



NEBRASKA  
**ENGLISH  
LEARNER**  
PROGRAMS

# Nebraska EL Program Guide

A GUIDE FOR SECONDARY  
EL PROGRAMMING  
2022



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## Introduction

This document provides ideas for secondary programming. It showcases many of the useful and creative ways districts in Nebraska are setting up their programs to support secondary ELs as they learn English and work towards graduation. It was created and informed by the state-wide secondary EL working group which represents districts and ESUs from around the state. Click on the topic below to find the information for that topic. Other resources for supporting English learners can be found on the Title III website at <https://www.education.ne.gov/natlorigin/>.

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## Course Schedule & Graduation Plan

Increase student access to content classes/course credit by:

- Using professional development money to add ESL endorsements for content teachers.
  - Content teachers with ESL endorsements can support EL students in content classes and/or create sheltered content courses for credit
  - Consider Sheltered Instruction Training
- Accepting previous country transcript credits
- Creating new courses for credit/partial credit for ELs
- Co-teaching (ESL and content endorsed teacher) with co-planning
- Monitoring students' attendance and grades to keep them on course
- Utilizing peer assistants in classes who earn volunteer hours

Considerations for creating a graduation plan for high school ELs:

- Be flexible
  - Meet the students where they are
  - Realize EL acquisition varies
  - Adjust the "big picture" based on the needs of the student
- Encourage SLIFE students to stay until 21
  - Recognize some students may not "graduate" in the traditional sense but may need skills for the workforce
- Support students by encouraging them to stay in school - be the advocate they need and help them realize their potential by staying in school for as long as possible
- Keep expectations high but realistic - we can't expect more from ELs than English speakers (in academics and behavior).
- Include extended or additional learning opportunities that promote literacy/language develop, credit recovery, etc.
  - After school, Saturday School, Summer School, spring break
  - Independent study programs (in addition to HS day), night classes
- Communicate plan (and expectations) to students, parents, and staff
- Review plan by school staff (ongoing)
- Work with guidance counselors to develop plan
- Create a specific, reasonable graduation plan for SLIFE students

Process for Curriculum Development:

- Align to NE ELP Standards
- Look at other districts' work and national groups
- Partner and plan curriculum with content area curriculum specialists
- Partner with counselors for graduation requirements
- Develop a plan for curriculum and then refine multiple times
- Create documents for counselors, students, and families (translated)
- Develop new courses

## Engaging and Supporting Secondary English Learners

Ideas for providing additional support and engaging English learners:

- Create peer tutoring opportunities
- Encourage students to be part of TeamMates (and other similar) programs
- Create service learning opportunities for students
  - Use native English speakers who need service learning hours as partners to practice conversational skills with ELs
- Use coaches and sponsors to help find rides to extracurricular activities and/sports
- Assign peer ambassador to new ELs
- Encourage ELs to participate in extracurricular clubs (i.e., Conversational Partners with native speakers)
- Sponsor EL Leadership Clubs or other clubs
- Identify disconnected kids and form relationships
  - Identify staff who can connect to EL students who are not engaged to support and check in with students
- Help ELs access local supports like the town library
- Create relationships with families and community members to support student engagement
- Utilize peer assistants in classes to earn volunteer hours
- Do learning walks - observing mainstream classes and interacting with other staff

## Family Engagement and Support

### Ways to build communication with families:

- Create a Welcome Packet for ELs and their families - include a video link that includes a tour of the school, location of important people in the building, lunch routine, etc. There could also be a video for parents about paperwork and requirements for students to begin school, helpful websites, and how to access them, etc.
- Utilize [TRANSACT](#)
- Utilize Parent Liaisons
- Do home visits
- Develop a Parent Leadership Conference (i.e. Harvard Public Schools)
- Involve EL parents in parent associations
- Host a “Celebration” ceremony for those students exiting the EL program, as well as celebrating all EL students’ growth
- Learn about and understand students’ and families’ cultures and backgrounds

### Resources for Family Engagement

- <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?projectID=4509>
- [NDE Rule 15 Canvas Course](#) (Identifying and Welcoming ELs)
- [NDE Family and Community Engagement Website](#)

## Collaborating with Content Teachers and Transitioning Students

### Communicating with Content Teachers

- Build in time to work with content teachers (be efficient, prioritize)
  - Provide professional development for EL teachers to share strategies
    - Require building staff to attend in-service, PD, trainings, for ELs.
    - Provide staff with an opportunity to earn their ESL endorsement
  - Co-teaching
- Limit the number of strategies you provide them to use with ELs so the teachers don't get overwhelmed.
- Use a shared site with content teachers (i.e OneDrive, ELLoquence) to get resources to core teachers
- Include the EL teacher on the content team and/or curriculum team
- Create an [Individual Language Acquisition Plan](#) to inform content teacher about supports students will need in the general education classroom
- Communicate purpose and role of EL program
  - Improve EL student data collection captured on district's student data system and educate school administration and content-area teachers on how to interpret student EL data provided in the system (ex: ELPA21 scores, intake assessment results)
- Invite content teachers to attend state/regional conferences for EL strategies
- Participate in standards revision and curriculum writing process with core content areas (Science, Social Studies and Math)
- Collaborate with Special Education regarding screening ELs and supporting dual-identified ELs

### Professional Learning Topic Ideas/PD offerings for content teachers

- Ways to provide support in the content areas – [NDE Standards Alignment Resources](#)
- Cultural awareness
- Stages of language acquisition
- [Classroom Instruction that Works for English Learners](#)
- Language functions instruction, grammar, and vocabulary instruction in the content area (i.e., SIOP framework)
- Academic language for all students
- Oral language development/Academic Conversation

### Important topics to communicate to content teachers and administrators:

- ELPA21 and other testing results
- Rule 15
- OCR requirements

### Transition Plans for students

- [Sample plan for Redesignated English Fluent students](#)
- Transition forms given to teachers electronically
- Create a plan with a counselor that helps support the transition of students into more difficult content classes. Example:
  - Phase 1(Art, P.E., elective courses, etc)
  - Phase 2(Science, computers, etc.)
  - Phase 3(Social studies, English, other required courses)
  - Consider summer school options of required credit courses (i.e., English/Social Studies or Science) for accrual purposes when possible

## Serving Newcomers and Students with Limited or Interrupted Education (SLIFE)

### Ways to support initial contact with new ELLs

- Parent and/or bilingual liaisons
- [NDE Rule 15 Canvas Course](#) (Identifying and Welcoming ELs)
- Communicate with all personnel (including secretaries)
- Engage personnel in professional development (e.g., book study)
- Set routine / checklist for registration (paperwork, testing, wait time, etc.)
- Discuss graduation plan and options for career readiness with ELs at risk of aging out (i.e., share district's guidelines about this included in the Welcome Packet)

### Ways to support language and literacy skills

- Spanish courses/Native language courses to support literacy skills in native language
- Combine language instruction with a content focus (particularly vocabulary) immediately
- Use interactive notebooks to help ELs to learn print and notetaking skills (also helps to monitor and evaluate evidence of student learning)
- Use ELP Standards to determine priority standards
- [USDE Newcomer Toolkit](#)
- Create a packet for new students (activities that could catch them up on work that students had already completed)
- Create a to-do list for teachers when a new EL arrives
- Collaborate with content teachers to provide basic support and materials (i.e. for students with low math skills)
- Utilize peer assistants who earn volunteer hours
- Use online resources (ex: Imagine Learning, Learning A-Z, Raz-Kids, Achieve 3000 Access (EL version) and IXL for Language Arts and Math)
- Use a Pass/Fail option for grading
- Co-teach when possible

### Course options for newcomer ELs outside of EL electives:

- Choir
- Health
- Foods
- Woods
- Basic Math
- Art
- P.E.

### Materials for systemic language & content development

- Pearson Math
- Modern Curriculum Press
- Step Up to Writing
- Pearson-Longman (social studies, math, Keystone Series, Cornerstone Series)
- Hampton Brown EDGE and Inside the USA (HS sheltered programs)
- Fast Math
- Imagine Learning
- Front Row Ed

## Special Considerations for SLIFE Students

### Who are SLIFE students?

The following information is taken from the Nebraska English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards. The entire document can be found at: <https://www.education.ne.gov/natlorigin/ell-resources/>

#### **Indicators that a student may be SLIFE include:**

- Inadequate school records, no school records, or school records with gaps
- Reports by student and/or parent/guardian of not having attended school
- Poor attendance records from prior schools, frequent absences, and/or tardiness at current school
- Low literacy level in the native language
- Weak grasp of grade-level content material due to lack of opportunity to learn English or lack of school experiences
- Lack of awareness of the basic expectations of the school environment

(Indicators adapted from *Meeting the Needs of Students with Limited or Interrupted Schooling: A Guide for Educators*, DeCapua, Smathers, and Tang, 2009)

Based on the book, *Boosting Achievement Reading Students with Interrupted or Minimal Education* by Carol Salva and Anna Matis, the EL Secondary Working Group have come up with considerations for working with SLIFE student students.

### Ways to support SLIFE Students

- Provide ample opportunities to read (in all content areas).
- Create a social contract with SLIFE students to provide a sense of belonging , respect, and safety in a new environment.
- Include students in setting up classroom rules and expectations.
- Capitalize on their skills and life experiences to accelerate their learning.
- Educate students about the power of their “grit.”
- Consider a balanced approach to foundational literacy.
- Set goals with SLIFE students so they feel responsible for their own learning.
- Focus on success and growth.
- Involve EL students in the school (outside of the EL classes and groups).
- Use visuals.
- Help students learn to self-advocate.
- Focus on what students know, not on deficits.
- Help students learn the value and process of consensus building.
- Support foundational literacy development.



## Things to know about SLIFE students

- SLIFE students:
  - come with a large amount of grit, perseverance, and life experiences.
  - come with their own stories.
  - often have a strong desire to learn.
  - will have experienced different rules and norms than those of U.S. Schools and will need to be taught those rules and norms explicitly.
  - can be successful with belief in themselves, effort, and support.
  - have a lot of background knowledge and experiences to capitalize on even when their literacy levels are low.

## Considerations for Teachers

- Secondary EL teachers must understand foundational literacy instruction.
- EL and content teachers work together, but have a different focus. Difference focus for content and ELL teachers:
  - Effective content teachers use language to teach concepts.
  - Effective EL teachers use engaging content to teach language.
- Understand students' educational background and stages of language acquisition (i.e. the silent period).
- A teacher's attitude towards their students and their class is paramount to the success of EL students.