

The Bilingual Support Network (BSN): A Resource for English Learners

Overview: General Education Instruction for English Learners

English learners (ELs) need to learn English and achieve grade level standards. They need to know how to utilize English to navigate in both social and academic contexts. Classroom teachers need to support them in attaining high levels of English proficiency so as to enable them to learn and express their thinking with clarity, flexibility, and fluency. In essence, ELs must reach a level of English language proficiency that facilitates their conceptualizing, learning, and communicating academic content, so they are able to meet the same high academic standards expected for all students.

This task, though challenging, is achievable. With training and support provided through the district's Office of Language Acquisition (OLA), teachers are learning how to plan and provide instruction throughout the day that will enrich and expand an EL's English proficiency and support them in achieving grade-level standards. Teachers who have participated in training are honing their skills in developing English proficiency for their EL students in two fundamental ways:

- **Designated English Language Development (ELD):** A dedicated time in which students focus on how English works. It is systematic and follows the sequence of the levels of English language proficiency.
- **Integrated ELD (Within Subject Matter Instruction):** English is developed within the context of subject matter teaching – across the curriculum. This instruction may also be very explicit, but always focuses on the language specific to the subject matter.

When to Contact the BSN

Classroom teachers and support staff should avail themselves of all available training and site-level resources and supports for planning and implementing appropriate instruction/interventions **before the BSN is contacted. Documentation of the use of such resources/support, before the BSN is contacted is essential.** If a BSN team becomes involved, they will review support and progress documentation as part of their first meeting. Initial site-level support may include consultation with, classroom teachers, site administrators, the site Literacy or Math Resource Teacher, English Learner support staff, Speech-Language Pathologist, School Psychologist and/or Education Specialist.

When the site team (Speech-Language Pathologist, School Psychologist, Education Specialist) determine that general education resources have not been sufficiently effective with an EL who appears to be struggling, they may request a consultation with the BSN. The BSN's mission is to

provide an additional resource for **consultation with general education staff to address the student’s learning needs, before assessing for Special Education AND supporting special education staff with valid primary language assessments when considering Special Education services.**

Role of the BSN

The BSN is composed of Speech-Language Pathologists, School Psychologists, and an Education Specialist who are bilingual (English/Spanish) and have experience working with EL students. They provide support to improve site-level knowledge and practice related to second language acquisition and learning disabilities. BSN staff consults in the following areas:

- Effective ELD and access to core instruction for ELs
- Supplemental interventions addressing language and academic issues
- Culturally sensitive problem-solving at follow-up meetings and possible parent conferences
- Distinguishing suspected disabilities verses linguistic and cultural differences
- Best practices in EL assessment

The BSN can consult on students from all language backgrounds. Currently, the BSN members directly support assessments in Spanish, Vietnamese, and French. For assessments in other languages contact the BSN (bsn@sandi.net) to inquire about staff members who are not assigned to the BSN, but have unique cultural and linguistic expertise and may be able to support your team. If there are no staff members available, consider a BSN consultation to help you brainstorm the use of other data collection methods, including the use of an interpreter.

Submitting the BSN Consultation Request

1. The entire site team (SLP, School Psychologist and Education Specialist) should collaborate prior to initiating requests.
2. Complete only the most current *BSN Request* form, including the *Language-Culture Profile*. As the form is available in a Word Template, site teams should type in the current information, save the document with the title format, “BSN- Site Name, Student Last Name, Date,” and submit the Request form as an email attachment to BSN@sandi.net.
3. Check the box for CEP-EL Checklist when applicable. Please include a single, scanned copy of all current CEP-EL documentation (*Cumulative File Check*, *Extrinsic Factors form*, and *Intervention Summary*) with the request and only complete any additional information in the *Language-Culture Profile* below if not addressed in the CEP-EL documentation.
4. Office will review the request and assign the appropriate BSN staff.
5. Assigned BSN staff will schedule the initial and follow-up consultations.

Site Staff Consultation Preparation Responsibilities

It is essential for site staff to have the following information available at the first meeting:

- Completed** Comprehensive Evaluation Process for English Learners (CEP-EL) documents: *Cumulative File Check, Extrinsic Factors Form, and Intervention Summary.*
- Current CELDT/ELPAC scores
- Current IPT (Spanish) within 6 months or SDOAI (Cambodian, Lao, Hmong, Somali, Tagalog, Vietnamese). Make protocols available at time of consult
- Health and developmental history
- Recent vision and hearing screening results within at least one year
- Attendance records
- Report cards
- Portfolio of work with comparisons of peers at similar linguistic level, for example:
 - DRA, ARI
 - Reading & writing in primary language (informal assessment)
 - Writing samples using EL Rubric (EL Proficiency Indicators)
 - Math work
- Parent interview by site staff regarding concerns about the student
- Written observations** of the student in classroom contexts where there are concerns. Obtain parent permission, if appropriate.

BSN Team Consultation Responsibilities

- Collaborate and consult with site and district personnel
- Provide information and strategies to address concerns
- Document the consultation and “action plan”
- Continue with the follow-up consultations and actions (such as assessment). Document the follow-up actions.

Assessment Process and Related Responsibilities

If the documentation shows that the rate of progress is noticeably slower than that of peers with similar backgrounds and linguistic levels, the site team with BSN consultation might consider additional supplemental interventions or a referral for a special education assessment.

Site Team (SLP, School Psych, and/or Ed Spec.) Assessment Responsibilities

The site Speech-Language Pathologist, School Psychologist and/or Education Specialist assume primary responsibility for the assessment. The BSN staff support the process.

The site team:

- Works with assigned BSN staff to plan for the assessment.
- Gathers assessment data that does not require BSN language expertise including records review, interviews, observations, and analysis of work samples.

- ❑ Administers assessments when able and appropriate. Test instruments will depend on the nature of the referral and the questions that need to be addressed. The site speech-language pathologist, psychologist and Ed Specialist conduct all English testing. The site school psychologist conducts “processing” and “non-verbal” testing, as appropriate.
- ❑ Confirm that a room is available and the student is present during BSN visits.
- ❑ Schedules a meeting for the assessment team members to meet with the BSN staff to discuss findings and to recommend interventions.
- ❑ Writes the report. Site staff write the majority of the report in collaboration with BSN staff. BSN staff submits its contributions in a Word document. The report should indicate which team member administered each test.
- ❑ Enters the data and written report into SEAS.
- ❑ Adheres to timelines.
- ❑ Shares findings and recommendations at the IEP meeting.
- ❑ Arranges for an interpreter, if appropriate.

BSN Assessment Responsibilities

- ❑ Collaborate and consult with the site and district personnel
- ❑ Develop an “action plan” with the site team and give a copy of the plan to the site staff/administration.
- ❑ Conduct follow-up consultations.
- ❑ Document on the request form the consultation date and type of support provided.
- ❑ Work with the site team to complete appropriate assessments.
- ❑ Meet/Consult with the site assessment team prior to the IEP to discuss findings and recommendations.
- ❑ Work with the site team to write the BSN portion of the report.

General Office Responsibilities

- ❑ Provide mentoring and staff development to speech-language pathologists, school psychologists, and education specialists regarding cultural and linguistic issues related to instruction, intervention, and best practices in assessment.
- ❑ Provide professional development to BSN members related to consultation and “Best Practices” in assessment for this population.
- ❑ Assign cases to BSN staff and notify site requesting consultation.
- ❑ Maintain a data system that “tracks” BSN requests and outcomes