

PREFACE

As with the first edition, the second edition of *English Language Learners at School: A Guide for Administrators* answers the questions that K–12 administrators and teachers are asking about meeting the needs of the English language learners (ELLs) in their schools. Seventy-five experts provide brief, accessible, and practical responses to these questions. This edition focuses explicitly on leadership, capacity building, and professional learning not only for administrators but also for general education teachers, literacy coaches, ESL/bilingual specialists, staff developers, and policy-makers in ELL education.

Our use of the term *ELL education* is intentionally broad. By *ELL program* we mean the entire instructional program for an ELL at school, including the time an ELL spends in the ESL or bilingual classroom/program, the time s/he spends in the general education classroom, and the time s/he spends in specials and extra-curricular activities. This means that all teachers and administrators who have ELLs in their classes and schools are in fact ELL educators who need to be knowledgeable in ELL education. This broader notion of ELL education reflects an important shift in the education field: ELL education is no longer just the responsibility of the ESL or bilingual specialist. Improving instruction and achievement for ELLs is the shared responsibility of all educators.

PURPOSE

A confluence of factors has brought us to a tipping point in ELL education for administrators and teachers working in schools in many parts of the English-speaking world today.

- There has been unprecedented growth in the number of ELLs in schools and districts all across the United States, especially in suburban and rural communities that have not previously experienced such growth. While the general K–12 population grew 7.2% over the last decade, the ELL student population grew 51%. More than one half of states have experienced a growth of over 100% in their ELL populations during that same period (see National Clearinghouse of English Language Acquisition, 2011, for details). Most, if not all, teachers and administrators in the United States find ELLs in their classes and schools.
- There are federal accountability requirements that hold all public U.S. schools and educators responsible for the educational achievement of all students, including ELLs. All teachers and administrators must be *highly qualified* to work effectively with the ELLs in their classes and schools.
- State-mandated accountability data demonstrate that many of the ELLs in schools (especially those from low-income homes and

communities) are not attaining proficiency on state-mandated standardized achievement tests. There is a heightened sense of urgency to *close the achievement gap* for minority students (including ELLs) who continue to *lag behind* their white, middle-class, standard-English-speaking peers.

- There has been increasing awareness among administrators and general education teachers that most ELLs spend the majority of their instructional day in general education classes taught by teachers who have not yet learned to address ELLs' language and learning needs. There is a great demand for leadership and capacity building so that all teachers and administrators develop the necessary knowledge and skills to ensure that ELLs can participate and achieve at school.
- There is confusion and conflict at the local, state, and federal levels about what effective instructional programs and valid accountability requirements mean for ELLs.
- There have been severe budget cuts that require administrators and leadership teams to be creative in the ways that they use funding to address the challenges they face.

These factors present administrators and leadership teams with challenges as well as powerful opportunities to rethink the education of ELLs/bilingual learners.¹

NEW TO THE SECOND EDITION

The second edition of *English Language Learners at School: A Guide for Administrators* maintains the popular structural features of the first edition. The book revolves around questions that administrators, teachers, and leadership teams are asking about effective education for the ELLs/bilingual learners in their schools, districts, and states. Experts (researchers and practitioners) synthesize the research and offer their expertise in brief, accessible, and practical responses to those questions. The questions are organized into chapters that focus on different topics. Each chapter begins with a set of Guiding Principles that apply in any educational context and ends with a Survey for Reflection and Action that invites administrators and leadership team members to identify the degree to which the Guiding Principles are implemented in practice in their schools. This new edition includes more than 20 new questions that we collected from the field, and we

1. All ELLs are bilingual learners, but not all bilingual learners are ELLs. An ELL is a student who has been designated as such by state-mandated English language proficiency tests. A bilingual learner is a student who uses two (or more) languages in his or her linguistic repertoire to learn. We use both terms in the preface and introductions to chapters to draw attention to two facts: (1) ELLs draw on all of the languages in their linguistic repertoire to learn, and (2) many students who are designated as English speakers are also bilingual learners.

have invited a number of new experts to share their expertise. All of the experts included from the first edition were invited to update their responses to reflect recent developments in research, theory, policy, and practice.

The second edition opens with a chapter on leadership and professional development. Staff developers have repeatedly asked us to share how we organize professional learning opportunities that promote leadership and foster shared responsibility around ELL education for administrators, teachers, and leadership teams in their districts and schools, not only in the United States but also in Canada, Latin America, and Europe. The new content and placement of this chapter is intended to facilitate this work for staff developers, especially for those who are relatively new to the field of ELL education. The guidance we provide is also intended to support ESL and bilingual education specialists who are increasingly called upon to provide leadership and professional development in ELL education. However, many of these specialists are new to the job of promoting leadership and structuring staff development for general education administrators and teachers.

Two important new strands run through the book. The first strand focuses explicitly on *bilingualism*, *biliteracy*, *home language*, *heritage language*, and *bilingual programs*; these questions are highlighted by the icon  in the table of contents. The second strand focuses on the notion of *data-driven decision making*; these questions are highlighted by the icon . We take a broad view of *data* and of *data-driven decision making*. We know that a wide range of constituents, including students, parents, community members, teachers, administrators, and policymakers working at the school, district, state, and federal levels, all need to know how ELLs/bilingual learners/all students are performing and progressing relative to federal, state, and local standards, goals, and objectives. Answers to questions throughout this guide recommend how teachers and administrators can collect and use the right kinds of data (qualitative and quantitative, summative and formative) to guide placement, instruction, program and professional development, policy, and advocacy for ELLs.

The second edition of *English Language Learners at School: A Guide for Administrators* also features website resources that provide a space where professional learning communities (PLCs) of teachers, administrators, and leadership teams can interact with each other around their common mission and vision of improved instruction and achievement for ELLs/bilingual learners. Educators simply go to casloncommunity.com and register to use the site. Educators working individually or in PLCs are able to

- Download additional resources (e.g., PowerPoint slides and activities, outlines of professional development workshops). When a response in the book is accompanied by a resource (e.g., framework, guiding principles or questions, template, form) on

the Caslon Community website, we include an icon  at that point in the text.

- Complete and share end-of-chapter Surveys for Reflection and Action.
- Link to other resources in the field.
- Participate in discussions within PLCs in their schools and districts.
- Participate in discussions within PLCs that connect schools, districts, communities, and states around common issues, concerns, and approaches
- Upload examples of innovative and effective practices that they have used in their schools and districts.

We continue to update website resources in response to burning issues in the field. Our intention is that administrators, teachers, and leadership teams will question each other about issues they face, learn together, and share examples of innovative policies, programs, and practices that they have developed or used. Because each Caslon title we publish is aligned with this mission, members of the Caslon Community can also find resources related to, for example, teaching for biliteracy, teaching adolescent ELLs, differentiating instruction and assessment for ELLs, special education considerations for ELLs, and implementing effective instruction for ELLs. (Visit caslonpublishing.com for a full list of titles.) Through our books and the Caslon Community (casloncommunity.com) we hope to contribute to the ongoing professionalization of the ELL education field and to grass-roots action regarding educational equity and excellence for ELLs/bilingual learners.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

We hope that this guide will be useful in three ways: (1) as a quick reference for administrators, teachers, and leadership teams; (2) for specific program development and improvement at school and; (3) for pre-service or in-service professional development. For specific program development and improvement, the guide can be used by school-based collaborative teams to advise them as they choose an appropriate program for their school, plan a schedule or a grouping method for their ELLs, decide on an instructional approach, or reflect on how well their current programs and practices address the needs of ELLs in their school. For professional development, the guide can be used by administrators and others responsible for in-service training to help school staff expand their knowledge and skills in how children learn in two languages; policies and accountability requirements for ELLs; developing, implementing, and evaluating instructional programs for ELLs; classroom instruction and assessment; to meet challenges; and advocacy. The guide can also be used in pre-service programs for administrators who need a grounded introduction to this important aspect of their future work in schools. Often the needs of ELLs are addressed only cursorily in most educational leadership programs. Following are some specific examples of how this guide can be used.

- An administrator reviews an expert's response on a particular question that has arisen at school (such as, how long does it take ELLs to acquire English?).
- A staff member who is responsible for professional development uses one of the questions and responses as the basis for a discussion of how to address a particular challenge in their local context.
- An administrator, group of administrators, or a school-based PLC turns to the chapter on developing instructional programs for ELLs and begins with the Guiding Principles and Surveys for Reflection and Action to assess their school's strengths and needs relative to the topic. After completing the school-based survey, these educators might look for answers to the specific questions that arose as they worked through the survey, and perhaps use the conversations around this focal area to develop school-based strategies for action. Ideally, administrators will incorporate these strategies for action into their school improvement plans.
- A study group of administrators, teachers, or leadership team members develops an action plan that clearly articulates a problem or concern regarding ELLs at school with the help of the guide. This action plan should be incorporated into the district strategic plan or the school improvement plan.
- An administrator or staff member draws on the recommended resources (such as the suggestions for further reading, websites of professional organizations, or lists of useful resources) found on the Caslon Community website to follow up on an area that he or she wanted to explore in greater detail.

We hope that the research and practical recommendations in this guide (in the book and on the Caslon Community website) will prove helpful to administrators and staff in their efforts to help ELLs acquire English and achieve academically in all areas of the curriculum. And we look forward to seeing how administrators, teachers, and leadership teams use the Caslon Community website to engage with each other within and across educational contexts in their schools, districts, communities, states, and nations. Most of all, we hope that this guide enriches the lives of all students and staff in our schools.