

Introduction

The English Learner Advisory Council (Council) was established pursuant to Assembly Bill (AB) 335 (2025), Section 11, to study state policies supporting English language acquisition, development, and literacy. Composed of twelve appointed members representing local education agencies (LEAs), the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE), district administrators, department staff, and recognized teacher organizations, the Council examined statutory, regulatory, and administrative frameworks affecting Nevada's ~65,000 multilingual learners. Pursuant to AB335, the Council is required to submit its findings, conclusions, and formal policy recommendations to the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) by October 31, 2026.

Activities

During the 2025–2026 Interim, the Council held eight public meetings to analyze statewide student performance data, evaluate peer state legislation, hear expert testimony, and refine recommendations through successive drafts of their *Policy Prospectus*. Public agendas, meeting materials, to include all policy prospectus, and approved summary minutes are available in the appendix of this report.

Meeting Summary:

Date	Meeting Topics and Actions Taken
May 20, 2026	Inaugural meeting; elected officers; received Open Meeting Law training; established interim work plan based on Policy Prospectus v1.
June 25, 2026	Evaluated statewide demographic and assessment data regarding English Learners; reviewed Policy Prospectus v2 for discussion and prioritization.
July 13, 2026	Reviewed Policy Prospectus v3 for prioritization.
August 10, 2026	Reviewed ELAC Interventions Prospectus for prioritization.
August 24, 2026	Presentation from the Colorado Department of Education regarding their READ Act and Multilingual READ Plans; reviewed ELAC Focus on Educators Prospectus for prioritization.
September 14, 2026	Reviewed ELAC Clarify Language and Metrics Prospectus for prioritization.
September 28, 2026	Review of draft report.
October 12, 2026	Review of draft bill draft request.

Findings

Data presentations from NDE, peer state research, and stakeholder testimony yielded four overarching empirical findings:

- **Demographic Scale & Newcomer Surge:** Nevada serves 65,278 multilingual learners (14.5% of K–12 enrollment). Between 2021 and 2026, Nevada experienced a 233% increase in newcomer pupils enrolled in public schools for 20 cumulative months or less.
- **Long-Term Stagnation:** One-third of the state's multilingual learners are Long-Term English Learners who have remained in language instruction educational programs for six or more years without attaining proficiency.
- **Special Education Intersection:** 19.62% of Nevada's multilingual learners are dually identified for Special Education services under an Individualized Education Program, significantly exceeding the statewide general education IEP rate of 14.2%.
- **Workforce Centralization:** 95% of Nevada's 4,740 actively employed endorsed teachers (ELAD and Bilingual) are concentrated in Clark County, Washoe County, and State Public Charter Schools, creating severe specialist shortages in rural LEAs.

Recommendations – Interventions

- 1. The Council recommends that the Department promulgate guidance and update literacy performance plan templates to include English language development goals, language proficiency scores, and targeted linguistic supports.**

Skilled reading requires inter-weaving word recognition (phonemic awareness, phonics, decoding) and language comprehension (vocabulary, syntax, background knowledge). For multilingual learners, these strands develop concurrently as English is acquired, requiring literacy and language goals to be planned together within a single framework rather than as separate tracks. To ensure educators accurately distinguish whether a student's reading difficulty stems from foundational word-recognition deficits or developing language comprehension, guidance on screening and diagnostic assessment practices tailored for multilingual learners, in addition to updating state literacy performance plan templates to integrate language proficiency data, diagnostic results, and explicit language development goals alongside reading targets enables classroom teachers and specialists to target interventions precisely without navigating duplicative paperwork.
- 2. The Council recommends that the Department evaluate and promulgate guidance on methods to better integrate English learner supports and language proficiency data within Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) literacy interventions, aligning language acquisition targets with academic intervention goals.**

Drawing on peer state models, guidance that systematically connects English language development with evidence-based literacy instruction across all MTSS tiers prevents programs from operating in isolation, where educators struggle to determine whether learning difficulties stem from reading deficits or emerging English proficiency. Guidance would clarify that Tier 1 core instruction must explicitly build oral language, academic vocabulary, and sentence-level syntax for all multilingual learners so that intervention is not the first place students receive language supports. For Tiers 2 and 3, interventions will match diagnostic student needs—pairing foundational word-recognition instruction with linguistic scaffolding or targeting language comprehension directly. Furthermore, progress monitoring results will be evaluated against true peers with similar language proficiency levels to ensure timely support and reduce the over- and under-identification of reading disabilities.
- 3. The Council recommends that the Department develop early warning indicators of linguistic stagnation through a comparative cohort study of multilingual learners in secondary grades.**

To shift state strategy from secondary remediation toward prevention in the primary grades, educators need predictive indicators that identify students at risk of becoming long-term English learners before that trajectory is set. A longitudinal comparative study of secondary multilingual learners in grades 6 through 12, contrasting pupils who successfully attained English proficiency within five years against those who stalled and became long-term English learners would support this outcome. By looking back at primary-grade (K–3) records, the study will analyze key historical factors—including WIDA ACCESS domain trends (with emphasis on reading and writing), early literacy and dyslexia screening results, reading intervention histories, timing of special education referrals, interim growth assessments (such as NWEA MAP or iReady), attendance and school mobility, language instruction program consistency, and native-language literacy data where available. Contrasting these cohorts will produce actionable predictive indicators that the Department could report to local education agencies, equipping educators to begin targeted intervention early within existing district planning frameworks, including literacy performance plans and Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).
- 4. The Council requests the drafting of a legislative measure to establish specialized academic plans for multilingual learners in grades 7 through 12 to support proper course scheduling, credit attainment, and on-time graduation.**

The creation of individualized secondary academic plans that designate appropriate course scheduling and credit accrual for multilingual learners will support prevention of disproportionate secondary dropout rates and the marked underrepresentation of multilingual learners among advanced and college- and career-ready diploma recipients. Such plans would require school counselors and Multilingual Learner Education specialists to collaborate annually with students and families to align course schedules, safeguard diploma options, monitor credit accumulation, and provide tailored academic supports across the multilingual learner continuum.

5. The Council requests the drafting of a legislative measure to mandate proportional representation of parents and guardians of multilingual learners on local school and district advisory bodies.

This would ensure parents and legal guardians of multilingual learners have a structured voice in local educational governance by requiring proportional representation on existing school and district advisory councils. More specifically, this would require that any advisory body for a school or district serving a student population of 10% or more multilingual learners must include at least one parent or guardian of a multilingual learner. These advisory bodies must adhere to federal requirements regarding the provision of translation services as needed.

Recommendations – Clarify Metrics and Language

6. The Council recommends that the Department update administrative guidance, communications, and instructional frameworks to adopt the asset-based term “multilingual learner” for students designated as English learners, while retaining “English learner” in state statute for accountability, compliance, and funding purposes.

While the term “multilingual learner” broadly describes any student developing proficiency in more than one language—including native English speakers enrolled in world language courses or fluently bilingual students who are not classified as English learners—adopting it as the preferred term for students designated as English learners establishes an asset-based framework across Nevada classrooms. In instructional, professional development, and administrative guidance contexts, “multilingual learner” highlights student linguistic strengths and aligns with modern educational research. However, because state and federal accountability frameworks, Title III civil rights mandates, and Pupil-Centered Funding Plan (PCFP) weighted formulas are legally tied to the specific federal definition of an “English learner,” state statute, formal compliance, and fiscal reporting will continue to use “English learner” (EL). This distinction allows Nevada to modernize instructional guidance and communication while protecting statutory precision, federal compliance, and the allocation of state weighted funding.

7. The Council recommends continued development and investment in the Data Management System currently in production within the Department; expanding and/or revising data collection regarding primary/home language and students who are designated English learners and have an Individualized Education Plan; and continued support for the Department and Commission on School Funding as it relates to establishing intervention-level expenditure codes within the uniform accounting system for public schools.

A comprehensive data management system will enhance public data reporting and transparency, to include the academic growth of multilingual learners and the expenditure of weighted English learner funding. Transparent data is essential for evaluating whether state investments are reaching the students who need them most. Providing accessible, disaggregated reporting ensures that school communities, parent advisory bodies, and district leaders can verify that EL-weighted funds are directly supporting effective instruction, targeted interventions, and specialized student services.

8. The Council recommends the Department conduct a review and take action to revise the current entrance and exit procedures for English learners, including the available alternative pathway

criteria.

Nevada's current framework uses a standard WIDA ACCESS composite cut score of 4.5 for program exit; however, further review to evaluate entrance screeners, model secondary exit score adjustments, and multi-faceted reclassification pathways grounded in student growth data is necessary to support English learner transitions. Furthermore, Nevada is the only state that requires a demonstrated math proficiency requirement for its alternative pathway exit criteria and should instead shift to using only language-relevant academic indicators.

Recommendations – Focus on Educators

- 9. The Council requests the drafting of a legislative measure requiring that all Nevada educator preparatory programs integrate either the English Language Acquisition and Development (ELAD) or Bilingual Education endorsement into their standard programs for early education, elementary education, or special education, and at least one course on English Language Acquisition for all secondary education programs.**

Adding coursework – 3 credits for secondary educators, and 12 credits for early childhood, elementary, and special education educators – across preservice degree programs ensures every educator has the skills needed to support multilingual learners and expands statewide specialist capacity before candidates enter the workforce.

- 10. The Council recommends that the Department, LEAs, NSHE institutions, and the Regional Professional Development Programs work together to establish flexible and accessible in-service pathways for practicing educators to earn ELAD or Bilingual education endorsements.**

Current program capacity, limited course availability, and a lack of dedicated in-service Bilingual Education routes restrict overall educator participation in such programs. To build a robust, scalable pipeline of specialized teachers, collaboration to expand and diversify in-service credentialing routes—including district-university partnerships, flexible hybrid models, and new programs—is critical, in tandem with collaboratively working to identify and mitigate financial, scheduling, and geographic hurdles for practicing teachers.

- 11. The Council requests the drafting of a legislative measure requesting the Commission on School Funding to evaluate changes to the allowable uses for English learner weighted funding to better reflect current need and usage.**

In tandem with the recommendation to establish intervention-level expenditure coding, this measure works to ensure that dedicated English learner funds are allocated, utilized, and reported for effective, modern interventions and applications for English learner supports.

- 12. The Council requests the drafting of a legislative measure, to include an allocation request of \$460,000, to support pre-service and in-service educators pursuing ELAD or Bilingual Education endorsements.**

This request would fund approximately 100 educators, at \$4,600 per educator, to pay for 12 credit hours of coursework to gain their ELAD or Bilingual endorsement, with carryover provisions.