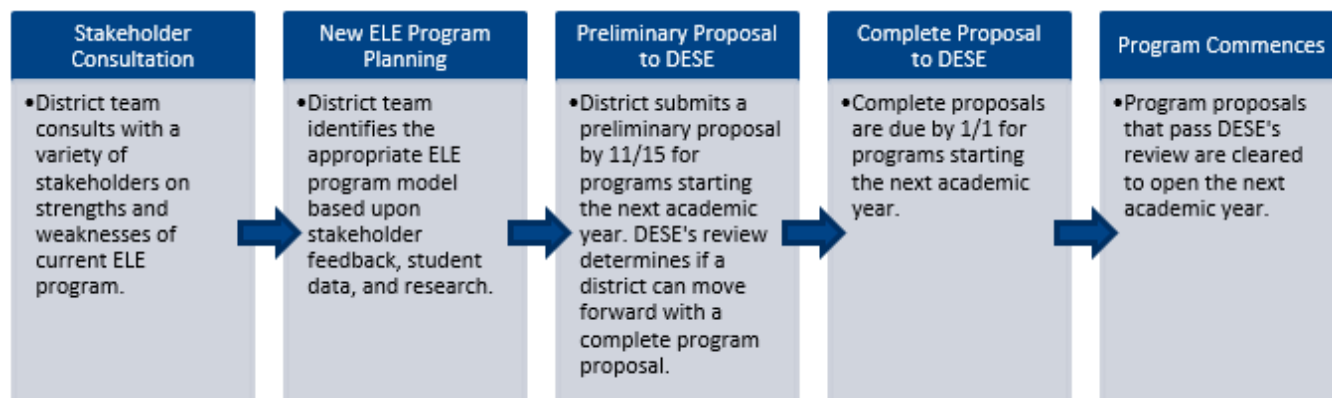


Quick Reference Guide: Starting a New English Learner Education Program

The Language Opportunity for Our Kids (LOOK) Act creates a new opportunity for districts to consider the programmatic needs of English Learners (ELs). The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) encourages all districts to take stock of their current English Learner Education (ELE) programs to assess whether they are meeting the needs of ELs in developing their English language skills while accessing grade-level content. Districts interested in opening new ELE programs can now receive support from DESE by following the review process outlined below.



Preliminary Proposal

Districts interested in starting a new ELE program must submit a preliminary proposal to the Department by November 15 of the preceding academic year. For example, a district that anticipates opening a new two-way immersion program in September 2020 will submit a preliminary proposal by November 15, 2019. **Since 2018 is the first year of this process, preliminary proposals will be accepted after November 15 to allow districts more time for program planning.**

Components of a Preliminary Proposal

A successful preliminary proposal includes the following:

1. A short description of the proposed new ELE program.
2. The demographics of the student population to be served by the proposed new ELE program.
3. An analysis of the district's current ELE program(s) based on *Castañeda's* Three-Pronged Test.¹
4. Confirmation that the district consulted with the district's English Learner Parent Advisory Council (ELPAC), if applicable.²

The preliminary proposal provides an opportunity to consider what is working about the district's current ELE programs, and more importantly, what is not. Prior to submitting a preliminary proposal, DESE recommends the district consult a range of stakeholders, including educators working within the current ELE program, current

¹ The United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit established a three-pronged test for analyzing ELE programs in the 1981 case of *Castaneda v. Pickard*. DESE utilizes *Castañeda's* test in the ELE component of the Coordinated Program Review (CPR) process. Districts whose most recent CPR included *Castañeda's* test do not need to repeat the exercise for the preliminary proposal and will instead indicate such in the preliminary proposal.

² Any district that serves 100 or more ELs or in which ELs comprise at least 5% of the student population must establish an ELPAC. Any school designated as underperforming or chronically underperforming that operates an ELE program, must also establish an ELPAC. 603 CMR 14.09.

and past EL students, parents of ELs, and community organizations that support ELs and their families. Being very clear at the outset about the district's priorities will allow the district to make the most informed decision about new ELE program design.

Once the district submits a preliminary proposal, staff from DESE's Office of Language Acquisition will review and advise on next steps within 10 business days. If the preliminary proposal demonstrates thoughtful planning, including consultation with the district's ELPAC (if applicable), describes a new proposed ELE program based on sound educational theory (Prong 1 of *Castañeda's* test) and describes the district's plan to adequately resource the program to ensure effective implementation (Prong 2 of *Castañeda's* test), the district will be invited to submit a complete new ELE program proposal by January 1. In some cases, DESE will determine that additional planning time is necessary before the district can move forward with a proposal. In those instances, DESE staff will provide technical assistance to help the district prepare to resubmit the preliminary proposal in a future year.

Complete Proposal

Once a district successfully completes the preliminary proposal process, the Office of Language Acquisition will provide technical assistance to help the district develop a complete ELE program proposal. DESE's ELE experts can connect districts to peers in the field and provide resources and guidance to help districts strengthen their complete ELE program proposals.

The complete ELE program proposal provides an opportunity for the district to fully describe their proposed program design, and importantly, consider how the proposed program will complement existing district structures and supports for ELs. The complete proposal also requires districts to consider how they will achieve Prong 3 of *Castañeda's* test related to proving the effectiveness of the program in developing ELs' English language skills. Taken with the preliminary proposal, the complete proposal will help new ELE programs meet the needs of the ELs that they serve.

Staff from the Office of Language Acquisition will review all full new ELE program proposals submitted by January 1st within 90 days. If the proposal meets all applicable requirements, DESE will notify the district in writing that the proposed program may commence in the next academic year. If a proposal does not meet all of the applicable requirements, DESE will provide corrective action steps and the district will have 30 days to revise the proposal and resubmit it for DESE's consideration.

Enrollment of an EL for the First Time

There are still districts in Massachusetts that have never enrolled an English Learner. Likely, many of these districts will enroll their first EL student in the coming years. It is important that all districts, including those without established ELE programs, provide language assistance services immediately upon a student's identification as an EL. Districts who enroll an EL student for the first time should contact DESE immediately for guidance on how to initiate services and complete the ELE program proposal process. Email ELL@doe.mass.edu.

READY?

DESE is excited to support districts in developing and implementing new ELE programs. To simplify the review process, the preliminary and complete new ELE program proposals are electronic submissions accessible through the Web-Based Monitoring System (WBMS) used for ELE tiered focused monitoring. Any district ready to begin the process is encouraged to access WBMS through [DESE's Security Portal](#), to review the required submissions. Email ELL@doe.mass.edu with any questions.