

LTSS RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

ELLs must be afforded equal access to all educational resources and opportunities in a district to ensure their progress and the effectiveness of LTSS. Since these services must enrich and accelerate student learning to high standards, it is imperative that school districts examine seriously the resources that will be required. For example, most, if not all, districts will need to consider using or reorganizing the current staff and resources, reducing student/teacher ratios, and employing additional professional staff members and resources. The “Report of the Early Reading Success Panel” highlights the need of teachers of ELLs for “adequate access” to the same resources as other teachers, e.g., access to a variety of books at a range of reading levels and access to specialists.²⁴

While adequate and appropriate resources must be provided to support and promote student learning in classrooms that provide LTSS, it is important, as indicated in the previous section, that instruction not only address student needs but also be aligned with the school district’s curriculum. It is in this way that classrooms that provide LTSS using sheltered content teaching strategies will serve as an effective bridge to mainstream classes. The remainder of this section will provide guidelines for the types of additional resources districts must provide to meet the academic needs of ELLs in the newly mandated LTSS.

Staffing should include:

- mainstream teachers trained in preservice and/or in-service contexts; and bilingual education and ESL teachers designated to provide LTSS with appropriate certification, background in second-language acquisition principles, sheltered content teaching strategies, and experience in teaching second-language learners;
- support staff with an understanding of second-language acquisition and sheltered content teaching strategies, including reading and math specialists;
- personnel qualified to provide training and cognitive coaching for LTSS teachers;
- personnel qualified to train and work with parents in supporting student achievement; and
- principals with an understanding of the needs of ELLs, of effective programming for them, and of the ways in which other factors can affect their learning, such as scheduling and staff/program supervision.

Classrooms should be:

- designated to include youngsters in LTSS with mainstream students; and
- characterized by lower teacher-student ratios.

²⁴ Connecticut State Department of Education (2000). *Connecticut’s Blueprint for Reading Achievement: The Report of the Early Reading Success Panel*. Hartford, CT: Author, p. 17.

Materials and equipment should include:

- curriculum materials appropriate for students' language and cognitive levels;
- equitable access to a professional library at each school, including videos and software that are available to all teachers;
- classroom computers and software accessible to LTSS students and members of the teaching staff;
- Internet access, computer labs, and language and science labs available to LTSS students and teachers; and
- website and e-mail capacity for teachers, students and parents for resources such as homework hot lines and contact with the home.

LTSS funding should include:

- local funds;
- state funds (students receiving LTSS are counted in the state bilingual education grant formula for local school districts); and
- federal funds, e.g., Titles I and III.

Staff supervision should be provided by:

- principals and department chairpersons who are trained to supervise educators of ELLs; and
- bilingual and ESL program administrators.

Resources for monitoring student progress should include:

- LTSS school-based team members trained to place students in LTSS, oversee student progress and assist teachers in making instructional decisions and changes;
- use of a student profile to record the progress of LTSS students and for making appropriate recommendations;
- student test data for determining attainment of the English mastery standard (required by the State's bilingual education statute); and
- parental notifications regarding the provision of LTSS.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A comprehensive professional development program is essential for supporting LTSS teachers, maintaining effective services and ensuring student success. Training must include approaches and strategies proven to be the most effective for ELLs by current research and practitioner experience. In particular, the “Report of the Early Reading Success Panel” emphasizes the need of teachers of ELLs for: 1) an extensive knowledge base about language and literacy acquisition and how to accelerate both second-language learning and literacy acquisition; and 2) knowledge about how to develop reading-related competencies, including word-identification and comprehension competencies.²⁵

Professional development cannot be seen as an isolated or single event but, rather, must be *ongoing*, focused on content and language and how to teach ELLs, enrichment-centered, practical and inclusive. A school district’s ultimate goal should be to develop a staff that continues to acquire expertise in working with, and accelerating the growth of, LTSS students and *all* ELLs.

Staff members to be trained include:

All elementary, middle and high school staff members involved in the education of LTSS students, including teachers in the following areas:

- mainstream;
- bilingual education;
- special education;
- speech and language;
- ESL; and
- reading and math specialists.

Other professional staff members who should be trained include:

- school principals and district-level administrators;
- curriculum specialists;
- guidance counselors; and
- content-area coordinators and department chairpersons.

Focus areas for training include the following:

Second-language acquisition:

- theory and
- related teaching practices.

²⁵ Connecticut State Department of Education (2000). *Connecticut’s Blueprint for Reading Achievement: The Report of the Early Reading Success Panel*. Hartford, CT: Author, p. 17.

Sheltered content instruction (for math/numeracy, science, social studies, etc.) in accordance with the four dimensions of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP).²⁶

- modifying instructional language;
- lessons with language and content objectives;
- cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies; and
- focus on academic content and specific language.

Enrichment strategies:

- incorporating high expectations for student achievement;
- building on students' prior knowledge and achievement;
- developing instruction that is age- and grade-appropriate and challenging;
- thematic interdisciplinary units;
- cooperative learning;
- use of videos and computers;
- critical thinking skills; and
- hands-on and discovery learning.

Cultural awareness:

- cross-cultural communication;
- cultural sensitivity; and
- knowledge of community.

Literacy and biliteracy:

- literacy development across the curriculum;
- influence of native language literacy on second-language literacy;
- effective second-language literacy strategies; and
- process writing.

Staff collaboration:

- team teaching or co-teaching;
- cognitive coaching;
- training other adults (e.g., delivering workshops to teachers); and
- forming task groups for joint planning.

²⁶ Echevarria, J.; Vogt, M.E. and Short, D. (2000). *Making Content Comprehensible for English Language Learners: The SIOP Model*. Needham, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Student placement:

- assessing student learning needs;
- matching available services to student needs;
- developing additional or more effective services; and
- resolving scheduling issues.

Student assessment:

- language and literacy assessment; and
- performance and portfolio assessment.

Parental involvement:

- two-way communication with parents of ELLs;
- recruiting and training parents as volunteers;
- training and/or advising parents to support children's learning at home; and
- parental input in decisions regarding curriculum and school governance.

CONCLUSION

These guidelines outline principles and practices of good teaching that are applicable to all students. Moreover, all students in public schools must experience success while being educated to challenging standards set by local school districts and state departments of education.

What distinguishes students who need LTSS is that they have had 30 months of growth in a bilingual education program but need more time, support and a program of studies that will accelerate their learning in order to meet the English mastery standard on the annual assessment and to function successfully in mainstream classrooms. These guidelines must be well planned and, to remain effective over time, LTSS must have sustained administrative and parental backing, including a long-term program of professional development, sufficient resources and ongoing monitoring and supervision.

The following points require emphasis:

- LTSS are a shared responsibility of mainstream, bilingual education and ESL teachers and administrators;
- LTSS must address individual student needs;
- each student's English language acquisition stage needs to be considered when deciding appropriate services;
- closing the achievement gap benefits the entire school district; and
- overall effectiveness of LTSS is a districtwide and schoolwide responsibility.

LTSS will serve as a strong **bridge** or **transition** from the bilingual education program to the mainstream program to the extent that they address individual student needs, are aligned with the district's curriculum, and challenge each student to further learning in an enriched, supportive environment.

For further information on legal requirements, guidelines and resources please refer to the State Department of Education website at <http://www.state.ct.us/sde>

If you have questions or need additional assistance, contact George P. De George, bilingual/ESL educational consultant, at (860) 713-6750 or by e-mail at george.degeorge@po.state.ct.us