School/District Tool for the Development of IEPs for English Learners (ELs) with Disabilities

This tool can be used by educators at the district and school level to improve IEPs for ELs with disabilities by examining and enhancing their IEP processes and procedures. Although this tool can be used by an educator independently, its real value lies in using it as an opportunity for discussion and planning between administrators and coordinators to help implement actionable steps to improve IEPs for ELs with disabilities.

Educators are often overwhelmed at the idea of adding 'one more thing' to their plates. Even now, you may be wondering how you're going to take on a project this size. This step-by-step guidance breaks down the entire process of helping you meet that goal of improving IEPs for ELs with disabilities.

Additionally, at times educators are directed to not include information about a student's English language proficiency within the IEP. Gathering and sharing information about a student's English language needs may not even need to be part of the IEP itself but could be discussed as part of an overall process. This guide will help you understand when it may be appropriate to include that information in the IEP and include those discussions as a part of your district's processes designed to focus on student learning and academic progress.

We start with helping you and your colleagues understand where you are and move to where you want to go. Many advocates of strategic planning believe "if you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there" (Cook, 2004; Porter, 1980;

Carroll, 1898). This guidance is aimed at helping districts not only plan out the road they will take on this path of improvement but will also help educators move from planning to doing.

Although this guidance is comprehensive, feel free to tailor the steps to your organization's needs and add as much information and detail as you think is necessary.

Who is this document for?

This document is intended primarily for educators involved in the creation of IEPs. This includes a student's regular education teacher, a representative of the school system, an individual who can interpret the evaluation results, representatives of any other agencies that may be responsible for paying for or providing transition services, and other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise about the student. This guidance is also targeted at educators who are responsible for setting up the systems and structures to support student success such as superintendents, principals, special education coordinators, and English learner coordinators. The purpose of the guidance is for all levels of educators to discuss improving ELs with

disabilities' access to opportunity to learn through the IEP. It is also not a replacement for the culturally responsive identification processes that should be used for the identification of ELs with suspected disabilities.

How To Use This Tool

A logical starting point is for the district EL Coordinator and the Special Education Coordinator to work collaboratively to facilitate the use of this step-by-step guide and the corresponding editable

Worksheet. These educators should use this tool to convene a group of additional educators within the district who can do the following:

- Review the current processes and procedures for developing IEPs for ELs with disabilities,
- Discuss and propose changes to those processes and procedures,
- Approve the proposed changes,
- Implement the proposed changes; and
- Annually review the processes for continuous updates and improvements.

Why should you work to improve IEPs for ELs with disabilities?

In order the understand why educators should even focus on the IEPs of ELs with disabilities, it's important to understand the concept of Opportunity to Learn (OTL) and the purpose of the IEP. The widely held belief is that the Individualized Education Program (IEP) provides an effective means for unique student-centered services. The IEP has been deemed essential to achieving ambitious goals for students and has been called the "heart and soul of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act" (Bateman, 1995; McLaughling & Thurlow, 2003). Others have called it the 'cornerstone' of providing effective post-secondary transition planning for students (Doren, Flannery, Lombardi, & McGrath Kato, 2013). For students with disabilities, the IEP has been described as a "road map" for how OTL may be realized (Pullin, 2008). For students in your district who are ELs with disabilities, the IEP brings to life their opportunities to learn.

The 1974 landmark case *Lau v. Nichols* determined that the opportunity for ELs to access a meaningful K-12 education was a constitutional right. This ruling was the start of a much stronger focus on the specific needs of ELs within the K-12 system. ELs' opportunity to learn the English language is central to their ability to exit from their formal status as an EL in Michigan. ELs in Michigan are expected to achieve a certain level of English proficiency on the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs or WIDA Alternate ACCESS for ELLs assessment as defined by the Michigan Department of Education's Entrance and Exit Protocol (EEP).

Research on this topic has indicated that a lack of English language proficiency negatively impacts students' performance on assessments (Abedi & Lord, 2001). Aguirre-Muñoz and Boscardin (2008) suggested that for students to benefit from being taught English language arts content, they must be provided with equal attention on the development of their academic English proficiency. Other researchers have echoed this need for ELs to be provided opportunities to strengthen their academic English skills in order to access the content of all of their general education classes including mathematics and science (Moschkovich, 2007; 2012; Quinn, Lee, & Valdes, 2012).

The literature on this topic indicates that OTL may be reduced for ELs if classroom practices such as being taught at a slower pace or not being provided with content related courses designed for second language acquisition are utilized (Boscardin, et al., 2004; Francis, Lesaux, & August, 2006; Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, Kieffer, & Rivera, 2006; Gutiérrez, & Jaramillo, 2006; Herman, Klein, & Abedi, 2000).

But how is OTL actually defined? Many definitions of OTL exist. However, one of the most widely used research-based definitions includes dimensions of Time, Content, and Quality. A more full description of each dimension is in the table shown below.

This foundation of OTL will help you better understand how to use IEPs to bring to life OTL for ELs with disabilities.

OTL Dimensions & Definitions

Time	• Allocated time (i.e., time scheduled for instruction) • Instructionally sensitive and student-oriented indicators such as instructional time (i.e., proportion of allocated time used for instruction) • Engaged time (i.e., proportion of instructional time during which students are engaged in learning) • Academic learning time (i.e., proportion of engaged time during which students are experiencing a high success rate of learning)
Content	• Teacher's content coverage of the general curriculum standards
Quality	• Instructional practices: direct instruction, guided feedback, student think-alouds, and instructional grouping formats. • Cognitive expectations: applying a range of cognitive processes from lower-order to higher-order. • Grouping format: pairs, small groups, multiple grouping formats.

Improving the IEP Process Step-By-Step

The first part of this tool is designed for educators to review their current district wide processes and take steps towards modifying them. Keep in mind that these steps are not for the convening of actual IEP teams, but are intended for the review and development of enhancing your district processes for those meetings when they occur.

You should follow the steps below and use the Worksheet to document your discussion and progress.

STEP 1 – Identification of Personnel

List the names of those responsible in the school or district for making decisions about the ways in which IEPs are constructed. If the district or school's EL/Title III Coordinator is not currently involved in decision making, that person should be included with this group. If you are working on enhancing the IEP process for ELs at the district level, consider including the Superintendent, the District EL Coordinator, the District Special Education Coordinator, and anyone else who is responsible for helping make decisions about district level policies. The inclusion of both the EL Coordinator and the Special Education coordinator is necessary to ensure that both areas of expertise,

English language acquisition and special education, are fully considered in these discussions.

If you are doing this at an individual school level then consider including the building principal, the school EL coordinator/educator, and the building level special education coordinator/educator.

It's possible that a school may not have someone identified in one of these roles. For example, in many districts with small EL populations a building level EL coordinator or EL educator may not exist. In these cases, the district will still benefit from including an EL educator from another building within the district or reaching out to their ISD/RESA for expertise in this area.

STEP 2 – Identification of Date(s)

Identify a date on which an initial hour meeting can be convened with the set of personnel identified in Step 1 to discuss IEPs for ELs with disabilities. Additional meetings will likely be needed based on the rate at which the discussion questions in each step are completed. It's possible you just might not get through all the steps in that meeting.

STEP 3 – Reflection Questions & Read Ahead

Asking your colleagues that will be involved in this process to reflect on the following questions ahead of time will help prepare everyone for the discussion and topics in the remaining steps. These reflection questions can be e-mailed to your colleagues in advance of the meeting and could even be used as discussion questions to start that initial meeting. Educators should also review pages 1-3 of this document as well as Chapter 6 of the U.S. Department of Education's English Learner Toolkit (https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap6.pdf) which focused on tools and resources for addressing ELs with disabilities.

In our organization:
- Whose responsibility is it to ensure ELs with disabilities receive a high-quality education?
- How, if at all, are our EL Coordinator and Special Education Coordinator working together on IEPs?
- What challenges do you think we will face as we attempt to improve the IEPs for ELs with disabilities?
- What positive things do we have in place that will help us improve IEPs for ELs with disabilities?
- How do we believe students' opportunity to learn the English language may be enhanced or diminished by our current IEP process?

STEP 4 – IEPs for ELs with Disabilities Meeting & Discussion

Your group is convened! Step 4 includes a series of questions for the group to discuss. In some cases, the questions are two-part questions and others require concrete actionable steps to be discussed and planned for. Make sure to identify someone as the notetaker on the Worksheet (https://docs.google.com/document/d/12QVzOqqSkj9UfBiV-8IsqmOqGAWr2Eq81aT38qOvrew/edit?usp=sharing). Each section of the Step 4 discussion focuses on a different and important aspect of IEPs for ELs with disabilities. Relevant research and high-quality resources are connected for additional reading in each of the areas.

At the beginning of the meeting make sure to identify who is responsible for each of the following items:
- Worksheet notetaker

- Person responsible for leading the discussion in each Step 4 section

◼ Disability Identification for ELs

One of the greatest challenges facing educators is the difficulty at times in determining whether or not an EL is eligible for special education services. Current research indicates a high degree of variability in how schools identify ELs for special education services (Artiles, Rueda, Salazar, & Higareda, 2005). Although the intent of this tool is not to focus on these identification aspects, educators should consider using the identification tools provided in

the U.S. Department of Education's [Chapter 6 Tools and Resources for Addressing English Learners with Disabilities](#).

Educators can refer to the [Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education](#) (https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/MARSE_Supplemented_with_IDEA_Regs_379598_7.pdf) for additional help in determining the presence of a disability. Oakland ISD provides excellent resources for helping educators make a determination between whether a student's needs are disability or language related on [their website](#) (http://differenceordisability.weebly.com/referral-tools.html).

Educator Collaboration

The U.S. Department of Education indicates that including an EL educator in the IEP process is valuable and "essential" (OELA, 2016). By doing so special educators improve the connectedness between themselves and EL educators. Educators with EL expertise are routinely not invited to IEP team meetings, EL educators often feel that their special educator peers are not interested in their expertise, and special education staff and EL educators often fall into the *specialization trap,* which occurs when the special educator and EL educator only attending to the needs of the student related to their own areas of expertise (Kangas, 2018). This compartmentalization leaves the potential for a gap in addressing the student's full needs. The following questions are aimed at addressing these issues.

1. Who is/are the knowledgeable EL educator(s) and special educator(s) that will participate in the IEP team meetings for students?
2. How will these personnel be notified of this responsibility?
3. Will these personnel assignments vary by building?
4. How will teachers coordinate instruction and

services to implement the IEP and provide the student with coherent and appropriate instruction?

Student Background

The U.S. Department of Education indicates that the IEP team must consider the student's level of English language proficiency when an IEP is developed (OELA, 2016). In order to fully understand all aspects of a student's conversational and academic language proficiency the student's background as it relates to language should be discussed.

1. **When** and **how** does the IEP team plan to reflect on the following aspects of the student's language background:
   • the dominant language in the home
   • the student's primary language of communication at home and in school
   • aspects of the student's primary language that may impact instruction (ex. Some languages read right to left, alphabet differences, absence of a written form of the language)
   • the cultural values and beliefs of the family
   • formal education experiences
   • disrupted education due to COVID, civil unrest, war, etc.

Family and Student Collaboration.

Guidance from the U.S. Department of Education directs educators to ensure that parents with limited English proficiency are able to meaningfully participate as a member of the IEP team. This guidance specifically states that educators must take whatever action is necessary to ensure that the parent understands the proceedings of the IEP team meeting which may necessitate the inclusion of an interpreter (OELA, 2016). Using the OELA guidance educators must have a plan for the following:

- How will the district determine if parents or guardians have limited English proficiency?
- How will the district determine the primary language of the parents or guardians?
- How will the district determine the actual language needs of the parents or guardians (i.e. necessity of interpreters or written translated information)?

Chapter 10 of the OELA English Learner Tool Kit provides an opportunity for educators to gather additional information and ideas for how to answer these questions as well as how to best communicate with parents of ELs.

■ Language

The federal regulations about IEPs indicate that in cases of students who are ELs, educators must "consider the language needs of the child as those needs relate to the child's IEP" (IDEA, Sec. 300.324 (a) (2)). It is very often the case that IEPs should consider how English language proficiency factors into the IEP, but there are certainly cases where English language proficiency is less important for a student. It is important to note that a lack of English language proficiency does not equal a disability.

Ideally, the following components should be identified within the student's IEP. If they are not, then discuss a plan for including this information:

1. In what language does the student receive their content instruction?
2. What are the student's print literacy skills in their first language?
3. What language will the student need to use in the planned post-secondary setting?

■ Assessments

Although assessments are identified within IEPs, for ELs with disabilities, this IEP section needs a closer look. Michigan uses the WIDA assessments to measure English language development and therefore educators have the ability to administer the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs or the WIDA Alternate ACCESS for

ELLs assessment. The decision about which form of this assessment an EL with disabilities should take is a decision that must be made by the IEP team and documented within the IEP.

1. **How** and **when** will the IEP team discuss if the WIDA Alternate ACCESS or the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs is appropriate for a student?
2. How will the IEP team incorporate the use of the Michigan Department of Education's WIDA Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Decision Guidance document into their work?

■ Supports & Accommodations

For the Classroom

Educators must keep in mind that supports and accommodations are intended to level the playing field. They should enable a student to have equal access to content while providing them the ability to participate and progress in the general curriculum to the maximum extent possible. In order for educators to determine what will help level the playing field for a student, they must start with what the learning goals are for the student and what may help them achieve those goals.

A student's classroom supports and accommodations will vary depending on a student's needs. These should be included in the IEP itself to ensure that a student is receiving the fullest extent of the benefits these can offer. It may be helpful to reach out to your district's ISD/RESA for more information on how to make appropriate supports and accommodations selections for the classroom.

For Assessments

Similar to the previous section, what a student should have access to at the time of statewide assessments is a typical component of IEPs. The use of anything identified on the WIDA assessments as an 'Accommodation' is intended only for students who have a need for that Accommodation outlined in their IEP. One of the most commonly used Accommodations on the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs assessment is the use

of "Extended Speaking test response time". The need for this English language Accommodation must be identified as a need somewhere in the IEP.

1. Are the the IEP team members familiar with the Universal Tools and Accommodations available for the WIDA assessments? If not, what is the plan for ensuring staff have an opportunity to become familiar with those?

2. Are the Universal Tools or Accommodations students need for the WIDA assessments identified in the IEP? If not, is there a current place in the IEP form to include this information or does that need to be added?

Information about all supports and accommodations for Michigan's state assessments can be found in the [MDE Supports & Accommodations Guidance Document](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Michigan_Accommodations_Manual.final_480016_7.pdf) (https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Michigan_Accommodations_Manual.final_480016_7.pdf).

OTL in the IEP

Earlier in this document, we focused on understanding how OTL impacts IEPs for ELs with disabilities. Educators should discuss these questions in light of that understanding.

1. How does your current IEP process consider each of the three components of OTL: instructional time, content coverage, and instructional quality?

2. **How** and **when** will the IEP team discuss whether and how English language proficiency is necessary as part of each student's goals and objectives?

STEP 5: Sustainability Plan

Creating a system through which you can annually review the processes you've established to improve IEPs for dual identified students can lead to a continuous cycle of improvement. You may find it useful to review steps 1-5 before the start of each school year.

1. What will your continuous cycle of improvement look like?

2. Who is the person in this group responsible for overseeing the implementation and follow-through of activities defined in this plan?

Tool for the Development of an IEP for an EL with Disabilities

This part of the tool can be used by the IEP team at the district and school level to improve IEPs for students who are identified as both English learners (ELs) and students with disabilities.

This part of the tool can be used to ensure that each element of the required components of the IEP considers the needs of the students who are ELs. An example of how a typical IEP might look for each component is also provided.

■ Parts of an IEP

Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAFFP)

This section of a student's IEP summarizes a student's current abilities such as their strengths and weaknesses, what helps the child learn, identifies the limitations for a child's learning, the ways in which the disability affects the student's ability to participate and progress in the general curriculum to the maximum extent possible, as well as objective data from current evaluations. In order to successfully identify measurable goals a baseline of the student's abilities should be reviewed. A student's second language abilities as they pertain to the student's disability should also be described in this section.

– Include current English language proficiency information as it pertains to each expressive (Speaking and Writing) and receptive (Listening and Reading) domain

– Include current home language proficiency information in student's preferred language of communication as it pertains to each expressive and receptive domain

Gathering information such as a student's abilities in the expressive and receptive domains could come in the form of scores from the WIDA screener or other assessments conducted in English by the school.

Additionally, information such as the student's preferences for communication in their home language will likely need to be obtained by first asking the student or family members about the student's preferred language of communication. Then, the district could choose to assess the student's abilities in that language with an appropriate tool.

Measurable Annual Goals

Measurable annual goals are statements that describe what a student can reasonably be expected to accomplish within 12-months. The measurable annual goals should be tied directly to the needs identified in the PLAAFP. One of the main tenets of these annual goals is that they must be related to meeting the student's needs that result from the child's disability. A student's second language abilities as they pertain to the student's disability(s) should also be included in this section.

– Include current English language proficiency information as it pertains to each expressive (Speaking and Writing) and receptive (Listening and Reading) domain

– Ensure that each goal identifies in which language the goals will be addressed

– Ensure each goal identifies who will be responsible for measuring the outcomes

Current research shows that students may not be able to reach goals such as those measured by standardized assessments if the educators providing instruction to the students do not have training in working with ELs (Master, et al. 2012). Districts should make additional efforts to ensure that educators are increasing their knowledge about how best to meet the needs of ELs. This may mean hiring additional staff or investing in training opportunities.

Supplementary Aids/Services

Supplementary aids and services includes aids, services, and other supports that are provided in regular education classes, other education-related settings, and in extracurricular and nonacademic settings, to enable students with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled students to the maximum extent appropriate. A student's second language abilities as they pertain to the student's disability(s) should also be included in this section.

While ESL services should not be listed as a special education program or service, they could be listed here when a link has been created between the student's disability and their English language proficiency.

– Include current English language proficiency information as it pertains to each expressive (Speaking and Writing) and receptive (Listening and Reading) domain

Example without Language Consideration

Supports and Modifications to the Environment	Time/Frequency/Condition	Location
Word prediction software	When needed; class work, homework, formal assessment	Classroom

Example with Language Consideration

Supports and Modifications to the Environment	Time/Frequency/Condition	Location
English word prediction software	When needed; class work, homework, formal assessment	Classroom

The tables above illustrate a simple addition to this section of the IEP that could provide meaningful information to educators about how to implement portions of the IEP for an EL with disabilities.

Participation With Non-disabled Children

Peer to peer interaction for students learning English is important for their language growth. The requirement for this section of the IEP includes documenting the extent to which a student's disability precludes their participation with students without disabilities but also allows the IEP team to recommend whether or not a student should be exempt from the language other than English requirement because the student's disability affects their ability to learn English. This should only apply in cases with students who have the most significant cognitive disabilities.

– Promote interaction with English speaking peers with and without disabilities

Participation in State and District-wide Tests (this include accommodations/modifications)

Michigan offers a variety of summative assessments students are expected to take. This includes assessment options for students being taught the general education curriculum and those who are being instructed on alternate content expectations. For ELs, students are also expected to take the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs or the WIDA Alternate ACCESS for ELLs, an assessment designed for ELs with the most significant cognitive disabilities. There is no clear-cut answer on which students with disabilities should take the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs assessment. Because of that, the IEP team must use the WIDA Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Selection Guidance to determine what is appropriate for the student on a case-by-case basis. Additionally, Accommodations a student may need for all state assessments should be included in the IEP. One practical reason for this is to ensure that the student gets what they need at the time of the assessment, ensuring validity of the test results.

– Determine whether the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs or WIDA Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is appropriate for the student

– Identify alternative English language proficiency assessments if necessary, and explain why the assessment is necessary and meets the student's needs

Assessment Area	Assessment	Rationale for Appropriateness/ non-appropriateness	Accommodations
ELA	MI-Access Functional Independence	M-STEP is not appropriate because the student is not being instructed on the general education curriculum but is rather working toward state alternate content expectations	Scribe Additional time
Mathematics	MI-Access Functional Independence	M-STEP is not appropriate because the student is not being instructed on the general education curriculum but is rather working toward state alternate content expectations	Scribe In-person human translator Additional time
Science			
Social Studies			
English Language Development (Proficiency)	WIDA Alternate ACCESS for ELLs	The student is working towards alternate achievement standards/student has, or functions as if they have among the most significant cognitive disabilities	Scribe Extended time Speaking

– Include Accommodations a student may need related to their second language acquisition needs for the ELP assessment and content area assessments

Please keep in mind that the Accommodations listed in the previous example, are a subset of Accommodations possible on the state summative assessments. A full list of what is available and what may match a student's needs can be found in the [Michigan Department of Education's Supports & Accommodations Guidance Document](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Michigan_Accommodations_Manual.final_480016_7.pdf) (https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Michigan_Accommodations_Manual.final_480016_7.pdf).

Dates and Places

The IEP must state when services will begin, how often they will be provided, where they will be provided, and how long they will last.

No information related to a student's English language needs is relevant for this portion of required information.

Transition Services

Transition services are special education services that are designed to focus on improving academic and functional achievement for students with disabilities as the student moves from school to post-school life

such as postsecondary education, employment, and even independent living. For ELs with disabilities, they may need to continue their English language learning even after their K-12 experiences. Their ability to function successfully in post-school activities such as post-secondary or vocational education, employment, independent living, and even community participation depends in part on their ability to understand and use the English language.

– Identify ways in which the student will continue their English language learning after their K-12 experience

Behavioral Intervention Plans

The IEP should include a behavioral intervention plan if the student's behavior impedes their learning or the learning of others. These plans typically include approaches to addressing the behavior. For example, these strategies may include designing routines, teaching the student new silent signals, or even taking breaks. Depending on the student's behavior being addressed, this part of the IEP should also include pertinent information related to their English language proficiency needs. For example, a teacher may have noticed that a student with limited English proficiency becomes easily frustrated when attempting to interact

with his English-speaking peers. The student throws a toy every time he is unable to verbally interact in English with them. In addressing this behavior for the student, it would seem likely that educators may need to work on self-calming behaviors. However, the student's lack of English seems to be a contributing factor to the behavioral issues.

- Identify English language proficiency needs as they relate to measuring the student's annual goals

Assistive Technology and Services

Many students with disabilities use assistive technology to aid them. Examples of this are magnifiers, refreshable braille devices, speech generating devices, text-to-speech systems, crutches and many other types of supports. These supports are specialized to meet the student's needs as they relate to their disability. Because of this, it is unlikely that these educators would be considering the student's English language needs as they relate to these devices. Despite the unlikelihood, educators should still consider how the technology may be able to offer assistance to the student in their English language needs. For example, a student using speech-to-text may benefit from utilizing it at times in their native language. In cases such as this, that level of detail should be included in the IEP.

- Identify English language proficiency needs, if applicable, as they relate to the student's assistive technology needs

Age of Majority

The age of majority is the age at which a student is now considered an adult. Their rights as they relate to the IEP must be explained to them no later than one year prior to reaching the age of majority. For ELs there are some practical implications to this discussion, ones of course, that include ensuring that the student is receiving information about the age of majority in a language they understand.

- Identify English language proficiency needs for

communicating age of majority information as they pertain to each expressive (Speaking and Writing) and receptive (Listening and Reading) domain

Additional Resources

- Many similar concepts to those found in this document can be found in the WIDA ALTELLA Brief Number 4 (https://altella.wceruw.org/pubs/ALTELLA_Brief-04_IEPs.pdf).

- Educators will find many useful chapters, such as the previously mentioned Chapter 6 and 10, of the OELA Toolkit (https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/index.html).

- Although not specific to Michigan, there are many valuable resources available in the California Practitioners' Guide for Educating English Learners with Disabilities (https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/ac/documents/ab2785guide.pdf).

Tips/Reminders

- The CCSSO English Learners with Disabilities Guide (https://ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/CCSSO%20ELSWD%20Guide_Final%2011%2011%202017.pdf) may also be helpful

- Creating an IEP for an EL may take longer due to the amount of information necessary to fully understand a student's needs.

- Michigan schools are required to have an ESL certified educator serving EL students. This may require schools to shift hiring practices or work with consortium to provide appropriate services for students. Educators can find more information about these requirements by reviewing MDE's Appropriate Staffing of EL Programs document (https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Appropriate_Teacher_EL_Endorsements_665160_7.docx). Questions about educator requirements can be directed to the MDE Office of Educational Supports at 517-241-6974 or mde-el@michigan.gov.

– Educators should keep in mind that ensuring students have access to content instruction is an integral part of meeting the goals of their IEP as well as meeting their language acquisition skills. This additionally means that educators should be adhering to the content standards themselves, including the WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards, in their instruction. The WIDA ELD standards are not a substitute for core content area instruction. They must be focused on in addition to content standards.

– As mentioned, the processes outlined in this document are not a replacement for the culturally responsive identification process for ELs with suspected disabilities. Additional resources on that topic can be found through the [Oakland ISD's Difference or Disability website](http://differenceordisability.weebly.com/store/c1/Featured_Products.html) (http://differenceordisability.weebly.com/store/c1/Featured_Products.html).