

Recommendations for District and School Staff, Community Partners, and Families

The Emergent Bilingual Steering Committee developed these research-backed recommendations to expand emergent bilingual student access to college-aligned courses and postsecondary programs.

Even as Texas leads the nation in emergent bilingual support, we acknowledge that district leaders, educators, and families may face challenges implementing these recommendations in the current climate.

Increased immigration enforcement can result in lower student enrollment and higher rates of chronic absenteeism, even for U.S.-born students (Pillai et al., 2025).

Texas is experiencing an ongoing shortage of bilingual educators.

Districts face difficult decisions to maintain services and programs while facing budget deficits.



The future of federal funding for programs that support emergent bilingual students is also unclear.

In a state where one in four Texas students is emergent bilingual, transforming these systems is more than a strategic goal; it is an economic and moral imperative to ensure that success is no longer a hard-fought exception but a guaranteed expectation.

Over the last three years, we have witnessed passionate educators and engaged parents ready and willing to dismantle the systemic barriers.

Building radical trust—rooted in unwavering transparency and deep communication—is the essential catalyst for systemic change. It is the only way to bridge the divide between families, educators, and students, and fundamentally rethink how our systems are limiting the opportunities available for all Texans.



District Staff Recommendations

ADVANCING OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMERGENT BILINGUAL STUDENTS

Policy, Systems, and Accountability

- Review TELPAS trends, reclassification progress, and advanced coursework participation through regular district-campus conversations among administrators and instructional staff. Use these discussions to share practices and provide targeted support that strengthens enrollment and persistence in advanced pathways.
- Publish and disseminate a district definition of “advanced coursework” (including honors, AP, IB, dual credit, and advanced CTE). Review enrollment policies and prerequisites to identify and revise rules that may unintentionally limit emergent bilingual student access.
- Create or expand policies that use multiple identification measures to enroll emergent bilingual students in advanced coursework. Incorporate measures, including performance indicators, language growth, grades, and student interest. Reduce reliance on single measures and promote earlier access to advanced coursework.
- Review participation patterns with campuses annually to understand how emergent bilingual students are accessing advanced courses. Partner with schools on strategies that strengthen access, enrollment, and persistence in advanced and postsecondary-aligned pathways.

Communication and Community Engagement

- Create and maintain a multilingual glossary of educational terms, acronyms, TELPAS-related language, and course titles. Translate into all major home languages represented in the district. Embed these translations in registration materials and campus websites.

- Identify “translation-required” touchpoints (e.g., course selection guides, LPAC letters, family meetings, information nights) and establish a district protocol to ensure interpretation and translation services are automatically provided.
- Share key data with families in accessible formats, including visuals and brief summaries in home languages, to explain participation gaps, course pathways, and available supports.
- Host recurring community events (e.g., annually or each semester) that celebrate multilingualism and explicitly connect bilingualism to college, career, and workforce opportunities. Include partnerships with local employers and higher education institutions.

Staffing and Professional Learning

- Prioritize staffing at middle and high schools. Hire or reassign bilingual counselors, ESL- or bilingual-certified teachers, family engagement liaisons, and course advisors with specific responsibility for emergent bilingual academic planning.
- Provide targeted professional learning for counselors and advisors that address implicit bias, asset-based mindsets, and how language status can, even unintentionally, shape course recommendations and long-term academic trajectories.
- Define and publish district standards of practice for bilingual and ESL program implementation, including expectations for instructional design, language supports, and course access. Establish a support process for campuses where models need strengthening or redesign.



School Staff Recommendations

ADVANCING OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMERGENT BILINGUAL STUDENTS

Instruction, Postsecondary Readiness, and Student Support

- Monitor TELPAS administration practices at the campus level to ensure equitable access, consistent expectations, and appropriate testing conditions. Address discrepancies through coaching and corrective action when needed.
- Create a proactive support and case management process for students who are not reclassified, including scheduled data reviews, targeted language supports, and differentiated strategies to prevent TELPAS from becoming a long-term barrier.
- Provide ongoing, year-round communication (not just during testing windows) to students and families explaining TELPAS, reclassification criteria, and how language proficiency decisions affect course access and postsecondary options.
- Expand advanced coursework with built-in language supports, such as sheltered instruction, co-teaching, extended time, and academic language scaffolds, to ensure emergent bilingual students can succeed once enrolled.
- Identify and remove advising practices that limit emergent bilingual student access to advanced courses, such as subjective “readiness” criteria or informal recommendations.

Communication and Family Engagement

- Provide families with clear, translated explanations of course options, academic pathways, and available supports during course selection periods, including decision timelines and points of contact.
- Create intentional opportunities early in the school year for families and educators to build relationships, such as bilingual family meetings, virtual information sessions, or counselor-led small-group discussions.



Community Partners Recommendations

ADVANCING OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMERGENT BILINGUAL STUDENTS

Collaboration and Capacity Building

- Partner with districts and schools to co-host workshops and information sessions that help families:
 - Understand TELPAS, reclassification, and language proficiency expectations.
 - Understand academic pathways, advanced coursework options, graduation requirements, and postsecondary opportunities.
- Serve as liaison and amplify school-related information.
- Bridge communication between families and educators, particularly within historically underserved or linguistically diverse communities.

Access, Outreach, and Student Support

- Provide or support high-quality translation and interpretation services and culturally responsive outreach strategies to ensure families can meaningfully participate in academic planning and decision-making.
- Share workforce, college, and career pathway data that demonstrates the long-term benefits of multilingualism and advanced coursework, helping families connect current academic decisions to future opportunities.
- Collaborate with districts to support student persistence in advanced courses by offering mentoring, enrichment programs, tutoring, internships, or other community-based supports aligned to students' linguistic and academic strengths.



Family Recommendations

ADVANCING OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMERGENT BILINGUAL STUDENTS

- Celebrate the power of two languages. Being bilingual is a superpower! Continuing to use and develop your home language helps your children academically and prepares them for college and careers. Talking, reading, and sharing stories about your experiences and challenges in your language at home is an important strength and supports your children in their future success.
- Lean on your community. Supporting your children is not something you have to do alone. Your friends, family, and neighbors are amazing resources. Share what you learn about the school with them, and don't be afraid to ask for tips in return. We are stronger when we work together.
- Make space to have regular conversations with your child about school. Take a moment of quality time to talk with your child every day. Ask about what's happening at school, including the fun social parts, what they are learning, and if they are facing any challenges. It's also a great time to look over forms or talk about upcoming classes, assignments, and deadlines together, so you both know what is coming up.
- Maintain family routines and take advantage of the simple moments that can be used regularly for homework and studying. This is a great way for you and your children to look at homework or assignment due dates together, so you are both prepared and ahead of the game.
- Stay connected with school. Think of teachers, counselors, and school staff as your partners. You have the right to ask how your children are doing on tests, how they can participate in advanced classes, and what they need to graduate and enroll in postsecondary program.
- Your voice is very important. Ask specific questions like:
 - “How can my child get into advanced classes?”
 - “What help is available for this subject?”
 - “When will my child be considered a fluent English speaker?”
- Participate in school and district opportunities when possible. Registration days, academic planning meetings, information sessions, and family workshops can provide helpful information and build connections. Families participate in different ways, and every level of involvement supports the success of children.



Recomendaciones para familias en español

- Celebra el poder de dos idiomas ¡Ser bilingüe es un superpoder!: Seguir usando y desarrollando su lengua materna ayuda a sus hijos académicamente y los prepara para la universidad y la carrera profesional. Hablar, leer y compartir historias de su niñez o de sus experiencias y retos en su idioma en casa, es una fortaleza importante y apoya a los sus hijos/as en su éxito futuro.
- Apóyese en su comunidad: Apoyar a sus hijos no es algo que tiene que hacer solo/a. Sus amigos, familia y vecinos son recursos increíbles. Comparta con ellos lo que aprenda sobre la escuela y que no le de pena de pedirles consejos a cambio. Todos somos más fuertes cuando trabajamos juntos.
- Haga un espacio de tiempo para tener conversaciones sobre la escuela con tu hijo/a regularmente: Tómese un tiempo de calidad para hablar con su hijo/a cada día. Pregunte qué está pasando en la escuela, incluyendo las partes sociales divertidas, lo que está aprendiendo, y si están pasando por algún desafío. También es un buen momento para revisar los formularios o hablar juntos sobre sus próximas clases, tareas y fechas importantes para entregar trabajos o de la escuela para que ambos estén preparados para lo que se acerca.
- Crea una rutina de equipo: Mantenga y aproveche los tiempos y lugares sencillos para las rutinas de tareas y los estudios. Esta es una excelente manera para que usted y su estudiante revisen juntos las fechas de entrega de trabajos para que ambos estén preparados y adelantados.
- Manténgase conectado con la escuela: Mire a los maestros/as, consejeros, y personal escolar como su equipo cuando se trata de apoyar a su hijo/a. Usted tiene derecho a preguntar y se recomienda que pregunte cómo le va a su hijo en los exámenes, cómo puede participar en clases avanzadas y qué necesita para graduarse y matricularse en la educación superior.
- ¡Su voz es muy importante!: Usted puede hacer preguntas concretas como: “¿Cómo puede mi hijo acceder a clases avanzadas?” o “¿Qué ayuda hay disponible para esta materia?” ¿Cuándo se considerará a mi hijo un estudiante proficiente en inglés?
- Participe en oportunidades escolares y del distrito cuando sea posible: Los días de inscripción, las reuniones de planificación académica, las sesiones informativas y los talleres familiares pueden proporcionar información útil y conexiones. Las familias participan de diferentes maneras y todos los niveles de participación apoyan el éxito del alumno.

E3 Alliance®

Education Equals Economics

5930 Middle Fiskville Road
Suite 414
Austin, Texas 78752
512-223-7241
info@e3alliance.org

e3alliance.org

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