Tips for Identifying EL Students from the National Center for Research on Gifted Education

Adopt Universal Screening Procedures
1. Adopt a policy of universal screening of all students in one or more grade levels for the identification process.
2. Select assessment instruments that are culturally sensitive and account for language differences.
3. Assess the speed of English language acquisition and monitor the rate of mastering reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills in English.
4. Consider including reliable and valid nonverbal ability assessments as part of the overall identification process.
5. Use other identification tools to supplement results of universal screening.

Create Alternative Pathways to Identification
6. Use native language ability and achievement assessments as indicators of potential giftedness, when available.
7. Maintain a list of multilingual school psychologists who are qualified to administer assessments in the student’s native language.
8. Establish a preparation program prior to formal identification procedures that provides students with learning opportunities to enhance knowledge and academic skills necessary for a student to be recognized.
9. Create a talent pool list of students who exhibit high potential but are not yet enrolled in gifted and talented programs. Observations, daily interactions between teachers and students, informal assessments, and formal assessments provide multiple opportunities to gauge students’ learning progress. Make identification of giftedness an ongoing process rather than a single event.

Establish a Web of Communication
10. Establish an identification committee that includes representatives who have key responsibilities in various roles and departments.
11. Develop and implement intentional outreach to the school community, particularly parents/guardians/caretakers. This process should utilize multiple pathways in languages appropriate to the population.
12. Emphasize collaboration within and across specializations/departments (e.g., general education, English as a second language [ESL], special education, gifted education) so people view themselves as talent scouts.

View Professional Development as a Lever for Change
13. Provide professional development opportunities for school personnel about effective policies and practices to support equitable representation of ELs in gifted and talented programs.
14. Develop a systematic approach to analyzing district and school demographics and the status of students identified/not identified for gifted and talented programs.
15. Promote efforts to diversify the teaching corps so that the adult community of a school reflects the student population.

Visit http://ncrge.uconn.edu for more information

This research was completed by the National Center for Research on Gifted Education (NCRGE) at the University of Connecticut under a contract with the United States Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA). These recommendations are based on the NCRGE’s research on the identification of gifted English learners (ELs) and the views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the Department. No official endorsement by the Department of any identification procedures, practices, and instruments mentioned is intended or should be inferred. This research was funded by the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) through the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), U.S. Department of Education, PR/Award # R305C140018. Visit the Resources section at http://ncrge.uconn.edu for the full research report from which these recommendations were made.