



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

*Washington State
Multilingual Learners:
Policies and Practices Guide*

2024

CHAPTER 4: STAFFING & PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Staffing

School districts have an obligation to provide the personnel and resources necessary to effectively implement their chosen Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program (TBIP) models. This obligation includes having highly qualified teachers to provide English language development services, trained and supported core content teachers who provide meaningful access to rigorous, grade-level content, administrators trained in second language acquisition who can evaluate these teachers, and adequate and appropriate materials for the TBIP program.

Paraprofessionals, aides, or tutors may not take the place of qualified teachers and may be used only as an interim measure while the school district hires, trains, or otherwise secures enough qualified teachers to serve its multilingual learners. If a school district uses paraprofessionals to provide language assistance services to multilingual learners that supplement those provided by qualified teachers, it may do so only if the paraprofessional is trained to provide services to multilingual learners and works under the direct supervision of a qualified teacher. Learn more about compliance monitoring for qualifications for staff who instruct multilingual learners in the OSPI [Program Review Checklist](#).

Staffing for English language development services and accessible content should be provided through various funding sources, including basic education, TBIP, and Title III. **All teachers funded by the TBIP must hold an ELL or Bilingual Education Endorsement.**

Basic Education

The Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program is, first and foremost, a Basic Education program. Providing English Language Development (ELD) and accessible content are civil rights requirements for multilingual learners and are required whether or not the district receives supplemental funding of any kind.

Teachers who are providing sheltered content or English Language Development (ELD) classes for eligible multilingual learners (MLs) should be funded primarily from Basic Education. Even if the teacher holds an ELL or Bilingual endorsement, if they are serving as the primary teacher of record for a given course, their funding must come primarily from Basic Education. TBIP may supplement this funding to allow for smaller class sizes.

Districts that fund sheltered content or ELD classes for MLs entirely from TBIP funds may be in violation of the “supplement vs. supplant” standard. MLs are Basic Education students first, and the district receives funds for these students for the entire school day. If a school uses TBIP funds to pay for one class out of six, then those students are receiving one-sixth less Basic Education funding than their peers, and TBIP is supplanting funds to which they are entitled.

Teachers who are providing *supplemental* ELD services may be funded using TBIP as long as they hold an ELL or Bilingual Endorsement and are not serving as the teacher of record. For example, teachers who provide push-in or pull-out ELD services, serve as an instructional coach or specialist, or serve as a co-teacher alongside a general classroom teacher are serving in a supplemental capacity and may be fully funded from TBIP. Paraeducators providing supplemental ELD services may also be funded from TBIP.

For more information, please see [OSPI Bulletin No. 011-23 Use of TBIP funds](#).

Staffing Ratios

The ideal ratio of ELL/Bilingual-endorsed teachers to multilingual learners is difficult to identify due to the differences in program models and how ELD services are provided such as through dual language, co-teaching, or sheltered instruction. Regardless of the program model, a healthy TBIP program will have a number of ELL/Bilingual endorsed teachers that is proportional to the number of eligible multilingual learners so that there is sufficient expertise throughout the system to provide high-quality instruction and services to students.

While the ideal ratio of ELL/Bilingual endorsed teachers to multilingual learners is around 1:25, an adequate ratio is around 1:50. If a school or district has a ratio that is much greater than this, there may be a lack of adequate knowledge and expertise to provide strong supports for students. These numbers are not meant to indicate a suggested "caseload," as all staff are responsible for the needs of multilingual learners, not just those who are ELL or Bilingual endorsed.

Schools and districts that lack sufficient ELL/Bilingual endorsed teachers should make significant efforts to provide professional learning to teachers in second language acquisition and English language development strategies and may want to consider use of Title II funds to support teachers earning an ELL or Bilingual endorsement. The Professional Educators Standards Board (PESB) offers a list of [approved educator programs](#) and provides information on ELL/Bilingual endorsements.

Professional Learning

Professional learning for ML teachers, classroom teachers, and paraeducators who work with multilingual learners is a critical part of every program and is required by state and federal law. Professional development must be ongoing and of sufficient duration and intensity as to have an impact on instruction.

Professional Learning Activities

Professional learning activities may include:

- Effective services for multilingual learners and AI/AN students
- WIDA English Language Development standards and assessments
- Second language acquisition
- Instructional strategies for English language development and accessible content

- Dual language research, program development, and instruction
- Culturally and linguistically responsive instruction for multilingual learners
- Core content or skills needed for ELL/Bilingual endorsed teachers to support content instruction for MLs (i.e., foundational skill instruction for ELD teachers working with PK–3 students, content for ELD teachers doing co-teaching)
- Other topics related directly to services for multilingual learners

Professional learning activities, including conferences or workshops, should be designed as part of a comprehensive plan that will directly impact staff members' ability to support improved educational outcomes for multilingual learners.

Monitoring Implementation

All planned professional learning activities that are funded by Title III and/or TBIP should be monitored to verify that new learning is implemented effectively and has a positive impact on the achievement of multilingual learners. There are three levels of implementation monitoring that can support strong professional learning plans:

1. **Feedback** – For each professional learning activity, the school/district should have an immediate plan for soliciting feedback from participants on the relevance and usefulness of the professional learning. This feedback can be used to improve professional learning and address additional needs of staff members.
2. **Implementation** – After providing professional learning, the school/district should arrange ways to determine how staff members are using and implementing the new strategies or new learning. Implementation data may be collected through self-report surveys, classroom observations, or focus groups. If difficulties arise, these data can be used to determine what may be the cause of those difficulties and what may be needed to improve implementation.
3. **Student Outcomes** – After staff members have had time to implement new learning, student data should be examined to determine whether new adult learning has had an impact on student outcomes. These data may include student assessment results, student surveys or feedback, and/or observations of students. If student outcomes are not affected by professional learning, adjustments may be needed to the professional learning plan.

Resources

For more information on Staffing and Supporting an English Learner Program, see the [U.S. Department of Education's EL Toolkit Chapter 3](#).