

## Title III Year 2 and Year 4 Improvement Plan Needs Assessment Template

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**Directions:** Using the template, provide information requested for each cell in the outline. The cells expand to allow space needed for narrative responses under each item. All Title III LEAs must submit a copy of this Needs Assessment to the Title III Regional COE Lead as part of the review process. The final version is uploaded into CAIS as an attachment under the Needs Assessment item in the Requested Documents tab.

**1. Briefly summarize EL linguistic and academic performance challenges, and identify and describe those key factors of the instructional program that prevented the local educational agency (LEA) from meeting Title III AMAOs.**

a. Describe the LEA's makeup including location, grade levels and demographics.

New Heights Charter is part of a consortium that is composed of 15 schools that range from elementary, middle, and high school in California.

New Heights Charter is a TK-8<sup>th</sup> grade school located in South Los Angeles. It has a population of 382 students. 64.5% are Latino/a, 35% students are African American, and .5% are not reported. 30% (126) of students are ELs with Spanish as their primary language. Approximately 98% of students are eligible for free/reduced lunch and 70% live at or below poverty levels.

In the previous year, the EL population at New Heights, the school in the consortium with one of the largest numbers of ELL students, more than doubled. In the 2010-2011 school year about 60 students were tested for CELDT and 2011-2012, a total of 122 students were tested.

In general, the demographics of the consortium have shifted dramatically over the past two years, with an increasing number of ELL students. In addition, the transitory nature of students across the consortium schools means that year-to-year comparisons aren't very valid.

Schools in the consortium range from zero EL annuals to 90 EL annuals at a specific (and everything in between). Of the 427 students, only 48.9% or 209 have prior CELDT scores.

b. Describe findings from analyses of the CST, CAPA, CMA, CELDT, CAHSEE, state tools (e.g., ELSSA, APS), Graduation/Drop Out rates (if appropriate), and other assessments used by the LEA \_e.g. benchmark assessments, curriculum embedded assessments, ELSSA Supplement) to measure EL student English proficiency and academic achievement, and findings

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derived from other data analyses as these relate to the three AMAOs (Goals 2A, 2B, and 2C).

AMAO 1: In the 2011-2012 school year, the schools had a difficult time getting CELDT scores from the previous schools of students new to the consortium schools. Only 48.9% or 209 have prior CELDT scores, so the consortium did not receive an AMAO 1 score because the % is less than 65%. In the past, when students enter charter schools, the staff relies on the office staff in students' previous schools for past CELDT information. Due to the sometimes contentious nature of the relationships between charters and traditional schools, this can be difficult. With all schools using CALPADS, charters are able to identify the new students that need to take the CELDT test, but still don't have access to the students' CELDT score or level. In 2012-13 school year, 5 schools were able to get 90-100% of their students' past test scores, but the other members still need to work on their operational systems to increase their percentage of prior CELDT scores. Within the schools with enough prior scores to analyze, the average percent meeting AMAO 1 was approximately 52%, rather than the goal of 57.5% so this is an area that needs work.

AMAO 2: The consortium met the AMAO 2 goal for student in school less than 5 years, but this percentage needs to increase in order to meet the goal for next year. The consortium did not meet the AMAO goal for students in school more than 5 years, reaching 43.4%, rather than the target of 47%. Based on consortium's **analysis**, reading comprehension has emerged as a critical student achievement goal – the scores are, on average, the lowest of the CELDT categories. The data from the school's Benchmark Reading Tests, the CELDT test, and the disaggregated cluster score data from the California State Standardized Test, point to reading comprehension as an area for future improvement. Across the grades, reading comprehension scores rank the lowest or second to lowest area compared to the other cluster areas in ELA. The consortium's goal is to increase teachers' skills in using assessment data from the above list of strategies to strategically teach the skills students need in the area of reading.

AMAO 3: The consortium did not make the target for ELA or Math. The New Heights consortium has the following **strengths to build on** in meeting this goal. Each year, students have increased their reading abilities as demonstrated on the CA State Standardized Test, except for students in Grade 2 in 2008-09. In addition, students in grades 4-6 met their AYP goal in terms of percentage of students proficient in ELA. Teachers have increased their skills in the teaching and assessing of reading and will continue to do so with this intensive focus. The consortium has already begun to take several **action steps** to meet this goal including increasing job-embedded professional development to focus on increasing teachers' skills in teaching reading, assessing reading, and unit planning for reading instruction.

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For high schools in consortium: drop out rate, grad rate, access to AP/honors classes for EL in comparison to all other, what services are being provided by EXED.

Reclassification: Reclassification rates are rising. For example, New Heights' rates increased from 1% in 2011, 14.8% in 2012, and 22% in 2013 (with 21 out of 94 students being reclassified.)

Most elementary students in the consortium are “stuck” at the Intermediate level, whether they are in 2<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade. At New Heights, 26% of the ELL students moved up one level in 2012-13 and one student was reclassified. The CELDT coordinator believes that the “new” test 2<sup>nd</sup> graders and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders take proves challenging for them. In addition, the 6<sup>th</sup> grade students who are ELL students were new to New Heights as 6<sup>th</sup> graders, so the school hasn't had a chance to see yet what a year of instruction will do to support their language development (as determined by the CELDT.)

- c. Describe strengths and weaknesses in the design and implementation of the EL related goals (2A-2G and 5A-B) in the **current** LEA Plan/Addendum, the prior Year 2 Title Improvement III Plan, and any other appropriate documents, e.g. the LEAs EL Master Plan. The program dimensions listed below are areas to consider in reviewing current plans.

### **Instructional program design**

#### STRENGTHS:

- All schools use thorough method for identifying and assessing students which includes a home language survey (HLS) is distributed to every parent as part of the enrollment process. The purpose of the HLS is to identify students who come from homes where a language other than English is spoken. The survey is equitable, comprehensive, and not based on prior assumptions. A student who lists a language other than English on any of the questions of the HLS, will be identified as an English Language Learner initially, until their actual language proficiency is determined through the CELDT.
- Students who score Early Advanced or Advanced on the CELDT are reclassified as Initially Fluent English Proficient (I-FEP). The California English Language Development Test (CELDT) is given to each incoming English Language Learner, including students with disabilities, to determine each student's English language proficiency level. Per California state law, this is done within 30 days of student's enrollment. It is also administered to all English Language Learners, including students with disabilities, annually to determine students' individual proficiency level and monitor progress.
- CELDT scores are used as one of the necessary components when making reclassification decisions. In addition, students are given the pre-LAS to determine proficiency in their primary language.

#### WEAKNESSES:

Increasing academic language for students so that they are able to increase their scores on the CELDT test and the CST

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(or in the future the Smarter Balanced tests.) Students also tend to not take the CELDT seriously, so incentives and test awareness activities will be designed for consortium schools to use.

- **Implementation of state and district adopted curricula**

**STRENGTHS:** All schools use materials that have been approved through their charter authorizer through the petition process. The materials are aligned to the schools vision and mission for students' overall development. All schools are moving towards greater alignment with the new Common Core standards and Smarter Balanced Assessments.

**WEAKNESSES:** Charter schools in the consortium are either growing or changing, both conditions lead to an increased number of new teachers on the faculty each year. The time it takes for the new teachers to acclimate to the charter school's instructional program can sometimes result in a drop in student performance.

- **Implementation of instructional services and methods**

**STRENGTHS:** The consortium schools deliver ELL instruction as part of the general education program, not as pull-out services. Although, some ELL students may be pulled out if they are also part of a Response to Intervention small group. By keeping ELL students in the general education classroom, students are able to receive the same instruction and curriculum as their non-ELL peers and more readily integrate into the life of the school.

**WEAKNESSES:** The students who are stuck in their CELDT progress or their CST progress tend to be students who lack academic language and/or are also in Special Education. These students would benefit from increased support in the area of academic language development.

- **Professional development (Goal 2D)**

**STRENGTHS:** Teachers participate in regular professional development to build their instructional repertoire in language arts, math, social studies, and science. Participation in professional development is 100%. Given the relative small size of school faculties and the cohesive school visions of charter schools, schools tend to provide targeted professional development opportunities for all teachers. A primary focus of professional development has been increasing students' reading, writing, speaking, and listening capacities.

**WEAKNESSES:** New teachers also require professional development in classroom management. This detracts, in the short-term, from time spent supporting language development, but has long-term benefits for students.

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- Parent & community participation (Goal 2E)

STRENGTHS: Since ELL students are fully integrated into the educational program, their participation in school events is high. 100% of ELL parents attend parent conferences twice a year. Translation is provided for all conferences as needed. Approximately 60% of parents participate in the various Family Nights and school events throughout the school year, in equal proportion to non-ELL parents. Parent surveys are conducted each year to determine parent needs in terms of their own education and skills in supporting student's academic growth. In these surveys ELL parents are able to communicate their needs for English Language instruction, computer instruction, social/emotional development, etc.

WEAKNESSES: Some of the parents of the students who are "stuck" in their academic progress, don't have the time or interest in build their own skills in order to support their children's academic growth. These parents are "hard to reach" and continue to be a challenge for consortium schools.

- Parental Notification (Goal 2F)

STRENGTHS: The consortium follows all the required protocols for communicating with parents regarding their child's ELL status and progress.

WEAKNESSES: Parents who don't also attend the meetings held to explain the ELL process only have the written communication to use and this may not help them fully understand the policies/procedures.

- Services for Immigrant Students if the LEA receives Title III Immigrant funds (Goal 2G)

STRENGTHS: Do we receive these funds?

WEAKNESSES:

- Graduation, Drop Out (Goal 5A, B)

STRENGTHS: \*for the high schools in the consortium

WEAKNESSES:

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<p><b>2. Describe factors contributing to the failure to meet AMAO(s).</b> Identify and describe factors that prevented the LEA from achieving the AMAO(s) and explain how the identified factors above were verified from evidence gathered.</p>		
AMAOs	FACTORS (ie., inconsistent implementation, inadequate PD, inadequate resources)	EVIDENCE (ie., data analyses, classroom walk-throughs, program evaluation, surveys)
AMAO 1	Inadequate data collection of past CELDT scores from prior schools, inadequate resources and RTI structures to support struggling students.	Benchmark assessments in reading and writing revealed language gaps.
AMAO 2 Cohort 1: < 5 yrs	Met AMAO 2	
AMAO 2 Cohort 2: ≥ 5 yrs	Lack of RTI groups to support struggling students.	RTI groups were formed, but data collection was inconsistent.
AMAO 3 ELA	Inconsistent implementation of language strategies, new teachers just learning Reading/Writing Workshop and other school-based strategies for the first time.	Classroom observations revealed teachers' struggling with classroom management and just beginning to see the impact of targeted reading and writing strategies.
AMAO 3 Mathematics	PD focused on language arts.	Math unit tests revealed gaps in foundational math knowledge, especially for middle elementary, middle, and upper grade students entering the charter schools for the first time.
<p><b>3. Write a brief description/bulleted outline of each goal below that was identified as an area of focus from the Needs Assessment; the details for these will be part of your plan.</b> Goal statements should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely (i.e., SMART Goals), since they must be made actionable through strategies, actions and tasks in the Title III Improvement Plan.</p>		
<p><i>Goal 2A: (AMAO 1 Annual Progress Learning English)</i></p> <p>By June 2015 the percentage of EL students who advance at least one level on CELDT will increase from 48.9% to 59% as measured by CELDT.</p> <p>The percentage of students scoring early advanced, rather than Intermediate will increase by 5% on the CELDT by the fall 2014 administration.</p> <p>The consortium will continue to review and learn from the new English Language Development Standards and levels to ensure student data is analyzed based on the new system. Consortium leaders have read <i>Improving Education for English Learners</i> to ensure that this</p>		

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plan and future implementation is guided by research-based ideas and practices for improving performance of English Language Learners. Consortium schools are focused on implementing Common Core standards in innovative and engaging ways for students.

- **Placement and grouping of ELD:** Schools use cooperative learning, web-based instruction, group discussions, and small group differentiated teaching to support growth inside the mainstream classroom to provide ELL students with access to Common Core curriculum. Students are also placed in in-school and afterschool small group instructional settings for targeted, strategic instruction in language. Schools will ensure that ELs at all levels of English language proficiency fully participate in grade level tasks in all content areas with varying degrees of scaffolding in order to develop both content knowledge and English.
- **Instruction:** ELs at all proficiency levels are expected to engage in high-level thinking and complex, cognitively demanding social and academic activities requiring language and will receive appropriate linguistic support whether substantial, moderate or light.
- **Curriculum and materials:** Consortium schools have independence to determine the best research-based materials to meet their school's needs.
- **Monitor student progress:** Student progress is monitored through teacher assessments, data gathered through Data Director tests that tracks performance over time and helps teacher analyze both individual and group progress.
- **Monitor placement and instruction:** Consortium schools are small and their faculties work closely together to monitor student placement and instruction.
- **Professional Development:**
  1. Teachers will receive training on how to effectively use previous years' CELDT results and bank of released CELDT test questions.
  2. Teachers will be provided with the CELDT blueprints and Released Test Questions.
  3. Sample questions will be shared with students, staff, and parents.
  4. Teachers will explore new instructional approaches, such as Systematic ELD. Consortium schools will determine their own approaches based on their school vision and data.
  5. Teachers will access new Common Core ELL resources such as Stanford University's *Understanding Language*.
  6. Students will also have access to Rosetta Stone English online programs to support their language development.

*Goal 2B:* (AMAO 2 English Proficiency)

By June 2015, our ELs who have been in US schools less than 5 years will increase from 25.3% proficient as measured by CELDT to 28%. EL students that have been in us schools for longer than 5 years will increase their proficiency from 43.4% to 49% as measured by CELDT.

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The percentage of students scoring Early Advanced will increase by 5% on the CELDT by the Fall 2013 Administration.

- Teachers will be provided with a list of students who are “stuck” at one CELDT level.
- Teachers will receive training on how to effectively use previous years’ CELDT results and bank of released CELDT test questions.
- Teachers will be provided with the CELDT blueprints and Released Test Questions.
- Sample questions will be shared with students, staff, and parents.
- Teachers will explore new instructional approaches, such as Systematic ELD. Consortium schools will determine approaches based on their school vision and data.
- Teachers will access new Common Core ELL resources such as Stanford University’s *Understanding Language*.
- Students will also have access to Rosetta Stone English online programs to support their language development.
- RTI groups will be formed early in the year to target language development for “stuck” students.

*Goal 2C: (AMAO 3-AYP for ELs in English Language Arts)*

- Implementation of Common Core standards has already begun in consortium schools. For example, New Heights’ teachers are already engaged in teaching Reading and Writing workshops units of study aligned with Common Core Standards in ELA.
- Administrators will create observation schedules and rubrics to ensure teachers are providing access to the new standards and supporting the “shifts” in instruction such as close reading, opinion writing, and non-fiction text.
- Based on these observations, peer teams will be formed to support ongoing professional learning.

*Goal 2C: (AMAO 3-AYP for ELs in Mathematics)*

Goal: EL students are supposed to increase from 26.1% to 89.2% proficiency in ELA as measured by AYP. This goal is unreasonable and it is currently unclear what the state and federal governments will determine as the new target with the new Smarter Balanced Tests. The first test to be scored will be in 2015 and this will provide a baseline for determining future growth targets.

EL students will have access to ELA through Common Core Standards curriculum and receive Struggling students will receive additional intervention as measured by Common Core based assessment

- Implementation of Common Core standards has already begun in consortium schools. For example, New Heights’ teachers are transitioning in the winter of 2013-14 to the new Story of Units and Story of Ratios curriculum designed to align with Common Core and written for New York schools already engaged in high stakes testing with the new standards.
- Teachers will be trained in the new Common Core Standards in Math.



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- Administrators will create observation schedules and rubrics to ensure teachers are providing access to the new standards and supporting the “shifts” in instruction such as mathematical reasoning, problem-solving, and more in-depth understanding of math concepts.
- Based on these observations, peer teams will be formed to support ongoing professional learning.

### *Goal 2D: (High Quality Professional Development)*

By June 2015, 100% of administrator and teachers who work with ELs will participate in appropriate ELD, ELA, and Math (specify what we are using) professional development activities as measured by attendance sheets.

- Common Core experts in ELA and Math will design professional development for teachers.
- Consortium practices such as Reading and Writing Workshop, Common Core Math (A Story of Units and A Story of Ratios), and Responsive Classroom will continue to be taught in professional development workshops, job-embedded labs, peer-to-peer observation, and collaborative planning.
- Teachers will learn how the The California English Language Development Standards (CA ELD Standards) describe the knowledge, skills, and abilities in English as a new language that are expected at exit from each proficiency level.
- Teachers will learn instructional strategies to match students’ levels as emerging, expanding, and bridging.

### *Goal 2E: (Parent and Community Participation)*

- There will be an increase parent involvement of EL’s as measured by their attendance from 50% to 75% at Parent Meeting and Family Events.
- The number of EL parents who learn English and Computer skills will increase by 20%.
- Parents’ understanding and expectations of their children’s language development will increase qualitatively as measured by parent surveys given twice a year.

### *Goal 2F: (Parental Notification)*

- The Title III Accountability letter will continue to be sent to parents as required and will be translated.
- Parents will receive support to work with their children at home.

### *Goal 2G: (Services for Immigrant Students: must be addressed if the LEA receives Title III Immigrant Education Funds)*

N/A

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*Goal 5 A, B: (Increase Graduation Rates, Decrease Dropout Rates)*

For high schools in consortium the graduation rate increase from \_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_. The drop out rates will decrease from \_\_\_ to \_\_\_ for EL students.

To reach the goals listed above, consortium schools will engage in the following tasks:

1. Increase number of professional development sessions focused on reading.
2. Teach conferring skills to enhance teachers' ability to identify student weaknesses and strengths and teach strategically.
3. Teach teachers how to organize and run small group strategy sessions for students within Readers' Workshop.
4. Improve use of assessment data, such as the Reading Assessments to monitor student progress and guide teaching.
5. Improve implementation of vocabulary building programs such as *Text Talk* to build student's vocabulary in grades 1-3 and Academic Vocabulary activities in grades 4-12.
6. Explore a variety of strategies to ensure student learning, such as Word Study and Rosetta Stone.

### **Reading Intervention Program: Fast Forward and other brain-based programs with a research-base for ELL students**

1. Integrate technology into instruction, such as using Fast Forward to support student learning.
2. Pilot web-based programs, like Fast ForWord, with Special Education Students, Response to Intervention students, and English Language Learners.
4. Train additional staff to provide support to students using brain-based computer programs.

### **Increase non-fiction reading comprehension work across content areas: social studies and science.**

1. Integrate non-fiction science texts into science block and into readers' workshop.
2. Increase non-fiction texts in classroom libraries that address themes in social studies and science standards.

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**Enhance Afterschool and Summer School to support struggling readers.**

### **STRATEGIES:**

1. Increase skills of afterschool tutors.
2. Add Fast ForWord and other brain-based language programs to Summer School program.

### **ASSESSMENT:**

1. Benchmark Assessment Tests in Reading: Students not yet proficient in reading will improve reading by one level every two months.
2. Review of informal documentation: Teachers' conferring notes, exit tickets from students, and reading logs.
3. Classroom Observation.
4. STAR/CALMAPPS test data including interim and summative assessments when available through Smarter Balanced.

### **More info on Implementation:**

All students are grouped in mainstream classrooms that implement ELD and SDAIE strategies. Teachers use modeling, graphic organizers and visuals to support students' recognition of essential information in all academic subjects. Teachers are mindful of the staged of language acquisition and differentiate instruction within the classroom to meet the needs of each student. Students at the beginning and early intermediate stages of language acquisition are still learning how to read, write, listen and speak in Academic English, and will benefit most from ELD strategies. Students at the Intermediate level are taught using Academic English skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking to learn content and will benefit most from SDAIE strategies.

Appropriate language support is provided to students. Teachers work with ELL students through daily reading, writing, and discussion activities to determine each student's literacy habits and skills. Teachers integrate language learning, academic content, and learning strategies. Three relevant themes guide the school's English Language Learner support system: (1) the critical role of vocabulary in language development; (2) the critical role that oral language plays in the development of academic English language proficiency, including vocabulary, reading, and writing skills; and (3) the critical relationship between English language acquisition and instruction in other academic subjects.

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**SERVICE DELIVERY:** ELD and SDAIE methods are used regularly by classroom teachers throughout the school day. After careful review of the student data and available research on best practices to support ELL students, teachers are implementing the following strategies/supports to build students' language skills, such as:

- 1) High interest leveled books organized in classroom libraries are used daily to encourage readers,
- 2) Daily oral language development through Morning Meeting
- 3) Systematic Instruction in Phonics, Phonemic Awareness, and Sight Words (SIPPS, Grades K-3 and SIPPS Plus, grades 4-8),
- 4) *Text Talk* (grades 1-3) to build academic vocabulary,
- 5) *Brain Pop* (video/visual support for content learning),
- 6) *Words Their Way* (grades K-8) for word study, and
- 7) ST Math, a visual approach to mathematics concepts, (grades K-5)

In addition, extra language support is given in small group intervention groups during the school day, before school, and afterschool. The small groups are led by bilingual instructional aids and through language-based computer programs for ELL students who struggle academically, including:

- 1) Fast ForWord, a web-based reading program,
- 2) A-Z Books, trade books for students with computer enhancements to support vocabulary comprehension,
- 3) ReadingMate, web-based reading fluency and comprehension support
- 4) Rosetta Stone
- 5) IXL Math, and
- 6) Fastt Math.