Connecticut State Department of Education Evidence-Based Practice Guide
Supporting Local Education Agencies' (LEA) Use of ESSA Title Funds

English Language Proficiency

DRAFT

Under ESSA, there are four tiers, or levels, of evidence. Throughout this guide, the level indicator key is used to identify the evidence level at a quick glance.

Tier	Evidence Level	Evidence Descriptor
1	Strong Evidence	Supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented **randomized control experimental** studies.
2	Moderate Evidence	Supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented **quasi-experimental** studies.
3	Promising Evidence	Supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented **correlational** studies.
4	Demonstrates a Rationale	Practices that have a well-defined **logic model** or **theory of action**, are supported by research, and have some effort underway to determine their effectiveness.

Interventions applied under Title I, Section 1003 (School Improvement) are required to have strong, moderate, or promising evidence (Tiers 1-3) to support them. All other programs under Titles I-IV can rely on Tiers 1-4.

Suggested citation: Connecticut State Department of Education. (2018). *CSDE and ESSA Evidence-Based Spending Guide*.

Systems

The Connecticut State Department of Education adheres to research supporting schoolwide, systemic, multi-tiered approaches to the instruction and supplemental supports for a diverse range of English learners, including progress monitoring, providing a system of supports, and ensuring fidelity of implementation.

Evidence-based practice and rationale	Grade band	Evidence level and source
Offer long-term bilingual programs for English learners. *Long-term math and English/language arts outcomes are highest for English Learners in bilingual programs. English learners in dual language programs far outperform English learners in other programs. Effective programs must be sustained and consistent.*	PreK-3 4-5 6-8 9-12	**Tier 1, Strong** Source: Valentino, R., Reardon, S. (2014) Effectiveness of four instructional programs designed to serve English language learners: Variation by ethnicity and initial English proficiency.
	PreK-3 4-5 6-8 9-12	**Tier 4, Demonstrates a Rationale** Source: Howard, E. R., Lindholm-Leary, K. J., Rogers, D., Olague, N., Medina, J., Kennedy, B., Sugarman, J., & Christian, D. (2018). Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education (3rd ed.). Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.
Develop clear policies, guidelines and data-tracking systems to monitor student progress toward English language proficiency. *Policies and practices should include multiple types of data sources and should be reviewed by a diverse range of stakeholders and experts. There should be an alignment between special education and English language programs, practices, and systemic data collection and tracking.*	PreK-3 4-5 6-8 9-12	**Tier 4, Demonstrates a Rationale** Source: Burr, E., Haas, E., & Ferriere, K. (2015). Identifying and supporting English learner students with learning disabilities: Key issues in the literature and state practice (REL 2015–086). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory West.

Evidence-based practice and rationale	Grade band	Evidence level and source
Create a school-wide vision of bilingualism, biliteracy and multiculturalism through effective, engaged leadership and staff. *Creation of a shared vision will set a foundation for bilingualism and biliteracy, increase buy-in among school community stakeholders, and support the long-term programming that leads to the most effective bilingual and biliterate outcomes for students.*	PreK-3 4-5 6-8 9-12	**Tier 4, Demonstrates a Rationale** Source: Howard, E. R., Lindholm-Leary, K. J., Rogers, D., Olague, N., Medina, J., Kennedy, B., Sugarman, J., & Christian, D. (2018). Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education (3rd ed.). Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.
Fill content area gaps with appropriate instruction and basic literacy development adapted for English learners. *Newcomer programs can help to mitigate the challenges of addressing content gaps and basic English literacy needs for English learners that arrive later in their education. By providing targeted supports through newcomer programs, the very specific needs of these students can be addressed in order to provide a foundation for more advanced secondary coursework and to enable students to graduate.*	6-8 9-12	**Tier 3, Promising** Source: Short, D. J., & Boyson, B. A. (2012). Helping newcomer students succeed in secondary schools and beyond. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.
Use progress monitoring. *Closely monitor student progress and proactively intervene if students begin to show that there are challenges with attendance, behavior, or academics.*	9-12	**Tier 3, Promising** Source: Preventing Dropout in Secondary Schools (NCEE 2017-4028)
Provide intensive, individualized supports for students that have fallen off track. *When students need intensive supports, identify a single individual to be each student's primary advocate, provide a range of support options that can be used to assist students, and help advocates by providing ongoing professional learning and tracking tools.*	9-12	**Tier 2, Moderate** Source: Preventing Dropout in Secondary Schools (NCEE 2017-4028)

Evidence-based practice and rationale	Grade band	Evidence level and source
Engage students through curricula and programs that connect with college and career success. *Connect schoolwork to students' options after high school and provide curricula and programs that help students build supportive relationships. Assess student engagement to identify areas for improvement, and intervene with students who are not meaningfully engaged.*	9-12	**Tier 1, Strong** Source: [Preventing Dropout in Secondary Schools (NCEE 2017-4028)](#)
Create small, personalized communities to facilitate monitoring and support. *Build teams of teachers that share groups of students, and provide common planning time and opportunities for staff to collaborate and support students. Identify a theme to help build a strong sense of community and foster student engagement.*	9-12	**Tier 2, Moderate** Source: [Preventing Dropout in Secondary Schools (NCEE 2017-4028)](#)

Instructional Practice

The Connecticut State Department of Education adheres to research that supports the explicit instructional practice of explicitly teaching vocabulary, integrating oral and written instruction into content-area teaching, providing regular opportunities to develop writing skills, providing small-group interventions, offering dual language programs and addressing the particular needs of specific groups of English learner students, such as long-term English learners and late arrival students, and students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE).

Evidence-based practice and rationale	Grade band	Evidence level and source
Conduct formative assessments to use with English Learners to determine which students need additional support. *Formative assessments should measure phonological processing, letter knowledge, and word and text reading.*	PreK-3 4-5	**Tier 1, Strong** Source: Effective Literacy and English Language Instruction for English Learners in the Elementary Grades (NCEE 2007-4001)
Provide focused, intensive small-group interventions for English learners determined to be at risk for reading problems. *The interventions should include phonological awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension and be delivered through explicit, direct instruction.*	PreK-3 4-5 6-8 9-12 PreK-3 4-5 6-8 9-12	**Tier 1, Strong** Source: Effective Literacy and English Language Instruction for English Learners in the Elementary Grades (NCEE 2007-4001) **Tier 2, Moderate** Source: Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School (NCEE 2014-4012) **Tier 2, Moderate** Source: Preventing Dropout in Secondary Schools (NCEE 2017-4028)
Prioritize academic vocabulary instruction. *Provide high-quality vocabulary instruction throughout the day, and teach vocabulary learning strategies and essential content words in detail; teach a set of academic vocabulary intensively over multiple days.*	PreK-3 4-5 6-8 9-12	**Tier 1, Strong** Source: Effective Literacy and English Language Instruction for English Learners in the Elementary Grades (NCEE 2007-4001)

Evidence-based practice and rationale	Grade band	Evidence level and source
Prioritize academic vocabulary instruction (continued). *Provide high-quality vocabulary instruction throughout the day and teach vocabulary learning strategies and essential content words in detail; teach a set of academic vocabulary intensively over multiple days.*	PreK-3 4-5 6-8 9-12	**Tier 1, Strong** Source: Carlo, M., August, D., McLaughlin, B., Snow, C., Dressler, C., Lippman, D., Lively, T., White, Cl., (2004). Closing the gap: Addressing the vocabulary needs of English-language learners in bilingual and mainstream classrooms. Reading Research Quarterly, V39, n2, PP. 188-215.
	PreK-3 4-5 6-8	**Tier 1, Strong** Source: Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School (NCEE 2014-4012)
Provide at least 90 minutes a week for English Learners to work collaboratively with others. *This time should be devoted to activities in which pairs of students at different ability levels or different English language proficiencies work together on academic tasks to practice and extend new content.*	PreK-3 4-5	**Tier 1, Strong** Source: Effective Literacy and English Language Instruction for English Learners in the Elementary Grades (NCEE 2007-4001)
Ensure that the development of academic English is a key instructional goal for English Learners. *Provide curricula to accompany core reading and mathematics series, and support the implementation of the curricula through effective professional development.*	PreK-3 4-5	**Tier 2, Moderate** Source: Effective Literacy and English Language Instruction for English Learners in the Elementary Grades (NCEE 2007-4001)
Use literature logs and oral academic language. *Develop independent literature logs and have students engage in discussions to make connections and enhance understanding.*	PreK-3 4-5	**Tier 1, Strong** Source: What Works Clearinghouse Intervention Report Instructional Conversations and Literature Logs (Rep.). (2006) Retrieved from What Works Clearinghouse.

Evidence-based practice and rationale	Grade band	Evidence level and source
Integrate oral and written English language instruction into content instruction. *Use visual instructional tools to anchor instruction and help make content comprehensible. Provide daily opportunities for students to talk about content in pairs or small groups, and use writing opportunities to extend student learning and understanding of new content.*	PreK-3 4-5 6-8	**Tier 1, Strong** Source: Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School (NCEE 2014-4012)
Provide ongoing, structured opportunities to develop writing skills in English. *Offer writing assignments that are anchored in content and provide language-based supports to facilitate student writing. Provide opportunities for students to collaborate in small groups about aspects of writing. Review student writing and provide constructive feedback.*	PreK-3 4-5 6-8	**Tier 3, Promising** Source: Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School (NCEE 2014-4012)
Fill content area gaps with appropriate instruction and basic literacy development adapted for English Learners. *Newcomer programs can help to mitigate the challenges of addressing content gaps and basic English literacy needs for English learners that arrive later in their education. By providing targeted supports through newcomer programs, the very specific needs of these students can be addressed in order to provide a foundation for more advanced secondary coursework and to enable students to graduate.*	6-8 9-12	**Tier 3, Promising** Source: Short, D. J., & Boyson, B. A. (2012). Helping newcomer students succeed in secondary schools and beyond. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.
Offer long-term bilingual programs for English learners. *Long-term math and English/language arts outcomes are highest for English learners in bilingual programs. English learners in dual language programs far outperform English learners in other programs. Effective programs are sustained and consistent.*	PreK-3 4-5 6-8 9-12	**Tier 1, Strong** Source: Valentino, R., Reardon, S. (2014) *Effectiveness of four instructional programs designed to serve English language learners: Variation by ethnicity and initial English proficiency.*

Evidence-based practice and rationale	Grade band	Evidence level and source
Provide intensive, individualized supports for students that have fallen off track. *When students need intensive supports, identify a single individual to be each student's primary advocate, provide a range of support options that can be used to assist students, and help advocates by providing ongoing professional learning and tracking tools.*	9-12	**Tier 2, Moderate** Source: Preventing Dropout in Secondary Schools (NCEE 2017-4028)
Engage students through curricula and programs that connect with college and career success. *Connect schoolwork to students' options after high school and provide curricula and programs that help students build supportive relationships. Assess student engagement to identify areas for improvement, and intervene with students who are not meaningfully engaged.*	9-12	**Tier 1, Strong** Source: Preventing Dropout in Secondary Schools (NCEE 2017-4028)
Use progress monitoring. *Closely monitor student progress and proactively intervene if students begin to show that there are challenges with attendance, behavior, or academics.*	9-12	**Tier 3, Promising** Source: Preventing Dropout in Secondary Schools (NCEE 2017-4028)
Integrate long-term English learners into the school community and offer supports. *Provide access to rigorous and relevant curriculum and relationships with supportive adults.*	9-12	**Tier 3, Promising** Source: Effective Interventions for Long-Term English Learners (2017). Washington DC: Hanover House

Professional Learning

The Connecticut State Department of Education supports the following evidence-based models of teacher professional learning that is collaborative, ongoing and deepens teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge.

Evidence-based practice and rationale	Grade band	Evidence level and source
Provide professional development on how to expand the academic language of English Learners. *Ongoing professional development should focus in part on features of English, such as morphology, syntax, and discourse, and these should be addressed in a gradual manner. Professional development should include practical activities, such as analyzing student texts for academic English and determining features of language that students need to complete assignments and should also give teachers opportunities to practice teaching academic language.*	PreK-3 4-5	**Tier 3, Promising** Source: [Effective Literacy and English Language Instruction for English Learners in the Elementary Grades (NCEE 2007-4001)](#)
Ensure that teachers of English Learners receive specialized training in language education pedagogy, materials and resources. *Training should address such topics as educational pedagogy, equity pedagogy, biliteracy development and implementation of the language program model, standards-based teaching, literacy instruction, sheltered instruction, and parental and community involvement as well as specific concepts of English literacy development, such as oral language development, vocabulary development, and meaning-based phonemic and phonetic work.*	PreK-3 4-5 6-8 9-12	**Tier 4, Demonstrates a Rationale** Source: [Howard, E. R., Lindholm-Leary, K. J., Rogers, D., Olague, N., Medina, J., Kennedy, B., Sugarman, J., & Christian, D. (2018). Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education (3rd ed.). Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.](#)

Evidence-based practice and rationale	Grade band	Evidence level and source
Provide high-quality professional development on bilingual education, dual language programs and effective instructional strategies. *It is imperative that teachers are trained in second language and biliteracy development so they understand how languages are learned and incorporate this into their practice. To support their students' acquisition of language and literacy, teachers must use content pedagogy methods and choose strategies that fit with the goals and needs of dual language students, and training is important to familiarize teachers with these concepts.*	PreK-3 4-5 6-8 9-12	**Tier 4, Demonstrates a Rationale** Source: Howard, E. R., Lindholm-Leary, K. J., Rogers, D., Olague, N., Medina, J., Kennedy, B., Sugarman, J., & Christian, D. (2018). Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education (3rd ed.). Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.
Careful staffing and professional development are imperative for effective newcomer programs. *Programs should be staffed by committed teachers that are specially trained to teach newcomers and have ESL or bilingual credentials or endorsements as well as professionals that can provide wraparound supports. Professional development should be provided to newcomer program staff.*	6-9 9-12	**Tier 3, Promising** Source: Short, D. J., & Boyson, B. A. (2012). Helping newcomer students succeed in secondary schools and beyond. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Extended Learning

The Connecticut State Department of Education supports evidenced-based models of extended learning that focus on English Learners and their academic needs as well as their social/emotional support needs to develop English language proficiency, academic content and supports that extend beyond the traditional classroom hours, days and school year.

Evidence-based practice and rationale	Grade band	Evidence level and source
Maximize student participation and attendance. *Student participation is impacted by issues of access and convenience, as well as by the adequacy and attractiveness of the services and features provided in the program. Minimize the barriers to participation, especially for the students most in need of program services and most likely to benefit from them.*	**PreK-3** **4-5** **6-8** **9-12**	**Tier 4, Demonstrates a Rationale** Source: Structuring Out-of-School Time to Improve Academic Achievement (NCEE 2009-012).
Adapt instruction to individual and small group needs. *Focus should be placed on supplementing learning from the school day and providing targeted assistance to students whose needs extend beyond what is available through classroom instruction. Student performance may be positively impacted by close alignment of the content and pacing of instruction, and identifying the right level of instruction and pace is imperative for effective individualized instruction.*	**PreK-3** **4-5** **6-8** **9-12**	**Tier 2, Moderate** Source: Structuring Out-of-School Time to Improve Academic Achievement (NCEE 2009-012)
Provide engaging learning experiences. *Activities should be interactive, hands on, learner directed and related to the real world, while remaining grounded in academic learning goals.*	**PreK-3** **4-5** **6-8** **9-12**	**Tier 4, Demonstrates a Rationale** Source: Structuring Out-of-School Time to Improve Academic Achievement (NCEE 2009-012)

Evidence-based practice and rationale	Grade band	Evidence level and source
Assess program performance and use the results to improve the quality of the program. *Both formative and summative evaluations are instrumental in any program improvement effort. Programs should have internal mechanisms to monitor staff performance, collect data related to program implementation, and conduct independent evaluations of program implementation and student impact.*	PreK-3 4-5 6-8 9-12	**Tier 4, Demonstrates a Rationale** Source: Structuring Out-of-School Time to Improve Academic Achievement (NCEE 2009-012)
Provide extended time for instruction and support. *Well-structured and well-planned extended time, such as an afterschool, weekend and/or summer school program, enables students to receive targeted instruction to build foundational academic and linguistic skills, address gaps in academic content, and practice new material.*	6-8 9-12	**Tier 3, Promising** Source: Short, D. J., & Boyson, B. A. (2012). Helping newcomer students succeed in secondary schools and beyond. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.
Provide intensive, individualized support to students who have fallen off track and face significant challenges to success. *When students need intensive supports, identify a single individual to be each student's primary advocate, provide a range of support options that can be used to assist students, and help advocates by providing ongoing professional learning and tracking tools.*	9-12	**Tier 2, Moderate** Source: Preventing Dropout in Secondary Schools (NCEE 2017-4028)
Create small, personalized communities to facilitate monitoring and support of at-risk students. *Build teams of teachers that share groups of students, and provide common planning time and opportunities for staff to collaborate and support students. Identify a theme to help build a strong sense of community and foster student engagement.*	9-12	**Tier 2, Moderate** Source: Preventing Dropout in Secondary Schools (NCEE 2017-4028)