



**CALIFORNIANS
TOGETHER**

CHAMPIONING THE SUCCESS
OF ENGLISH LEARNERS

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS

The California English Learner Roadmap calls us to envision schools where multilingual learners' assets are valued, learning is meaningful, joyful, and rigorous, and students have opportunities to develop both their linguistic and academic identities. Realizing this vision requires us to examine our systems and practices, and create the conditions for multilingual learners to thrive. The California Multi-Tiered System of Supports (CA MTSS) framework offers a structure for examining those systems and building more responsive, equitable supports for students.

When Long-Term English Learners (LTELs) became a featured group on the California School Dashboard in 2023, Californians Together began exploring how an MTSS lens could help local education agencies (LEAs) respond more proactively to the needs of LTELs. At the heart of this work is a fundamental belief that LTELs are not the result of perceived deficits in students, their behaviors, or their identities. Rather, they are often a reflection of the systems in which students learn. We sought to help LEAs examine their systems, align their vision, and (re)imagine more inclusive supports for LTELs who have too often been overlooked or left behind.

The resource launched at the California MTSS conference in 2025, and became part of professional learning for administrators and teacher leaders focused on LTELs and At-Risk LTELs (AR-LTELs). Through this work, educators began examining their existing systems and considering how they could better respond to students' needs.

From there, we brought the conversation to the classroom: **What does it look like to translate these systems-level commitments into meaningful instructional experiences for LTELs?** Through conversations with educators, one theme became clear: LTELs need consistent, high-quality English Language Development (ELD) that is responsive to their linguistic, academic, and social-emotional needs. If our systems were designed to holistically support multilingual learners from the beginning, we would not see students becoming At-Risk LTELs or LTELs. That, however, is not yet our current reality.

Our work with LTELs ultimately led us to ask a bigger question: **What would it take to create the conditions for every multilingual learner to develop language and academic knowledge from the beginning?** This led us to explore comprehensive ELD within an MTSS framework. Not as an intervention reserved for students who are struggling, but as a foundation of Tier 1 instruction, with increasingly targeted supports at Tier 2 and Tier 3—when students need additional opportunities, intensity, or specialized support.

These tools invite educators and LEAs to reflect on current practices, identify opportunities to strengthen support, and (re)imagine or refine what that support can look like across tiers. In doing so, we can move from responding to student needs to intentionally creating the conditions that support multilingual learners' language and academic development.

SECTION 1

MTSS Framework: Building Comprehensive Structures to Support At-Risk LTEL and LTEL Students



SECTION 2

MTSS Framework: Adapting Instruction for Comprehensive English Language Development



Multi-Tiered System of Supports Framework

Building Comprehensive Structures to Support At-Risk LTEL and LTEL Students

This MTSS framework is a targeted, holistic approach to supporting Long-Term English Learners (LTELs). It integrates academic, language, social-emotional, and behavioral supports to ensure LTELs receive culturally affirming, data-driven support that reflects their strengths. By weaving these elements together, this framework provides a comprehensive system aligned to the vision of the California English Learner Roadmap—where multilingual learners are seen, supported, and set up to thrive.

Universal Supports

Honor Identity and Language Across the School

TIER 1

TIER 2

TIER 3

Comprehensive ELD

Integrated

All teachers of English Learners use the CA ELD Standards in tandem with the ELA/Literacy and other content standards (e.g., science, math, social studies, art) throughout the day.

Designated

Teachers use the CA ELD Standards as the focal standards in ways that build language into and from content instruction.

Language Rich, Collaborative Classrooms

Provide ample opportunities for academic discourse through student interaction, language frames, structured talk, and content-based language instruction.

Student Voice in School Culture

Include LTEL students in advisory groups or student councils to co-design culturally affirming events, classroom practices, and feedback systems.

Use student voice data to inform curriculum, policies, and supports that elevate LTEL engagement and success.

Professional Learning for All Educators

Center language acquisition, formative language assessment, and LTEL profiles in schoolwide professional learning that centers foundational documents including the CA EL Roadmap policy, ELA/ELD Framework, and ELD standards.

Cross-Departmental Planning

EL specialists, content teachers, and student support staff collaborate to embed language development within and across systems.

School-Wide Celebration of Multilingualism

Display student work in multiple languages, celebrate multiliteracy, and create a school culture that positions multilingualism as a strength with clear pathways towards the Seal of Biliteracy. Invite families to share home languages, stories, and cultural traditions through multilingual family nights, classroom visits, or advisory panels.

Family Leadership and Partnership Councils

Expand and deepen the role of ELAC by establishing multilingual family leadership councils that move beyond advisory functions to co-design schoolwide programs, supports, and culturally responsive events. These councils tap into families' cultural and linguistic knowledge to shape LTEL success and school culture, fostering authentic belonging and shared leadership.



Goal: Create inclusive environments where LTELs thrive through rich, rigorous instruction and cultural affirmation.

TIER 1

TIER 2

TIER 3

Targeted Supports

Amplify Strengths and Remove Barriers

Small Group Clustering with Language Acceleration Cultural Relevance Focus

Use targeted, scaffolded support for academic language (e.g. ELPAC domain focus), using relevant high-interest texts. Support students in documenting and reflecting on their language and academic growth, and presenting these portfolios to families or success teams.

Family and Community Collaboration

Family and Community Collaboration: Co-create support plans that reflect students’ home cultures, languages, and family aspirations. Facilitate bilingual family learning series to build understanding of LTEL needs, language development, and how families can support at home.

Specialized Designated ELD with Enrichment Focus

Extend designated ELD curriculum with enhanced supports tailored to LTELs’ strengths and interest areas (e.g. content-specific, high-interest elective, CTE).

Student Mentoring and Advocacy

Pair students with mentors who affirm their language journeys and support them in building agency and leadership. Include regular check-ins where students reflect on their goals, progress, and experiences with LTEL-specific supports.

Extended Academic Support with Language Development

Language-rich tutoring or supplemental extended learning opportunities that focus on both academic content and language growth with special attention to writing.

LTEL-Focused Data Teams

Use growth-focused data protocols (GPA, course access, language scores, student voice) to build plans with strengths in mind.



Goal: Provide targeted language and academic supports that are identity-affirming and designed to expand opportunity.

TIER 1

TIER 2

TIER 3

Intensive Supports

Humanize, Individualize, and Empower

Individualized Language Learning Plans (ILPs)

Centered on student goals, strengths, ELPAC data, course performance, and personal aspirations (e.g. college, Seal of Biliteracy). Ensure ILPs are co-developed with student and family input, incorporating home language use, aspirations, and out-of-school strengths.

Personalized Literacy Coaching

Deliver 1:1 or small group literacy support using comprehensive research-based approaches and texts that align with students’ identities, interests, and aspirations.

1:1 Academic Advising

Provide clear pathway opportunities and goal setting and affirm reclassification as a step in a multilingual journey, not just a destination.

Restorative Counseling and SEL Supports

Address identity, language trauma, and resilience using culturally affirming, healing-centered practices.

Student-Led Success Teams

Engage students in leading their support plans with input from counselors, EL specialists, and family members. Center student voice in all planning meetings. Invite families to co-design solutions, not just receive updates.

Cross-System Leadership Teaming

Coordinate intensive supports across departments with a shared focus on student strengths, aspirations, and opportunities.



Goal: Provide deeply personalized, high-impact interventions that center student identity, healing, and agency.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports Framework

Adapting Instruction for Comprehensive English Language Development

This MTSS Framework focuses on Adapting Instruction for Comprehensive English Language Development to support multilingual learners, with particular attention to AR-LTEs and LTEs, in building their language proficiency alongside grade-level content mastery. This framework is intended to support classroom teachers, coaches, administrators, and ML specialists when planning and supporting instruction.

These supports are designed for use during both integrated ELD and designated ELD instruction. Supports might look different and/or be additional for other typologies of students, such as newcomer students and students who are dually identified. Depending on local context and environment, what looks like Tier 2 or Tier 3 instruction in one setting may, in fact, be embedded within strong Tier 1 instruction. Students move in and out of these tiers, based on ongoing formative assessment of language.

When these supports are established, they create the environment in which language development and academic learning reinforce one another.



OVERVIEW

TIER 1 – Universal Supports



GOAL: **All** students develop English language, literacy, and academic competencies through core integrated and designated ELD instruction.

Standards-based and clear objectives

Purposeful grouping and Supports for interaction

Comprehension

Language Intentionality

Cross-language connections

Materials

Supportive Climate

Making Connections

Clear Instructions and Checks for Comprehension

TIER 2 – Targeted Supports



GOAL: **Some** students engage in additional, responsive opportunities informed by ongoing formative assessment to accelerate their English language, literacy, and academic development.

Targeted Grouping

Language Domain Acceleration

Language Intentional Goal Setting

Regular Check-ins

Peer Mentoring

Student Success Conferences

TIER 3 – Intensive Supports



GOAL: **A few** students receive individualized, intensive, and responsive opportunities, informed by ongoing formative assessment, to accelerate their English language, literacy, and academic development.

1:1 Support

Specialized Workshops

Student Success Conferences

Universal Supports

TIER 1

TIER 2

TIER 3



All students develop English language, literacy, and academic competencies through core integrated and designated ELD instruction.

Supports	What it looks like in Integrated ELD	What it looks like in Designated ELD
Standards-based and clear objectives	Objectives include language objectives which are purposefully designed and connect learning (content standards) and language (ELD standards). Students develop metalinguistic awareness by explaining what they are learning, why they are learning it, and how they are expected to use both English and their home language, as well as understanding how these languages work together. The teacher can explain how the selected ELD standard or language focus responds to the students’ current language development needs.	Objectives include language objectives which are purposefully designed and connect learning (content standards) and language (ELD standards). Students develop metalinguistic awareness by explaining how they are expected to use language during the lesson, what language they’re developing, and why it matters. ELD standards drive the lessons • dELD lessons are relevant and connected to content students are learning during iELD.
Purposeful grouping and Supports for interaction	Student grouping has a purpose, is flexible, leverages assets, interest, language resources, and it focuses on learning needs. Multiple opportunities for students to speak and listen, to build meaning, and to use language through interaction. Through shared learning activity, students engage in communication that is meaning-based and authentic. Lessons include structured interaction and collaborative small-group work—with equity norms and scaffolds for participation to use more complex language. • Resource: Microsite	Purposeful grouping • Students are grouped for English fluency levels and/or assessed language needs. • Groups are centered around authentic communication and collaboration. Interactive • Students work in various, intentional types of groups - partners, dyads, small groups, etc • Interactions are structured with scaffolds • There are multiple opportunities for students to speak and listen, to build meaning, and use language through interaction while they practice targeted language functions and forms.



Universal Supports

TIER 1

TIER 2

TIER 3



Supports	What it looks like in Integrated ELD	What it looks like in Designated ELD
Comprehension	Students are engaged in using and creating graphic representations for organizing ideas. Using a variety of graphic organizers supports comprehension of concepts. Teachers use a variety of context clues, demonstrations, and linguistic cues to help students understand new vocabulary and concepts, including visuals, manipulatives, realia, and tangible, hands-on activities to support comprehension of the content to increase access to rigorous content.	Students use a variety of context clues, visuals, demonstrations, manipulatives, tangible hands-on activities, and linguistic cues to help students understand new vocabulary and linguistic concepts. Teachers use a variety of graphic organizers used to represent the relationship between ideas and as a bolster for language learning.
Language Intentionality	Language Intentionality: Attention is drawn to language—analyzing language and the ways it works in the context of each academic context. Discourse patterns, language forms, and key phrases for engaging in academic talk about the subject are explicitly taught and practiced. Language Objectives are explicitly taught. Teacher encourages and guides students to produce richer, more sophisticated oral language with precise domain vocabulary. Teachers identify and teach essential vocabulary—using a variety of approaches to elaborate on the meaning (synonyms, metaphors, amplification, etc.). Vocabulary previews identify and teach students essential words before they encounter them in the lesson and/or text. A variety of language supports are evident and accessible on the walls as resources for students—including, for example, differentiated sentence frames, cognate lists, language function walls, reference materials. Major language goals (i.e. by quarter, semester, trimester) are shared with families.	The teacher encourages students to actively produce richer, more sophisticated oral language. The teacher arranges ample time, support, and direction for students to practice new language skills. The teacher models expressive and authentic English, amplifying a range of language choices. A variety of language supports are evident and accessible on the walls as resources for students—including, for example, differentiated sentence frames, cognate lists, language function walls. Lessons respond to the language demands students face in academic tasks in the rest of their academic curricula. Language objectives are supported Major language goals (i.e. by quarter, semester, trimester) are shared with families.
<i>Elementary:</i> At regularly scheduled conferences, teachers share with families their student language development and growth (i.e. by quarter, semester, unit/theme). Student voice, strengths, goals, and progress are discussed as well as action steps to support continued success.		


TOOL: What to Look For

 Source: [EL Roadmap | Administrator's Toolkit Vol. 3](#) (pg. 31–35)


Universal Supports

TIER 1

TIER 2

TIER 3



Supports	What it looks like in Integrated ELD	What it looks like in Designated ELD
Cross-language connections	Contrastive analysis, opportunities to reflect on home language, and identification of cognates enable students to draw upon their home language to bolster comprehension and language development. Primary language reference books and dictionaries are available. Translanguaging is encouraged in the classroom	The teacher shows proficiency in contrastive analysis, inviting students to reflect on the relationship between English and their home language, and to apply their knowledge of their home language to English vocabulary, forms, and function. Translanguaging is a common practice
Materials	Materials have a connection between both iELD and dELD and also grade-level/rigorous materials. Materials include but are not limited to: graphic organizers, realia, manipulatives, visuals, primary language texts, etc.	Materials have a connection between both iELD and dELD and also grade-level/rigorous materials. The teacher has sufficient and culturally responsive materials to support the lesson. Materials include but are not limited to: graphic organizers, realia, manipulatives, visuals, primary language texts, etc.
Supportive Climate	The teacher has created a safe and low-anxiety environment for language learning and for ELs to take language risks. The teacher uses wait time after posing a prompt or question to an EL to enable students to gather their thoughts and consider how to express ideas. The teacher creates space and provides opportunities for oral rehearsal with a partner. Translanguaging is encouraged in the classroom	The teacher has created a safe and low-anxiety environment for language learning and for ELs to take language risks. The teacher uses wait time after posing a prompt or question to an EL to enable students to gather their thoughts and consider how to express ideas. The teacher creates space and provides opportunities for oral rehearsal with student partners.



Universal Supports

TIER 1

TIER 2

TIER 3



Supports	What it looks like in Integrated ELD	What it looks like in Designated ELD
Clear Instructions and Checks for Comprehension	The teacher provides clear and explicit instructions and offers rubrics and models of what good-quality finished products will look like. - Resource: Leveraging ELPAC Data to Support Language Development There are frequent checks for comprehension and informal formative assessments leading to opportunities for review, repetition, and additional practice as needed in the lesson. Rephrasing, paraphrasing, amplifying concepts, and presenting information in a variety of ways helps students access the content. Teachers structure and allow for multiple ways for students to show understanding and mastery. - Resource: Microsite Students receive explicit and direct instruction in metacognitive tasks to understand how to approach new content and tasks. - Resource: Microsite When possible, use home language to support checking for understanding.	The teacher provides clear and explicit instructions and offers rubrics and models of what good-quality finished products will look like. There are frequent checks for comprehension and informal formative assessments leading to review, repetition, and practice as needed and incorporated into the lesson. Teachers structure and allow for multiple ways for students to show understanding and mastery. Students receive explicit and direct instruction in metacognitive tasks to understand how to approach new language challenges and tasks. When possible, use home language to support checking for understanding.
Making Connections	The teacher uses intentional strategies that systematically access and activate the students' prior knowledge to relate new concepts and course content to their lives. Students learn through making connections between what they already know and the new experiences, perspectives, and information they encounter. These strategies improve comprehension and engage students in learning. Students have time to notice and make cross-linguistic connections, building their metalinguistic awareness.	The teacher uses intentional strategies that systematically access and activate the students' prior knowledge. They incorporate strategies that systematically access and activate students' prior knowledge in order to relate new concepts and course content to their lives. Students learn through making connections between what they already know and the new experiences, perspectives, and information they encounter. These strategies improve comprehension and engage students in learning. Students actively make cross-linguistic connections, building their metalinguistic awareness.



Targeted Supports

TIER 1

TIER 2

TIER 3



Some students engage in additional, responsive opportunities informed by ongoing formative assessment to accelerate their English language, literacy, and academic development.

Supports	What it looks like in Integrated ELD	What it looks like in Designated ELD
Targeted Grouping	Flexible groups are formed based on identified language needs and adjusted regularly. Students continue to engage in heterogeneous learning opportunities throughout instruction. Additional teacher support is provided during collaborative tasks.	Students are grouped based on shared language needs or English proficiency levels. Groups remain flexible and responsive to student progress. Instruction and supports are differentiated to address specific language development needs.
Language Domain Acceleration	Additional practice is provided in targeted language domains (listening, speaking, reading, writing, and/or metalinguistic awareness). Language scaffolds are intentionally aligned to grade-level content. Students engage in multiple opportunities to apply new language in meaningful academic tasks.	Instruction intentionally targets one or more language domains needing additional support. Explicit conversations/instruction about metalinguistic awareness (modeling, cross-linguistic connections, discussions about word and syntactical choices, TPR) Students engage in repeated opportunities to practice and apply new language. Language instruction connects directly to the language demands of grade-level coursework.
Language Intentional Goal Setting	Individual language goals are developed using formative assessment and language proficiency data. Students monitor progress toward language goals with teacher support. Written and oral feedback is specific to language growth and next steps. Resource: <u>Road to RFEP</u>	Students set individualized language goals aligned to the California ELD Standards. Students reflect on progress and identify next steps for language growth. Teachers provide ongoing, language-specific feedback.



Targeted Supports

TIER 1

TIER 2

TIER 3



Supports	What it looks like in Integrated ELD	What it looks like in Designated ELD
Regular Check-ins	Teachers regularly conference with students to monitor language development. Resource: Microsite Supports are adjusted based on ongoing evidence of student learning. Frequent formative assessment informs instructional decisions.	Teachers frequently monitor student language development through observation, conferencing, and formative assessment. Instruction is adjusted based on student progress. Students receive timely feedback to support continued language growth.
Peer Mentoring	Students participate in structured peer partnerships to strengthen language use. Partners model academic language and collaborative learning strategies. Peer interactions promote increasing independence and confidence. <i>*The peer mentor does not have to be a student from the same classroom</i>	Students engage in structured language partnerships to increase oral language production. Peer interactions provide opportunities to practice new language in authentic contexts. Partners encourage academic risk-taking and collaborative problem-solving.
Student Success Conferences	Teachers, students, families, and support staff collaboratively review language growth. Student voice, strengths, goals, and progress are discussed. Shared action steps are identified to support continued success. After the initial in-person meeting, it is recommended that all parties communicate about every six weeks.	



Intensive Supports

TIER 1

TIER 2

TIER 3

A few students receive individualized, intensive, and responsive opportunities, informed by ongoing formative assessment, to accelerate their English language, literacy, and academic development.

Supports	What it looks like in Integrated ELD	What it looks like in Designated ELD
1:1 Support	Regular individual language coaching is embedded within grade-level instruction (while all students are engaged in meaningful learning experiences during this time). Supports are tailored to each student's identified language needs. Scaffolds are gradually released to promote independence.	Regular individualized instruction targets specific language development needs. Teachers provide explicit modeling, guided practice, and immediate feedback. Language goals are monitored and adjusted as students progress.
Specialized Workshops	Short-term workshops target a language domain (reading, writing, speaking, listening, or metalinguistic awareness). Students receive additional guided practice and feedback. Instruction reinforces the language needed for current classroom learning.	Short-term workshops target a specific focus of the ELD Standards (Collaborative, Productive, Expanding and Enriching Ideas, etc.). Students have multiple opportunities to practice with teacher feedback. Lessons strengthen students' ability to use language across academic settings.
Student Success Conferences	Teachers, students, families, and support staff collaboratively review language growth. Student voice, strengths, goals, and progress are discussed. Shared action steps are identified to support continued success. After the initial in-person meeting, it is recommended that all parties communicate every other week.	