

## IX. Evaluating the Effectiveness of a District Program

Research shows that effective academic programs for ELs eliminate achievement gaps by providing cohesive, sustained systems of support (Valentino & Reardon, 2014; Baker et al., 2014; Calderón, Slavin, & Sánchez, 2011). Another key element of effective EL programs is full access to academic, grade-level content.<sup>1</sup>

**To determine the effectiveness of an LEA’s EL program, an LEA must periodically evaluate its EL programs. Indeed, evaluation should be integrated into all EL program activities and focus on policies, procedures, programs, practices, resources, staffing, and student outcomes.<sup>2</sup>**

**Meaningful EL evaluations include longitudinal data that compares the performance of current ELs, former ELs, and never-ELs in the LEA’s standard instructional program over time.**

### **Data Elements for Evaluating and Monitoring Programs for English Learners**

- Scores on state and local assessments
- Scores on annual English language proficiency tests
- Grades in content courses
- Retention in grade
- Reclassification/exit rates
- Graduation and dropout rates
- Participation rates in gifted and advanced courses (e.g., honors, Advanced Placement (AP), gifted and talented, and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses)
- Enrollment rates in pre-kindergarten, magnet, and other choice programs
- Enrollment rates in special education and related services
- Mobility and attendance rates
- Participation in extracurricular programs
- Suspension rates
- Other indicators of college and career readiness.

Title III of the ESEA, as amended by ESSA, requires LEAs and SEAs to report on a variety of key EL-related measures (see Sections 3121 and 3122) that can be used to improve local or state programs for ELs. However, evaluation of an EL program should not be limited to data required for ESEA accountability purposes.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition. (2017). English Learner Tool Kit (2nd Rev. ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*