to support ELRM implementation. COEs should use these guides to review how the ELRM is reflected in district goals, actions, and activities, incorporating the [LCAP rubric tool](#) developed by the LMU Center for Equity for English Learners and other partners to support LCAP development.
 - d. Share with LEAs how they can partner with early childhood programs in their communities to support dual language learning opportunities and professional development, including childcare providers who support young children and provide after-school care for many DLLs/ELs.
 - e. Adopt an updated ELA/ELD instructional materials list to support local implementation of the framework, given that the current list was last adopted after the 2014 ELA/ELD Framework.

3. Document and scale best practices:
 - a. Engage with schools and districts who are advanced in their implementation efforts to understand and document 1) what deep, sustained implementation can look like; 2) best practices in navigating challenges such as EL program entry and exit criteria, appropriate uses of funding, and supporting diverse EL typologies; 3) the development and expansion of dual language programs; and 4) the costs associated with various implementation efforts.
 - b. Share out these findings with practitioners in the field to advance understanding of and help scale best practices.

Secure the resources needed to support ELRM implementation.

1. Provide funding to support the development of the state ELRM implementation plan, including the hiring of dedicated CDE staff members, the work of the advisory committee, and ongoing monitoring/accountability.
2. Provide funding for local instructional leadership and professional development in LEAs exhibiting the greatest support needs (such as smaller or remote COEs or districts that have high concentrations of ELs from low-income backgrounds, low rates of EL advanced course taking, and challenges with and/or delayed implementation of the ELRM policy).
3. Provide grant funding support for “bright spots” to share their practices more broadly with other practitioners in the field.
4. Provide funding for comprehensive local implementation of the 2014 ELA/ELD Framework to support professional development, coaching, instructional materials (including development, adoption, and implementation), and other support services.
5. Establish a pilot grant program for COEs and LEAs to support local ELR planning and implementation efforts. Create a minimum five-year funding allocation for grant programs to allow for longer term planning and sustained implementation efforts:
 - a. Expand funding sources for these programs to include general funds rather than Proposition 98 funds in order to allow for funding to be allocated directly to nonprofit professional development providers, such as current EWIG grantees and other local implementation support structures;
 - b. Allocate a portion of funding to COEs that have already been serving as leading implementation partners, recognizing that some COEs have more capacity to take on this critical role;
 - c. Support coherence/alignment of efforts across entities receiving implementation funding, and increase spending flexibility to support longer-term plans for continuity of programming.

Build awareness of the ELRM across interest holders.

1. Develop a communications plan targeting practitioners and other interest holders that encourages engagement, raises awareness of the ELRM, and emphasizes the assets ELs and their families bring to our schools and the need to better support them.
2. Host an annual state ELR conference that increases awareness of the ELRM and builds strategic, sustained relationships with a broad audience.
3. Develop a parent toolkit to raise local implementation awareness and expand family and community engagement equitably. Engage with partners in the field who have expertise in family engagement to integrate the toolkit into their trainings and resources.

Integrate the ELRM policy with other state efforts.

1. Incorporate the ELRM into other state priorities and requirements – such as the Statewide System of Support (SSoS) / differentiated assistance (DA) process, technical assistance and monitoring for EL programs and services, Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP), Community Schools, Universal Pre-K (UPK), and Master Plan for Career Education (MPCE). The SSoS should lean on the many professional development and technical assistance tools already developed by current Educator Workforce Investment grant (EWIG) grantees that incorporate resources tailored to different practitioner audiences and ELRM principles.
2. Incorporate the ELRM into curriculum frameworks and instructional materials adoption criteria across subject areas to enhance ELRM Principle 2: Intellectual Quality of Instruction and Meaningful Access.
3. Integrate and align statewide efforts to strengthen the bilingual teacher pipeline (such as bringing new teachers into the profession, recruiting the State Seal of Bilingualism awardees, building teacher leadership capacity, and providing educator professional development) through policy efforts such as the Bilingual Teacher Professional Development Program, MiniCorps, Master Plan for Career Education, Child Development Permit, CTE education grants, and Teacher Residencies.
4. Communicate clearly, in all CDE and related state agency (i.e. California Collaborative for Educational Excellence) outreach, that ELs and DLLs should be at the core of any educational initiatives and improvement efforts rather than being an afterthought.
5. Critically examine the limitations of our current state accountability system [i.e. expectations for annual progress, English Learner Progress Indicator (ELPI) cut scores] and identify opportunities to improve upon the system in ways that highlight and encourage districts to be responsive to ELs' needs.