

Checklist for carrying out the recommendations

Recommendation 1. Screen for reading problems and monitor progress

✔ Districts should establish procedures for—and provide training for—schools to screen English learners for reading problems. The same measures and assessment approaches can be used with English learners and native English speakers.

✔ Depending on resources, districts should consider collecting progress monitoring data more than three times a year for English learners at risk for reading problems. The severity of the problem should dictate how often progress is monitored—weekly or bi-weekly for students at high risk of reading problems.

✔ Data from screening and progress monitoring assessments should be used to make decisions about the instructional support English learners need to learn to read.

✔ Schools with performance benchmarks in reading in the early grades can use the same standards for English learners and for native English speakers to make adjustments in instruction when progress is not sufficient. It is the opinion of the panel that schools should not consider below-grade-level performance in reading as “normal” or something that will resolve itself when oral language proficiency in English improves.

✔ Provide training on how teachers are to use formative assessment data to guide instruction.

Recommendation 2. Provide intensive small-group reading interventions

✔ Use an intervention program with students who enter the first grade with weak reading and prereading skills, or with older elementary students with reading problems.

✔ Ensure that the program is implemented daily for at least 30 minutes in small, homogeneous groups of three to six students.

✔ Provide training and ongoing support for the teachers and interventionists (reading coaches, Title I personnel, or paraeducators) who provide the small-group instruction.

✔ Training for teachers and other school personnel who provide the small-group interventions should also focus on how to deliver instruction effectively, independent of the particular program emphasized. It is important that this training include the use of the specific program materials the teachers will use during the school year. But the training should also explicitly emphasize that these instructional techniques can be used in other programs and across other subject areas.

Recommendation 3. Provide extensive and varied vocabulary instruction

✔ Adopt an evidence-based approach to vocabulary instruction.

✔ Develop districtwide lists of essential words for vocabulary instruction. These words should be drawn from the core reading program and from the textbooks used in key content areas, such as science and history.

- ✓ Vocabulary instruction for English learners should also emphasize the acquisition of meanings of everyday words that native speakers know and that are not necessarily part of the academic curriculum.

**Recommendation 4.
Develop academic English**

- ✓ Adopt a plan that focuses on ways and means to help teachers understand that instruction to English learners must include time devoted to development of academic English. Daily academic English instruction should also be integrated into the core curriculum.
- ✓ Teach academic English in the earliest grades.

- ✓ Provide teachers with appropriate professional development to help them learn how to teach academic English.

- ✓ Consider asking teachers to devote a specific block (or blocks) of time each day to building English learners' academic English.

**Recommendation 5.
Schedule regular peer-assisted
learning opportunities**

- ✓ Develop plans that encourage teachers to schedule about 90 minutes a week with activities in reading and language arts that entail students working in structured pair activities.
- ✓ Also consider the use of partnering for English language development instruction.