TOOL 5: EVALUATING ENGLISH LEARNER PROGRAMS

Schools must provide adequate language assistance services (through their EL program) so that students attain proficiency in English and are able to meaningfully participate in the school's educational programs within a reasonable length of time.

No particular EL program is required, but all EL programs must meet certain minimum standards:
- The program must be based upon sound educational theory or principles.
- The program must be implemented effectively.
- After a reasonable period of time, the program must result in students overcoming language barriers.

When evaluating the adequacy of an EL program, the following considerations should be made:
- Is the program based upon sound educational theory or principals or a legitimate experimental strategy?
- Is the program implemented effectively and in accordance with the educational theory or strategy that the program is based on?
  - Does the school allocate appropriate staff to provide instruction/support?
    - The answer must be yes.
    - Qualifications/training necessary for staff will depend on the chosen EL model.
    - All staff should be adequately trained on implementation of the EL program.
    - All staff must be made aware of the services/supports that EL students require.
    - Effective implementation of the EL program should be included in teacher/staff evaluations.
    - EL services offered should not be based on staffing levels and teacher availability but rather should be based on student need.
  - Does the school allocate appropriate resources and materials?
    - The answer must be yes.
  - Are EL students unnecessarily segregated from non-EL peers?
    - The answer must be no.
    - Segregation of EL students must not occur unless necessary to implement the EL program—the EL program must be implemented in the least segregated manner possible.
    - The school must be able to demonstrate valid, nondiscriminatory reasons for segregated class assignments.
      - A valid educational purpose exists when the class is specially designed to teach English.
      - The school may require separate instruction for a limited period consistent with the EL program's goals.
      - There is not likely to be justification to separate EL students in physical education, music, lunch, recess, assemblies, and extracurricular activities.

- o Are EL students educated in facilities that are of comparable quality to those available to non-EL peers?
  - ▪ The answer must be yes.
- o Do EL students have an equal opportunity to participate in extracurricular and non-academic activities?
  - ▪ The answer must be yes.
- o Are EL students categorically excluded from special programs?
  - ▪ The answer must be no.
  - ▪ The school must ensure that evaluation/testing procedures for gifted/accelerated or other specialized programs do not screen out EL students because of limited English proficiency unless the school can demonstrate that English proficiency is required for meaningful participation.

- Is the EL program periodically evaluated to ensure that EL students are overcoming language barriers and accessing the school's curriculum within a reasonable period of time?
  - o Schools must formally evaluate their EL program periodically.
  - o Evaluations and results should be documented.
  - o The evaluation of the EL program must include the following:
    - ▪ A review of available data including but not necessarily limited to English language proficiency assessment results, academic achievement assessment results, grades, promotion and retention rates, graduation rates, attendance, and rates of participation in special programs
    - ▪ Input from a variety of stakeholders, including teachers, students, and parents
  - o The evaluation should consider:
    - ▪ Is the EL program is being implemented?
    - ▪ Is the EL program effective?
      - • Is it achieving its established goals?
      - • Are EL students developing English language skills at the expected rate?
      - • Are EL students able to participate meaningfully in the school's educational program?
  - o The evaluation results must identify any necessary and appropriate revisions to the EL program and a plan for implementing said revisions.