



## **RESTART & RECOVERY: Maintaining Integrity of Language-Instruction Educational Program Models For English Learners During Remote and Hybrid Learning**

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*This document compiles evidence-based resources and information for state education agencies (SEAs) to support English learner (EL) students and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic. States can repurpose this document to meet their needs. If you repurpose this document, please use the following language: “**This resource draws on a resource created by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) that is based on guidance compiled from state education agencies, national organizations, and the U.S. Department of Education.**”*

State leaders are well positioned to [foster access and equity for English learner \(EL\) students](#) amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, and play an important role in ensuring that ELs’ civil rights are upheld across remote and hybrid learning environments. Civil rights law, enacted with the *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) Supreme Court decision, states that all public schools must take affirmative steps to ensure that EL students can meaningfully participate in educational programs. To determine whether a language instruction educational program (LIEP) is sufficient in addressing EL students’ needs, the *Castañeda* (1981) framework articulates three standards for local education agencies (LEAs):

1. The program is based on sound educational theory or research.
2. The program is implemented effectively with adequate resources and personnel.
3. The program is evaluated as effective in overcoming language barriers.

Per the *Castañeda* framework, schools receiving any federal funding are required to implement evidence-based LIEPs that facilitate EL students’ language development and provide opportunities for ELs to meet challenging content standards. In a comprehensive [literature review](#), the U.S. Department of Education summarizes four evidence-based LIEPs and outlines the core aspects of each program, including staffing, goals, and class format. Building on this literature review, this resource outlines COVID-specific considerations for state leaders as they support districts and schools in maintaining the integrity of LIEP models and promoting consistency across remote and hybrid contexts.

## **Challenges to Maintaining Integrity of LIEP Models in Remote and Hybrid Learning Contexts**

The COVID-19 pandemic presents new challenges to state and local leaders as they work to effectively implement LIEPs, such as:

1. Ensuring access to appropriate language services and supports (e.g., dedicated language instruction and content-embedded or integrated ESL/ELD) as part of the regularly scheduled school day and across synchronous and asynchronous instructional activities in all content areas.
2. Developing schedules and assigning staff to mitigate unnecessary segregation of ELs. In light of public health concerns and remote learning logistics, the practice of “cohorting” students may limit ELs’ opportunities to engage with non-EL peers.
3. Building staff capacity to navigate shifting responsibilities, including learning new schedules and technologies to facilitate remote instruction and supporting families who are facing substantial hardships. The pandemic created an immediate demand for professional learning opportunities focused on supporting high-quality EL instruction in the remote learning environment.<sup>1</sup>

### **Guiding Principles for Maintaining the Integrity of LIEP Models During Distance and Hybrid Learning**

As state leaders support local education agencies (LEA) in maintaining the integrity of their LIEP models, they can consider the following guiding principles. Strategies focused on how to support each principle within particular LIEPs are included in Table 1. As LEAs adapt LIEP schedules and staffing for remote and hybrid learning environments, state leaders can provide monitoring support, collect information to inform short- and long-term adjustments, and identify approaches to continue supporting LEAs as schools return to full-time, in-person instruction.

1. Maintain the goals of the LIEP model (e.g., proficiency in English, meeting academic standards, bilingualism and biliteracy, sociocultural competence). Adjustments to schedules and staffing may be needed, depending on the learning environment, but the goals should remain consistent. Research has shown that, while bilingual programs generally produce more positive outcomes than ESL/ELD programs, both bilingual and

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<sup>1</sup> Council of Great City Schools. (2020). [Supporting English learners in the COVID-19 crisis](#).

ESL programs can produce strong outcomes for EL students when they consistently offer high-quality, challenging content and language instruction.<sup>2</sup>

2. Include leaders across departments in the development of schedules and staff assignments for remote and hybrid learning environments to [foster shared responsibility](#) for EL education.
3. Establish the provision of dedicated or protected ESL/ELD time, as well as integrated language supports during content instruction, within the hours of the regularly scheduled school day. LIEPs that produce positive outcomes for EL students incorporate both dedicated language instruction and specialized content instruction and ensure continuity in supports over time.<sup>3</sup>
4. Ensure that EL students have opportunities to engage with more language-proficient peers and participate in academic discourse across language domains (i.e., oral language, reading, writing) in each learning environment, as aligned with [principles of high-quality EL instruction](#). In all LIEPs, ELs benefit from daily opportunities to talk about content in pairs or small groups.<sup>4</sup>
5. Provide EL students with access to teachers and staff who have knowledge of their language, culture, and community. Teachers who are cognizant of EL students' assets and needs are more likely to adopt high-quality instructional practices that promote positive outcomes.<sup>5</sup>
6. Consider how paraprofessionals and home/school liaisons can support ELs and their families amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring that all staff assignments and responsibilities align with their qualifications.
7. Engage EL families as partners. Family engagement is an important component of any LIEP,<sup>6</sup> and should be maintained during the COVID-19 pandemic. Navigating remote and hybrid learning environments and the transitions between them will require new resources for families, which can be proactively provided by districts and schools.

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<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 12 in: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2017). *Promoting the educational success of children and youth learning English: Promising futures*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.17226/24677>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Baker, S., Lesaux, N., Jayanthi, M., Dimino, J., Proctor, C.P., Morris, J., Gersten, R., Haymond, K., Kieffer, M.J., Linan-Thompson, S., & Newman-Gonchar, R. (2014). *Teaching academic content and literacy to English learners in elementary and middle school* (NCEE 2014-4012). National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from: [https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/practiceguide/english\\_learners\\_pg\\_040114.pdf](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/practiceguide/english_learners_pg_040114.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> See Chapter 12 in: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2017). *Promoting the educational success of children and youth learning English: Promising futures*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.17226/24677>.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Education. (2012).

8. Leverage partnerships with faith- and community-based organizations (FBOs and CBOs), institutions of higher education (IHEs), and other organizations to augment staffing models as appropriate. Some FBOs and CBOs have been helpful partners in providing homework support and identifying individuals who could serve as home/school liaisons.<sup>7</sup> IHEs can facilitate connections to faculty and students in teacher education programs.

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<sup>7</sup> Lazarín, M. (2020). COVID-19 spotlights the inequities facing English learner students, as nonprofit organizations seek to mitigate challenges. Migration Policy Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/news/covid-19-inequities-english-learner-students>.

**Table 1: Summary of LIEP models and key considerations for remote and hybrid contexts**

Program Model	Description <sup>8</sup>	Structures and Staffing	Considerations for Remote and Hybrid Contexts	Strategies to be Considered by SEAs
English as Second Language (ESL)	<p><i>ELD:</i> Language instruction that focuses on developing proficiency in the English language, including grammar, vocabulary, and communication skills.</p> <p><i>Content-based:</i> Language instruction that uses content as a medium for building language skills. Although using content as a means, instruction is still focused primarily on learning English.</p>	<p><i>Push-in:</i> Typically, ESL/ELD instruction is provided by an EL-certified teacher who works in collaboration with a general education teacher via small-group instruction or coteaching in the general education setting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In remote contexts, coordinating coteaching and simultaneous small group instruction presents logistical challenges and necessitates enhanced coordination and planning between EL and general education teachers.</li> <li>● In hybrid contexts, health and safety concerns arise with face-to-face instruction if an EL-specific teacher is required to push into multiple classrooms, as this increases their risk of exposure. However, placing all ELs with an EL-specific teacher for all of their face-to-face instruction may segregate students unnecessarily.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Implement common planning time for EL and general education teachers via a virtual platform at least twice a week, with one planning session focused on ELs’ content learning needs and one on specific student concerns.<sup>9</sup> Consider including instructional coaches and other EL support staff in common planning opportunities.</li> <li>● Create EL-friendly schedules for synchronous online coteaching and asynchronous small-group support.</li> <li>● Share strategies for engaging ELs in oral and written academic discourse with peers across synchronous and asynchronous activities.</li> <li>● Offer designated ESL/ELD instruction online only, even if students are at school, so that the EL-certified teacher can safely work with students across multiple classrooms.</li> </ul>
		<p><i>Pull-out:</i> Students may have a dedicated ESL/ELD time during the school day or may receive pull-out ESL/ELD instruction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In remote contexts, designated ESL/ELD time may be added to the remote learning school day or class period, placing an extra burden on students and teachers.</li> <li>● In remote contexts, designated ESL/ELD may not be offered due to scheduling</li> </ul>	

<sup>8</sup> LIEP descriptions and information on structures and staffing are based on a review presented in a US Department of Education (2012) publication, *Language Instruction Educational Programs (LIEPs): A Review of the Foundational Literature*, available at: <https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/title-iii/language-instruction-ed-programs-report.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> See Honigsfeld & Dove (2020), *How ELL Educators Can Collaborate and Co-Teach During COVID-19*, available at: <https://www.colorincolorado.org/article/how-ell-educators-can-collaborate-during-covid-19>. Also see CCSSO’s resource, *Fostering Shared Responsibility for English Learner Education in Remote and Hybrid Learning Environments*, for more strategies to support collaboration between EL-focused and general education or content teachers.

		<p>wherein they work with an EL-certified specialist or a paraprofessional under the supervision of an EL-certified specialist for short periods during other classes.</p>	<p>constraints or may be offered intermittently, as some schools have shifted to modified schedules or semester systems that pare down the number of courses in which secondary students are enrolled at a time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In remote and hybrid contexts, coordinating synchronous dedicated ESL/ELD time for elementary students assigned to different classrooms presents logistical challenges for EL specialists and heightens risk of exposure in face-to-face instructional contexts.</li> <li>● In hybrid models that place all EL students in the same classroom for face-to-face instruction, ELs’ access to content expertise and peer language models may be limited.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop flexible staffing models that mitigate EL segregation (e.g., elevate some EL-specific staff to instructional specialists who develop sample schedules, design model units and/or lesson plans, and provide guidance to EL and general education teacher teams).</li> <li>● Connect with local universities that offer teacher preparation programs and develop field placements for teacher candidates who need experience working with EL students. Candidates can work with an EL specialist or teacher team to support EL students in completing synchronous class activities or asynchronous assignments.</li> <li>● Shift responsibilities for paraprofessionals, who can provide support with technology, attendance, and grading to reduce teachers’ additional responsibilities in the virtual environment and afford teachers more time to focus on instructional co-planning.</li> </ul>
Sheltered English Immersion (SEI)	One teacher provides instruction that simultaneously introduces language and content, using specialized techniques to accommodate ELs’	May be used for EL-only classrooms or for mixed classrooms with ELs and non-ELs. Instruction is likely to be delivered by a general education teacher, but this	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In remote contexts, it is challenging to ensure that EL students have access to appropriate language supports that facilitate their engagement in synchronous content instruction. Further, organizing language support for asynchronous, content-based activities to EL students at different proficiency levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop professional learning opportunities for teachers that focus on offering appropriate language supports in an online learning environment for EL students at different proficiency levels.</li> <li>● To offer these opportunities across districts and schools to teachers serving EL students in SEI programs, foster</li> </ul>

	<p>linguistic needs. Instruction focuses on the teaching of academic content, even though the acquisition of English may be one of the instructional goals.</p>	<p>teacher may hold an EL certification or endorsement.</p>	<p>presents many logistical and technological challenges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In remote and hybrid contexts, it may be challenging for SEI teachers to schedule dedicated ESL/ELD time into modified instructional schedules.</li> <li>● In hybrid contexts, if some students opt to participate only in online instruction while others are attending classes in person, arranging a schedule that offers appropriate language support to all EL students places a heavy burden on teachers.</li> </ul>	<p>collaborations with regional service centers and/or institutions of higher education.<sup>10</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work with regional service centers and/or county offices to create opportunities for SEI teachers to connect and co-plan with other educators in their schools, districts, and states who are teaching similar content and student populations.</li> <li>● Design model schedules that provide examples of daily and weekly instruction that include dedicated ESL/ELD time and integrated language support across synchronous and asynchronous activities, as well as remote and hybrid contexts in all content areas.</li> <li>● Offer flexibility in student groupings so teachers can share responsibility for dedicated ESL/ELD time (e.g., by designating certain instructors to teach dedicated ESL/ELD to students at certain proficiency levels; establishing a common time for remote, dedicated ESL/ELD instruction so teachers can work with EL students assigned to different teachers).</li> <li>● Share approaches to student grouping that optimize integration among EL students and their more proficient peers,</li> </ul>
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<sup>10</sup> See CCSSO's resource, [Supporting High Quality Instruction for English Learners in Onsite, Remote, and Hybrid Learning Environments](#), for more strategies to support teacher professional learning.

				<p>and leverage peers as learning and discourse partners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop staffing models that augment support for teachers so they can focus on instructional delivery (e.g., hire EL parents to offer support to other parents and students in navigating technology; engage home/school liaisons or paraprofessionals to provide similar support).</li> </ul>
<p>Newcomer EL and Students with Interrupted Formal Education. (SIFE) Programs</p>	<p>A specialized program designed to acclimate ELs who are recent immigrants to the U.S. public school setting and prepare them to participate in general education classes. Some newcomer programs focus on supporting SIFEs, who typically have low literacy skills and may be new to formal education settings.</p>	<p>Newcomer programs may last anywhere from a semester to four years. Programs may range from a half-day, in-school program to a full-time, self-contained school. Coursework often includes dedicated ESL/ELD instruction, grade-level content courses delivered in English or the students' primary language, and courses focused on developing basic literacy and math skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In remote contexts, ensuring that newcomers receive the intensive language support and/or basic-skills instruction they need can be challenging for teachers (and students) who are unaccustomed to working in an online environment.</li> <li>● In remote contexts, it may be particularly challenging for newcomers to complete asynchronous activities or assignments without explicit teacher support.</li> <li>● In remote and hybrid contexts, modified quarter or semester schedules at the secondary level may shift course offerings, such that newcomers are not offered consistent, dedicated ESL/ELD time during the school year.</li> <li>● In remote and hybrid contexts, it may be challenging to navigate language and cultural differences when communicating expectations for student</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop professional learning opportunities for teachers in newcomer programs across the district or state to (a) learn about online instructional tools for supporting students at beginner levels of English proficiency and/or with limited formal education and (b) collaborate with teachers of similar courses around the development of model lessons and units. Professional learning opportunities can encourage asset-based approaches to EL instruction that leverage students' home languages.</li> <li>● Create schedules for newcomer programs to offer dedicated ESL/ELD time throughout the school year.</li> <li>● Facilitate connections with community- or faith-based organizations that offer out-of-school time support to schedule specific time focused on offering</li> </ul>

			<p>participation in school with families who may also be new to the country.</p>	<p>newcomer students and families assistance with homework, accessing technology, etc.<sup>11</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Designate fiscal resources to hire and support home/school liaisons and/or paraprofessionals to maintain regular communication with newcomer families in their preferred languages and share district or school expectations for students' attendance and participation during remote and hybrid learning.<sup>12</sup></li> </ul>
Bilingual or Dual-Language	<p>ELs receive instruction in English and a non-English partner language. In some models, non-ELs are also present in the classroom. Bilingual and dual-language models use a range of approaches to implement language allocation. For example, in 50/50 models, instruction</p>	<p>Programs may balance languages by dividing instructional time according to content area, class period, instructor, week, or unit. Teachers may be bilingual or teacher teams may collaborate to offer instruction in each language. Teachers who teach in English use evidence-based practices to make their instruction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In remote and hybrid contexts, it is challenging to maintain the same allocation of languages as during face-to-face instruction, especially when asynchronous activities are included as part of the school day.</li> <li>● If two or more teachers are involved in delivering instruction to the same students, it can be logistically difficult to coordinate the provision of content and language support to multiple classes in a remote learning environment.</li> <li>● If two or more teachers are involved in delivering instruction to students (e.g., one teaches in English and one teaches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide examples of language allocations that illustrate how to maintain an appropriate balance across synchronous and asynchronous instruction (e.g., to maintain a 50/50 model, synchronous instruction is 75-100% in the partner language, while asynchronous instruction could be 0-25% in the partner language).<sup>13</sup></li> <li>● Design models of daily and weekly schedules that show how bilingual and dual-language teachers can maintain time for instruction in English and the partner language and time for making metalinguistic connections.</li> </ul>

<sup>11</sup> See CCSSO's resource, [Fostering Shared Responsibility for English Learner Education in Remote and Hybrid Learning Environments](#), for more strategies for engaging with community and faith-based organizations.

<sup>12</sup> See CCSSO's resource, [Promoting Attendance for English Learners in Remote and Hybrid Learning Environments](#), for more strategies related to supporting EL attendance and communicating with EL families.

<sup>13</sup> For an example of a remote [dual-language model](#), see San Antonio Independent School District's [Digital Learning Plan](#).

	<p>is offered equally in both languages, while in 90/10 models, 90% of instruction is in the partner language.</p>	<p>accessible for ELs.</p>	<p>the same students in the partner language), it may be challenging to organize hybrid instruction safely to reduce risk of exposure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Facilitate collaborations between districts and institutes of higher education preparing bilingual teachers, whose candidates may be able to provide tutoring support for asynchronous tasks in the desired language.</li> <li>● Implement weekly, common planning time for teachers via a virtual platform; provide planning templates that allow teachers working with the same students to identify a common set of content and language standards on which to focus in their lessons and units.</li> <li>● In remote contexts, consider flexible groupings, so that students across classrooms can participate in online small-group instruction (e.g., if two teachers work with two classes, allow students from across classes to be grouped together, if it helps streamline language support).</li> <li>● In hybrid contexts, consider flexible divisions of instructional time, so that teachers are not working with multiple classes or groups of students at a time (e.g., if language instructional time is designated by teacher, consider shifting to a model that divides language instructional time by unit so that only one teacher works with a class at a time, with two-week transitions in between in-person units).</li> </ul>
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## Scenarios for Use in Professional Learning

The four scenarios presented below can be used to help SEA and LEA leaders think through adaptations to LIEPs during remote and hybrid learning. These scenarios can be used in professional learning as a companion to the guiding principles and considerations outlined above. Following each scenario, there are relevant discussion questions with space for writing down reflections. Readers may also consider referring to the Council of Great City School’s August 2020 report, [Supporting English Learners During the COVID-19 Crisis](#), for additional recommendations pertaining to EL program models and related staffing.

### Scenario 1. Low-Incidence School District with a Push-in ESL Program

When district leaders announced that all five of its elementary schools were shifting from remote to hybrid learning, Ms. Hernandez, a K-5 ESL teacher, was concerned: How would she continue to serve the 30 EL students in her district, who were spread across all five schools? In her low-incidence district (i.e., where EL students make up 5% or less of the total student body), she is the only ESL teacher working across schools to provide push-in language support to EL students across a range of English proficiency levels. With the remote learning plan, Ms. Hernandez set up a schedule that allowed her to connect regularly with small groups of students via the district’s online learning platform during the students’ asynchronous learning time. With the shift to hybrid instruction, she does not know how to meet all her students’ needs while still following health and safety protocols and limiting her risk of exposure (i.e., by teaching students who were assigned to different classrooms). The district’s curriculum coordinator has suggested that Ms. Hernandez continue to offer only online instruction, even though students will be attending school in person.

Questions for Discussion	Notes
What are potential benefits and limitations of offering online-only ESL instruction?	
What would a model schedule for Ms. Hernandez look like in the hybrid learning environment?	
How can Ms. Hernandez collaborate with other teachers, paraprofessionals, and/or home/school liaisons to make sure that EL students in the district receive sufficient support in the hybrid model?	
What other solutions might help Ms. Hernandez meet the needs of her students in the switch to hybrid, without increasing her risk of exposure?	

## Scenario 2. High-Incidence High School with Dedicated ESL Courses and Integrated Language Supports

At Jackson High School, where about one-quarter of all students are designated English learners, leaders are having a hard time fitting dedicated ESL/ELD courses into the schedule, and content-area teachers are struggling to provide sufficient language support to their EL students in the remote learning environment. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the district relied on several EL specialists who taught dedicated ESL/ELD courses and offered small-group instruction and support for content-area teachers, sometimes coplanning and coteaching to make sure that EL students received integrated language support. When shifting to remote instruction, district leaders decided to offer three 60-minute blocks each day, when all students are expected to log on for synchronous instruction, cycling through three classes every six weeks. This change has meant that designated ESL/ELD classes are offered to EL students only six weeks out of the year. Rather than offering integrated support, EL specialists are tasked with supporting EL students' content learning outside of their regular 60-minute blocks. When they learned about this plan and considered its implications for EL students, the EL specialists reached out to the leadership team to set up a meeting.

Questions for Discussion	Notes
What are the benefits and limitations of the six-week cycle for EL students in terms of their access to dedicated ESL/ELD courses and integrated language supports?	
What scheduling adjustments can be considered to support EL students' language development and content learning?	
How can district or school leaders structure opportunities for integrated language supports?	
What collaborative routines between EL specialists and content area teachers might improve support for EL students?	

### Scenario 3. Elementary Dual-Language Program

Reyes Bilingual School relies on a two-teacher model to deliver a 50/50 dual-language program to EL and non-EL students in English and Spanish, with the goal of achieving bilingualism and biliteracy for all students. As teacher teams embarked on the complicated task of establishing a schedule for remote learning, they found it challenging to make sure their students continued to learn in both languages. Particularly for students whose parents spoke only English or Spanish, it was difficult to promote the use of both languages during asynchronous activities. By the time teachers made it through an exhausting week, they often found it difficult to coordinate instructional planning with their teammates. They brought their concerns to their principal, who made plans to reach out to the local university, which had a well-regarded bilingual teacher-education program.

<b>Questions for Discussion</b>	<b>Notes</b>
What could a model schedule look like in remote learning that maintains the 50/50 language balance?	
How can school leaders support collaboration among teacher teams to ensure effective co-planning in the remote learning context?	
How might the school gain and leverage access to university students in the bilingual teacher-education to support the goals of the dual-language program during remote learning?	

#### Scenario 4. Newcomer Program Serving Students with Limited Formal Education

When Lakeview, a large urban school district, went fully remote, the newcomer program at one of the district’s high schools, which serves 25 students with interrupted formal education (SIFE) from across the district, was forced to switch to remote learning, as well. As the program’s three teachers prepared for the shift, they worked to make sure that all 25 students had access to computers and hot-spots. The newcomer-program teachers prepared a full-day schedule that included synchronous and asynchronous activities; however, once remote learning commenced, they found that few students attended online classes and even fewer turned in their asynchronous assignments. The three teachers realized they would need to provide more direct outreach and support to the SIFE students and families if they were going to successfully engage their students in remote learning.

Questions for Discussion	Notes
How could newcomer program teachers collaborate with family members, home/school liaisons, and/or paraprofessionals to support remote learning?	
How can the district better provide newcomers with opportunities to interact and learn with their English-speaking peers?	
What professional learning might families or paraprofessionals need in order to more effectively support students in this model?	
How could the school district engage FBOs or CBOs to support students’ completion of their asynchronous activities?	