

Video Script

Overview: Programs for English Learners/Emergent Bilingual Students

Welcome to an overview on programs for English learners, now referred to as emergent bilingual students! This is the first in a series of videos intended to answer common questions related to bilingual education and English as a second language (ESL) program implementation.

This video will answer the question: What types of programs are Texas public schools required to implement to serve emergent bilingual students?

First, a student identified as emergent bilingual is in the process of acquiring English and has another language as the student's primary or home language. As a result of House Bill 2066 in the 2021 legislative session, the term emergent bilingual student replaced the term English learner. The two terms describe the same group of Texas students. It's important to note that the term English learner is still used in federal regulations and guidance.

Texas Education Code Section 29 outlines six state-approved program models that Texas public schools are required to provide for their students identified as emergent bilingual. Texas public schools include traditional school districts, open-enrollment charters, and districts of innovation. Throughout this video series, the term district is used for all Texas public schools.

Based on the district's population of emergent bilingual students, the district will provide bilingual education and/or ESL programs.

- When a district has 20 or more identified emergent bilingual students at the same grade level with the same primary language district-wide, they are required to provide bilingual education program services beginning with earliest grade level and building up each year (through elementary school, including prekindergarten through grade 5 or 6 if 6th is clustered with elementary). Generally, bilingual education programs utilize instruction in the primary language of the students and in English to develop literacy and academic skills in both the primary language and English.
- Districts with even one identified emergent bilingual student must provide ESL program services regardless of the students' grade levels and primary languages. ESL programs provide linguistically accommodated content instruction in English to support second language acquisition.

Out of the six state-approved program models for emergent bilingual students in Texas, four are bilingual education program types and two are ESL program types.

- Transitional bilingual education programs have a goal of academic English proficiency. Emergent bilingual students receive instruction in literacy and academic content in their primary language as well as English from teachers certified in bilingual education. They begin with a high level of primary language instructional minutes which decrease as English language instruction increases over the duration of the program. The early exit model decreases primary language instructional minutes more quickly than the late exit model, but both early exit and late exit models are available for the duration of elementary school.

- Dual language immersion (DLI) programs have goals of bilingualism, biliteracy, and socio-cultural competence. DLI program participants receive instruction in literacy and academic content in the program's partner language (as in Spanish or Vietnamese) as well as English from appropriately certified teachers. DLI programs may begin with a higher level of instructional minutes in the program's partner language, but these minutes never fall below 50% of instructional time through the duration of the program. One-way DLI serves students identified as emergent bilingual only but includes participation of those who have met reclassification as English proficient and are continuing DLI program participation. Two-way DLI includes students identified as emergent bilinguals as well as non-emergent bilingual students learning the program's partner language. Based on the goals of dual language immersion programs, districts may choose to extend the program into secondary grade levels.
- ESL Programs have a goal of academic English proficiency, and may use the primary language as a resource, but instruction is in English with embedded second language acquisition supports. The pull-out model provides an ESL certified teacher in at least English/Language Arts and Reading, whereas the content-based model provides ESL certified teacher/s in all content areas.

Overall, districts may choose to provide program services to emergent bilingual students that go beyond these state requirements, but access to these required program models ensures that emergent bilingual students have a full opportunity to participate equitably in school.

For more information on program models, visit txel.org/programimplementation. If you have additional questions, reach out to the TEA English Learner Support Division at EnglishLearnerSupport@tea.texas.gov. Thank you for listening!