We are a cohort of teacher leaders and Teach Plus Policy Fellows situated in school districts across California who are devoted to supporting the academic success of emergent bilingual students. Alongside educators across the state, we have been working in real time to serve nearly 1.2 million emerging bilingual students, while making the rapid switch from face-to-face learning to remote learning amid the COVID-19 crisis. We have witnessed firsthand how our most vulnerable students have fallen further behind as this unwanted disruption has magnified the inequities faced by our families around food security, health care, and access to technology. As we are preparing with uncertainty for the opening of next year, we offer district and school leaders recommendations for supporting students given our adaptive responses to the challenges we have faced during and following the spread of the virus.

In making recommendations for the continuity of learning for emergent bilingual students, we relied on the policy of the California English Learner Roadmap so students have full access to the curriculum. While our list is not exhaustive, the four guiding principles of the Roadmap shaped our recommendations to ensure that students are given the conditions and tools to make academic progress with designated English language development and integrated English language development instruction. A summary of the EL Roadmap's principles are provided in light of our new normal, along with actionable recommendations that can easily be modeled and adapted to any distance learning plan:

PRINCIPLE ONE: Assets-Oriented and Needs-Responsive Schools:
Practices and programs should support the social-emotional health and development of the students through strong family and school partnerships in safe, trusting, and affirming relationships and spaces.

PRINCIPLE TWO: Intellectual Quality of Instruction and Meaningful Access:
Remote instruction should provide access to standards-based curriculum through relevant and scaffolded instruction that increases language proficiencies in one or more languages.

PRINCIPLES THREE and FOUR: System Conditions that Support Effectiveness:
School systems should provide relevant and timely provide relevant and timely professional development, assessments, and support services during our swift change of instruction.

The recommendations to follow are aligned with the policy of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and meet the requirements of the Coronavirus Assistance, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) funding to support emergent bilingual students, who comprise nearly 25% of our state's students. These funds are to support increased access to information for emergent bilinguals and their families in their home languages, along with providing the infrastructure and tools necessary so vulnerable students thrive in these challenging times.

WHY IT MATTERS: Trusting, effective, and intentional two-way communication is imperative in a distance learning format. Without access to a regular structured classroom environment, schools must offer support to families trying to make space for learning in the home.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Establish two-way lines **of communication with students and their families to regularly communicate about assignments, curriculum, or other critical updates.**

Considerations for Implementation:

+ Provide regular communication in multiple languages that is responsive to the home languages of the student population. Utilize multiple communication tools, including phone calls, emails, text messages, mail, and website updates.

+ Consider community organizations, media outlets, or other resources within community networks to facilitate two-way communication.

+ Create a system for capturing feedback and requests for help from families. Ensure messages to families address the diverse needs of emergent bilingual students, including addressing concerns of undocumented students and families.

Principle 1 in Action

"We hoped to reach every family by scheduling frequent virtual meetings at times when caregivers are available and in their home language. Meetings include both students and parents sitting hip-to-hip to air out concerns and to help them navigate through their shift to remote learning. We include basic instructions in technology set-up, access to digital platforms, instructional procedures, schedules, and routines. These conversations will ignite meaningful relationships with families and illuminate needs for additional instructional support, modified schedules, wi-fi access, and any technology support required so students can fully engage in their distance learning environment."

-Elementary School Teacher

Principle 1 in Action

"Prior to COVID19 we held night tutorials for parents of ELL students in their home languages on how to use Schoolloop. By offering these tutorials we saw more parents of ELL students involved in our school. Helping parents know how to access their child's grades and teachers has helped to improve communication and ultimately student success, and thanks to those connections our transition to distance learning has been easier."

- High School Teacher

RECOMMENDATION 2: Provide access to multilingual resources for parents to supplement learning with the understanding that home language is a powerful asset.

Considerations for Implementation:

+ Ensure students have access to tech-free learning resources and school supplies.

+ Utilize parents as an ally for student engagement by providing oral and written directions in the home language. Educate families on the technology platforms and the expectations for remote learning.

+ Emphasize the role that home language plays in student learning. Tell parents to encourage their children to read, write, and listen in their home language, as well as English.

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WHY IT MATTERS: When rapidly shifting toward a focus on remote learning, we need to make sure that the learning experiences of emergent bilingual students are intellectually rich and developmentally appropriate. Distance learning must integrate language development, literacy, and content learning. During this time of rapid adaptation to virtual instruction many emergent bilingual students are experiencing inequitable access that must be addressed.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Ensure distance learning plans specifically address emergent bilingual students and their families, integrating multiple modalities (digital and non-digital) with clearly articulated expectations and learning outcomes.

Considerations for Implementation:

+ Ensure that plans utilize multiple strategies for reaching students, including having access to direct support and guidance in their home language.

+ Address key barriers, like variance in literacy and language proficiency in home and second languages; lack of access to adults to provide both academic and technical support; inadequate technology infrastructure; isolation from peers; lack of tools for practicing their second language listening and speaking skills; and lack of learning space.

+ Utilize standards-based curriculum through relevant and scaffolded instruction that increases language proficiencies in one or more languages.

+ Use multimedia digital texts and online software that support literacy and vocabulary development through a range of pre-curated literacy leveled materials that builds on students' retention.

Principle 2 in Action

"We provided students with links to texts in multiple languages through Google Classroom, in addition to access to Rosetta Stone and READ 180 software which provided both support in English Language Development and the primary language. Instruction was provided in differentiated small groups so that students had the opportunity to collaborate with peers and practice language. A video of the lesson was posted in Google Classroom that gave students access to the content before and after the synchronous lesson. To overcome barriers to technology access, students had the option of participating in synchronous lessons via Google Meet from a phone and hard copies of Google Classroom assignments and texts were delivered to their homes. These assignments were tailored to each level of language proficiency to provide the appropriate level of scaffolding. During the week, students were given the opportunity to schedule Google Meets or phone calls via Google Voice with the teacher to receive individual support."

-Middle School Teacher

Principle 2 in Action

Creating a student mentorship program for newcomer English language learners who can be mentored by other advanced English language learners who have the same home language as the mentee is an innovative language acquisition strategy that elevates emerging bilinguals' learning opportunities. Larry Ferlazzo, English Language Development (ELD) teacher at Luther Burbank High School in Sacramentol, coordinates an ELD Peer Mentor Program and coaches his advanced ELD students to become mentors. The value of this kind of mentorship program was elevated during COVID-19 distance learning as a tool for creating space for them to use their home language to learn English in collaboration with their peers and the guidance of the teachers.

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WHY IT MATTERS: In the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, we have experienced the absence of state assessment data to drive instruction. This void could ultimately postpone the reclassification of students and limit students' ability to progress toward college and career readiness. There is a need for alternative assessments aligned to our new reality of remote learning, ensuring progress toward students' individual linguistic and academic goals.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Provide access to alternative assessments ensuring emergent bilingual students receive uniquely aligned supports and services that meet their learning profile.

Considerations for Implementation:

+ Develop assessment protocols and adopt research-based tools that provide meaningful feedback and support for emergent bilingual students in identifying their accomplishments and areas of growth.

+ Gather both formal and informal data that can be understood by all stakeholders: including students, families, teachers, and support staff.

Principle 3 in Action

Teachers should continue the use of formative assessment tools during remote learning. This will help to ensure they can adapt instruction, plan for the acceleration of learning, and recover any learning loss for emergent bilingual students. It is best practice to make learning gains visible, focusing both on small progressions and big ideas, and to integrate more than one content area if possible. Teachers can give students agency over their learning by offering incentives for mastering learning goals. We have found success with learning platforms like SeeSaw, in which students can earn attractive badges after acquiring skills. This is a positive visual cue for families that learning is occurring, or it can alert them to the need for more attention.

Principle 4 in Action

"I know that these times can be tough for my ELL students. When I plan instruction, I make sure to have lessons available in asynchronous form, and I make sure to meet with students through Zoom. I have our Bilingual Community Liaison contact parents of students that are falling behind. As the ELL Coordinator at my school site we track our student's progress, understanding that we cannot wait for state testing to let us know of their progress."

-High School Teacher

RECOMMENDATION 2: Provide professional development and resources for educators to support remote learning that is inclusive of emergent bilingual students' learning needs.

Considerations for Implementation:

+ Provide job-embedded professional development in distance learning and the utilization of any new assessments or learning tools, with a focus on how to meet the needs of emergent bilingual students.

+ Collaborate with vendors of current instructional materials to ensure continuity and coherence of learning for emergent bilingual students.

+ Create time and space for collaboration among multiple stakeholders (district personnel, school site administrators, and teachers) to ensure the shared responsibility of meaningful interactions with emergent bilingual students and their families.

CONCLUSION

Access to quality distance learning has been incredibly uneven across California. The impact of ineffective distance learning is felt most acutely by our emergent bilingual students. As we look ahead to the start of the school year, we must do better. We have a strong framework to build from with the English Learner Roadmap. But we need state and local leaders to ensure that we do better moving forward and put necessary safeguards in place so that our most vulnerable students get access to instruction, effective accommodations, and support.

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CURATED TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Communications Tools

+ Talking Points: A multilingual family engagement platform that helps you to engage with your families, keep connected with your students, and get the most critical information out to your communities. Also providing free educational resources for educators and families to support your students' learning at home. Talking Points is free for educators. During this crisis, they are also making available their school and district facing platform for free.

+ Google Translate: Besides translating a text, Google Translate's Snap feature instantly translates an image using a camera. The Talk feature enables users to have live bilingual conversations. The Google Translate Chrome extension translates an entire webpage.

+ Microsoft Immersive Reader: Students can hear the text read aloud, use a picture dictionary, to look up words, and translate part of or the entire text into multiple languages in Word, OneNote, PowerPoint, and on several creation apps such as Buncee and Flipgrid.

+ Google Voice: Google Voice is a simple, smart and scalable phone system, providing users the ability to use phone numbers that are not tied to a device so calls can be placed and received from any device, anywhere.

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Resources for Remote Instruction of Emergent Bilingual Students

+ Resources that Support Distance Learning: California Department of Education has provided an extensive list of resources for distance learning, including multilingual resources and English Language Development Learning, Games, and Activities

+ ¡Colorín Colorado!: Colorín Colorado provides free research-based information, activities, and advice to educators and families of English Learners, and communities around the country. Resources include specific guidelines for schools, administrators, educators, parents, and students to keep in mind to help facilitate remote EL instruction during the COVID-19 crisis.

+ English Media Lab Homepage: Exercises for all English learners including online grammar exercises, vocabulary videos, pronunciation exercises, and interactive quizzes for beginning, intermediate and advanced learners.

+ WIDA: WIDA provides language development resources to those who support the academic success of multilingual learners. They offer a comprehensive, research-based system of language standards, assessments, professional learning and educator assistance.

+ Learning A - Z: The website provides reading, listening, speaking, and writing resources integrated with grammar and vocabulary support at varying grade and language proficiency levels. Free for educators for the rest of the school year, it includes downloadable, printable, projectable books and resources in Spanish, French, and English, grades K-5.

+ My Writing Coach: A subscription service that includes online writing instructional tasks with embedded guided practice. It provides customized feedback in the areas of inference, main idea, theme, revision, research, and full writes. It also offers ELPAC writing and high school portfolio building support. It is now offering free writing resources to any district, school, teacher, student, or family seeking support during this time.

+ ESL At Home: Crowd-sourced resources including links to activities for students in grades K through 12. that require only paper and pencil, and some household materials.

Resources for Parents and Educators

+ Parent Toolkit: A bilingual (English/Spanish) resource that includes information about many aspects of child development. Parents can click what grade their student is in and what type of resource they're looking for (videos, advice, etc) and about what (academics, health, etc) and pull up a list of resources.

+ Ready Rosie: A site with a number of tools for families but their "Modeled Moments" videos, available in English and Spanish, may be particularly helpful at this time. There are some free samples on their site as well as their YouTube channel.

+ Abriendo Puertas: A site that aims to build parent leadership skills and knowledge through training to promote family wellbeing and positive outcomes for small children is now conducting Facebook Live sessions in Spanish for parents.

+ Unite for Literacy: A resource with books in over 45 languages, including many refugee languages and even some indigenous languages! Click "English" and you can change the written language and/or the audio language.

+ Global Storybooks: A source of books in dozens of languages, including many from various countries in Africa.