

The New York State Education Department



Guidelines for Educating Limited English Proficient Students with Interrupted Formal Education (LEP/ELL SIFES)

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MILTON L. COFIELD, <i>Vice Chancellor</i> , B.S., M.B.A., Ph.D.	Rochester
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JAMES R. TALLON, JR., B.A., M.A.	Binghamton
ROGER TILLES, B.A., J.D.	Great Neck
KAREN BROOKS HOPKINS, B.A., M.F.A.	Brooklyn
CHARLES R. BENDIT, B.A.	Manhattan
BETTY A. ROSA, B.A., M.S. in Ed., M.S. in Ed., M.Ed., Ed.D.	Bronx
LESTER W. YOUNG, JR., B.S., M.S., Ed. D.	Oakland Gardens
CHRISTINE D. CEA, B.A., M.A., Ph.D.	Staten Island
WADE S. NORWOOD, B.A.	Rochester

Commissioner of Education

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Senior Deputy Commissioner

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Associate Commissioner

OFFICE OF CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND STANDARDS

JEAN C. STEVENS

Coordinator

Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies

PEDRO J. RUIZ

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The completion of this document was achieved as a result of the efforts of the educators listed below, who gave generously of their time and expertise.

COORDINATORS

Dr. Pedro J. Ruíz

NYSED Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies

Ellie Paiewonsky

Nassau BOCES Bilingual/ESL Technical Assistance Center

PRINCIPAL WRITERS

Ellie Paiewonsky

Nassau BOCES Bilingual/ESL Technical Assistance Center

Stephen I. Glickman

Researcher, Evaluator and Proposal Writer

REVIEWER

Dr. Nancy Cloud

University of Rhode Island

CONTRIBUTOR/EDITING

Heather Parris-Fitzpatrick

Nassau BOCES Bilingual/ESL Technical Assistance Center

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & LAYOUT

Kelly Perkowski

Nassau BOCES Bilingual/ESL Technical Assistance Center

SIFE Advisory Committee

Thanks to the following educators who reviewed and provided comments to the draft manuscript.

Terri Brady-Méndez
Eastern Suffolk BOCES
Bilingual/ESL Technical Assistance Center

Eudes Budhai
Westbury UFSD

Monica G. Chavez
Glen Cove Schools

Valerie D'Aguanno, Ed.D
Nassau BOCES
Curriculum, Instruction and Technology

Yvonne Daza
Malverne UFSD

Lisa Estrada
Nassau BOCES
Bilingual/ESL Technical Assistance Center

Minerva Feliciano
Brentwood School District

Vivian Fiallo
Long Beach City School District

Rosemarie C. Giovanni
Uniondale Public Schools

Susan Greca
Freeport UFSD

Lissette Laboy
Roosevelt UFSD

Rosa E. Lien
Central Islip Public Schools

Heather Parris-Fitzpatrick
Nassau BOCES
Bilingual/ESL Technical Assistance Center

Mary Stephens
Nassau BOCES
Language Programs and Assessment
Services

Margot Wareham-Bailey
Hempstead UFSD



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY,
NY 12234

Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Standards
Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies

89 Washington Avenue, Room 367 EBA
Albany, NY 12234
Tel. 518-474-8775
Fax 518-473-4678

55 Hanson Place
4th Floor
Brooklyn, NY 11210
Tel. 718-722-2425

January 2011

Dear Colleague:

The *Guidelines for Educating Limited English Proficient Students with Interrupted Formal Education (LEP/ELL SIFES)* was developed as a resource for educators. It serves to shape the design and implementation of ESL and Bilingual Education programs for Limited English Proficient Students with Interrupted Formal Education (LEP/ELL/SIFEs). As SIFEs are a component population of LEP/ELLs, the foundational framework for this document is the New York State Education Department (NYSED) CR Part 154 Guidelines for the Education of Limited English Proficient/English Language Learners (LEP/ELLs).

This document addresses key variables such as timely and accurate identification, reflective and evidence-based placement, design of programmatic options, and research on best instructional practices. It also includes references which have been used to conceptualize these guidelines. It endeavors to describe policies and practices which address the socio-academic, emotional, and cultural needs of SIFEs. These practices should underpin their successful negotiation of the curriculum, enhance their skills to close the achievement gap and optimize their success in both the academic and work environment. The guidelines recommend the implementation of programs that capitalize upon the background knowledge and interests of SIFEs, are age and developmentally appropriate, and allow them sufficient time to achieve educational goals.

The Nassau BETAC at Nassau BOCES staff composed this document with input from researchers, writers and practitioners in the field of first and second language acquisition.

As programs evolve and more districts enroll SIFEs, insights and perspectives should be documented and shared. We invite your comments on this resource and appreciate your input relevant to educating these students.

Please direct your comments to:

Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies
New York State Education Department
Room 367 EBA
Albany, New York 12234

Sincerely,



Dr. Pedro Ruiz

Guidelines for the Education of Limited English Proficient/English Language Learners-Students with Interrupted Formal Education (LEP/ELL/SIFE)

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Introduction

(LEP/ELL/SIFEs)

An increasing and diverse number of limited English proficient students with interrupted formal education (LEP/ELL/SIFEs) have been enrolling in New York State schools. As their instruction has been interrupted, inconsistent and in many cases unavailable, they do not possess the school readiness skills, sociolinguistic proficiencies and academic knowledge demonstrated by students who have consistently attended school. Thus, it is essential that they be given enriched, holistic instruction which capitalizes upon their prior knowledge and interests, providing them opportunities to achieve promotion and graduation benchmarks. Their education should integrate the social-emotional and cultural dimensions of learning in order to close the gap in their educational experiences and proficiencies. When provided a challenging, culturally and linguistically sensitive variety of educational experiences and given time to benefit from continuous schooling, LEP/ELL/SIFEs can make significant progress.

Research and evidence on effective practices for educating LEP/ELL/SIFEs is limited. However, they are a subgroup of LEP/ELLs and progress through the same language acquisition and developmental stages. Their lack of schooling and its socio-academic benefits often pose more complex and different challenges than those encountered in the general LEP/ELL population. Significant gaps in their academic knowledge require versatile instructional strategies and differentiated interventions. It is incumbent upon educators to develop a language and educational profile of these students as a reference point for making thoughtful, evidence-based decisions about the most effective strategies to use.

Since diverse socio-cultural and academic skills should be integrated and embedded in the curricular experiences of LEP/ELL/SIFEs, it is essential that schools use cross-disciplinary teams to design their educational programs, aligned with NYSED CR Part 154 Guidelines. Targeted programs should be created for them which address their verified and documented needs, provide challenging, standards-based content, have explicit exit criteria, and prepare them for eventual transition into the regular instructional program. Regardless of their age, they should be provided an appropriate standards-based program using enriched instruction which consistently promotes literacy and incorporates social-emotional learning and cultural awareness. Older LEP/ELL/SIFEs benefit from career exploration and prevocational training which prepares them for entry into the workplace.

Whenever possible, instruction should be accomplished using both the native language and English. The native language provides access to the assumptions, needs, scope of schooling, and life experiences of these students. Research suggests that native language skills facilitate the learning of English. When both languages are consistently developed, they become mutually supportive and serve to promote the acquisition of first and second language literacy.

LEP/ELL/SIFEs are one of the most vulnerable, at-risk LEP/ELL populations. Thus, our efforts require an equitable apportionment of resources; methodical and sustained evaluation of our efforts; consistent expansion of our knowledge; and, commitment to innovative approaches. We should document and share our accomplishments and continue our advocacy efforts, guided by our belief in the potential of these students.

CR PART 154 GUIDELINES FOR THE EDUCATION OF Limited English Proficient/English Language Learners with Interrupted Formal Education (LEP/ELL/SIFE)

SECTION I: SIFE IDENTIFICATION AND PROGRAMMING

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) CR Part 154 Guidelines provide a vision and framework for the education of Limited English Proficient/English Language Learners (LEP/ELLs). Excerpts from these regulations, cited in various sections of this document, are found at <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/biling/bilinged/pub/>

Regulations of the Commissioner of Education Part 154.1 states the following:

(a) Pupils with limited English proficiency shall mean pupils who by reason of foreign birth or ancestry, speak a language other than English, and

(1) either understand and speak little or no English; or (2) score below a state designated level of proficiency, on the Language Assessment Battery-Revised (LAB-R) or the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT)

Limited English Proficient/English Language Learners with Interrupted Formal Education, (LEP/ELL/SIFE) are a student subgroup of the LEP/ELL population and, therefore, subject to all New York State Education Department (NYSED) regulations and guidelines.

This document herein will solely refer to SIFEs as those LEP/ELLs who have interrupted formal education.

NYSED defines the SIFE population as those LEP/ELLs who:

- Come from a home in which a language other than English is spoken and enter a school in the United States after grade 2; and,
- Have had at least two years less schooling than their peers; and,
- Function at least two years below expected grade level in reading and mathematics; and,
- May be preliterate in their native language.

The number of SIFEs continues to increase in NYS schools, as their geographic distribution widens. These students come from countries where they received no formal schooling or their education was intermittent, suspended or temporarily unavailable. They have entered a new and different culture, whose explicit and implicit social/behavioral rules, cultural priorities and value systems are unfamiliar. They may experience levels of anxiety due to lack of access to dependable support systems, such as extended family, friends and/or separation from familiar and predictable routines. They also lack the full range of socio-academic and cultural competencies expected in US schools. At the secondary school level, the competing demands of familial and work obligations and the compressed period of time to attain educational benchmarks increase their risk of dropping out. These factors influence their life goals, aspirations and expectations of schooling. Nevertheless, SIFEs have had varied life experiences from which they have acquired a range of functional knowledge and coping strategies, which if appropriately harnessed can anchor a productive school career.

It is necessary to identify what SIFEs know before an educational design is created. For example, if a seventeen-year-old student does not know how to hold a pencil and has no alphabet awareness, then the initial focus and content of instruction will differ from that proposed for a student who has some knowledge of environmental print and familiarity with writing implements.

Moreover, the duration, scope and content of the formal educational experiences of SIFEs are significantly different from most LEP/ELLs. As a constituent group of LEP/ELLs, CR Part 154 Guidelines and the NYSED learning standards shape instruction for them. SIFEs require carefully crafted educational programming that reflects and incorporates their background knowledge. Students should be provided opportunities to gain sufficient mastery of coursework to attain promotional and graduation benchmarks. Scheduling, pacing of coursework, and the organizational framework of programs developed for them should be flexible in order to provide instruction that assists in closing their achievement gap.

Educators should have high expectations for these students and assist them in developing meaningful and challenging educational and career aspirations. Preparing these students for effective participation in the larger society requires a holistic, standards-based education that builds upon their experiential knowledge and consistently and sensitively promotes mastery of academic skills, print literacy, socio-emotional learning and cultural awareness.

As a significantly at-risk population, SIFEs benefit from educational approaches which integrate social, cultural, instructional, and community resources. In strategically developing an instructional plan for SIFEs, educators should:

- Determine the nature and extent of the students' prior knowledge and educational experiences.
- Adjust interventions to reflect changing needs at regular intervals.
- Address social, emotional and cultural needs.
- Focus on literacy and numeracy skills.
- Tap into students' interests and strengths in order to scaffold new information.
- Use differentiated pedagogical practices and instructional materials which are developmentally and age appropriate, linguistically enriching, and culturally and experientially relevant.
- Enlist additional support from supplementary academic intervention programs.

Another educational obstacle that SIFEs may confront is when they are erroneously compared to Long Term LEP/ELLs and consequently are not provided targeted instructional interventions to meet their needs.

SIFEs VS. LONG TERM LEP/ELLs

Sometimes SIFEs and Long Term LEP/ELLs are mistakenly viewed as having similar socio-academic needs and are provided the same interventions. Although both groups are LEP/ELLs, empirical evidence indicates that they present distinctly different educational profiles. Long Term LEP/ELLs have been exposed to an English language school system for six years or more. They perform academically below their expected grade level and require different instructional interventions. These interventions usually involve recontextualizing information previously presented, but not effectively learned. By comparison, SIFEs have had limited or no exposure to both their native and English language school systems. Thus, they have not had an opportunity to develop the socio-cultural and academic/linguistic proficiencies necessary for successful learning and have significant gaps in their academic background knowledge.

Since SIFEs have different educational backgrounds and socio-academic needs from Long Term LEP/ELLs, the two groups should not be merged for instructional purposes.

The following chart indicates some of the differences between Long Term LEP/ELLs and SIFEs.

LEP/ELL/SIFEs	Long Term LEP/ELLs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recently enrolled in a US school system (1-2 years) • Never or minimally exposed to formal schooling • Have little or no oral proficiency in English • Not accustomed to school norms, educational tools and behaviors in a school setting • May not have school records • Unfamiliar with the local culture and environment • Have very limited or no decoding, encoding, or reading comprehension skills in their native language and English • Below grade level due to lack of schooling in their native country • Instructional interventions introduce material for the first time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolled 6 or more years in a US school system • Exposed to the local curriculum in varying degrees • Have oral proficiency in English • Accustomed to school norms, educational tools and behaviors in a school setting • Have school records • Familiar with the local culture and environment • Have a range of decoding, encoding, and comprehension skills in their native language and English • Below grade level due to inconsistent instruction, ineffective study or learning skills, long term absence, etc. in a US school • Instructional interventions reintroduce material in new ways

Additionally, SIFEs manifest substantive needs and characteristics which differentiate them from special education students.

SIFE_s AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

Regulations of the Commissioner of Education Part 200.4 (c) (2) (i) (ii) (iii), p. 47

(c) Eligibility Determinations

(2) A student shall not be determined eligible for special education if the determinant factor is:

- (i) lack of appropriate instruction in reading, including explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency (including oral reading skills) and reading comprehension strategies;
- (ii) lack of appropriate instruction in math; or
- (iii) limited English proficiency.

Recent research indicates that there exists no higher incidence of special education needs among SIFE_s than is true for any other student population (Zehr, 2009). Consequently, SIFE_s must not be assigned automatically to special education classes nor viewed as inevitably needing such services. Unlike students with empirically diagnosed disabilities, their academic status, relative to expected grade level proficiencies, derives from their lack of access to formal schooling. When students have not had access to the benefits of formal education or sustained schooling opportunities, their lack of socio-academic progress should not be equated with impairment or disability. Nevertheless, this finding should not prevent a SIFE from being referred for a special education evaluation if there is clear, objective, documented evidence of a disability. For example, if SIFE_s exhibit emotional or behavioral problems, both the parent and student should be interviewed in the native language by a social worker to determine if there is an environmental, personal or familial situation which needs to be addressed. If an auditory, visual or other physical handicapping condition exists, which impedes the progress of SIFE_s, support services should be provided.

Before considering a SIFE for special education services the following strategies should be implemented. SIFE_s should be afforded a meaningful period of time to learn from intensive literacy - and numeracy-based instruction across the curriculum. They should have a fair and reasonable opportunity to internalize the benefits of schooling and adapt to their new culture. Moreover, any evaluation of a SIFE's academic progress should be based upon an assessment in the native language and English. The native language is the means by which SIFE_s interpret, understand and retrieve their experiences. Thus, assessments in the native language can yield useful, actionable information about the student's background knowledge. If, after a meaningful period of time, despite, deliberative and consistent interventions, a SIFE does not make reasonable progress, then Response to Intervention (RTI) protocols should be implemented.

SIFE_s may experience culture shock, agitation, anxiety, feelings of dislocation and confusion which are a consequence of being unfamiliar with the values, norms and conventions of their new setting. This emotional turmoil may impact their academic performance. Therefore, every effort should be made to provide support mechanisms in the school, such as instruction in the native language; regular access to bilingual guidance counselors and social workers; supplementary academic intervention programs; and, structured experiences, which promote social and emotional learning.

SIFE IDENTIFICATION

Regulations of the Commissioner of Education Part 154.1

The purpose of this Part is to establish standards for school districts having pupils with limited English proficiency to assure that such pupils are provided opportunities to achieve the same educational goals and standards as the general student population. In accordance with the provisions of this Part, each school district shall provide pupils with limited English proficiency equal access to all school programs and services offered by the district commensurate with their ages and grade level, including access to programs required for graduation.

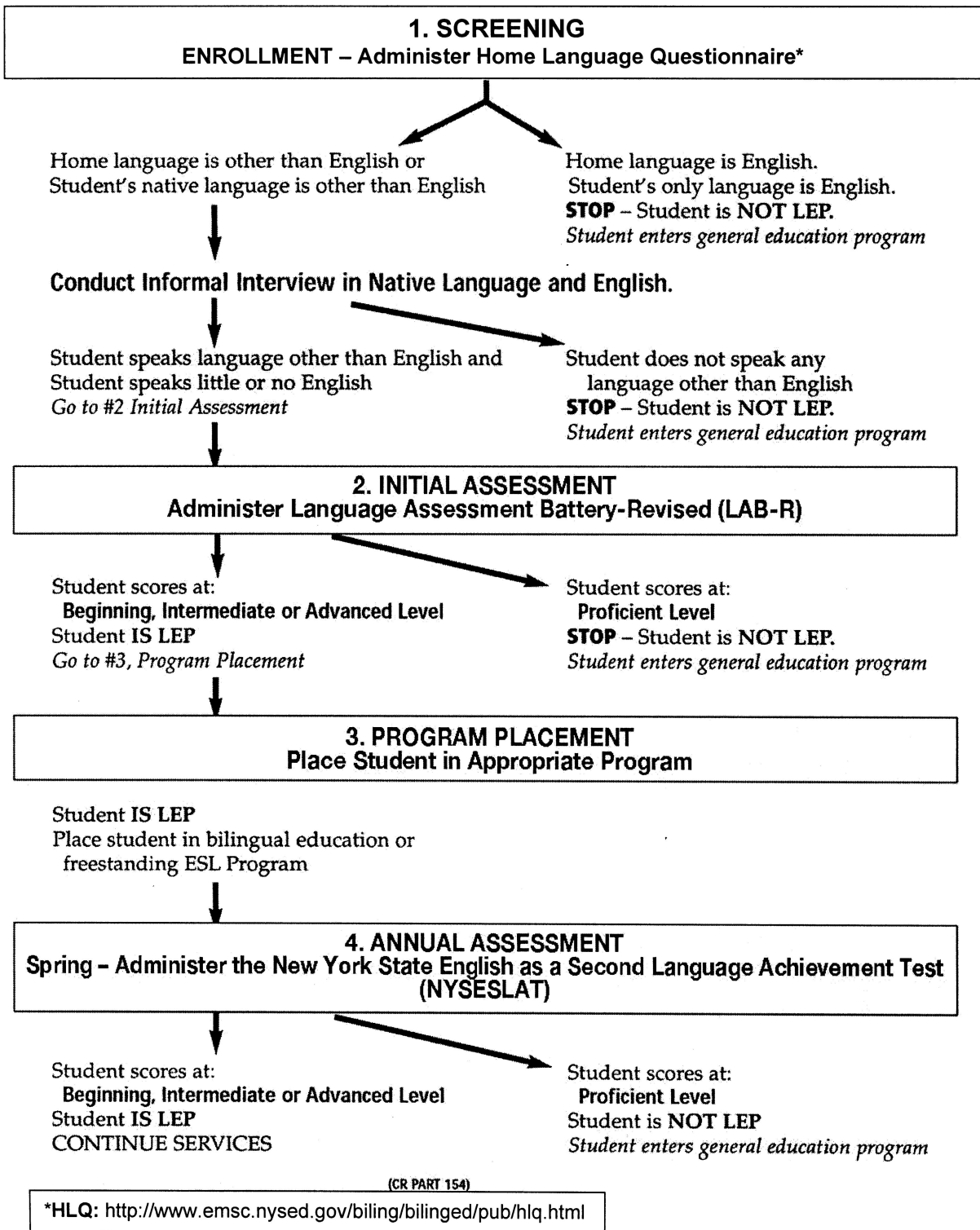
CR Part 154 Guidelines apply to the identification of all LEP/ELLs. These guidelines provide for access and equity relevant to their enrollment in school and provision for appropriate and meaningful educational opportunities. Guiding principles relevant to identifying SIFEs follow.

- Regardless of their age at entry, SIFEs should be identified in a timely manner.
- Routine collection and disaggregation of data should include such variables as age upon arrival, mobility, years of schooling at time of entry into an English language school system, and the type and scope of content learned in both their native country and in the United States, among other variables.
- Careful documentation of the identification process is essential.
- The earliest possible interventions facilitate successful outcomes.

It is strongly recommended that districts identify/place SIFEs by:

- Forming a cross-disciplinary team of educators who coordinate their skills to plan a comprehensive approach. This team should consist of ESL/bilingual education coordinators and teachers, guidance counselors, social workers and other educators who will be serving this population. They should be sensitive to the socio-cultural and linguistic needs of SIFEs or have familiarity with assisting linguistically and culturally diverse students, and experience in deploying strategies to ‘close the gap’ in their education.
- Ensuring that the cross-disciplinary team responsible for identifying SIFEs follow all NYSED prescribed sequential steps pursuant to CR Part 154, which include use of the Home Language Identification Questionnaire (HLQ), Oral Interview Questions in the native language and English, and the administration of the Language Assessment Battery – Revised (LAB-R).
- Administering locally and/or commercially developed diagnostics to identify their content area instructional needs if it appears that schooling has been delayed or not experienced.
- Placing SIFEs, in a timely manner, in an appropriate instructional program after they are accurately identified.

New York State – LEP Identification Process



PLACEMENT FOR INSTRUCTION

In order for SIFEs to be accurately identified and receive appropriate instructional services, it is necessary for educators to acquire baseline information about the nature and scope of their background knowledge, numeracy and literacy skills.

The placement of SIFEs should be based upon documented information collected during the identification process. Upon identification, the cross disciplinary team should facilitate, in a timely manner, the placement of SIFEs in mandatory standards-based ESL and content area classrooms. In addition, bilingual education instructional models, pursuant to CR Part 154, should be implemented.

In order to determine the literacy and numeracy skills of SIFEs, it is necessary to use diagnostic tests, in the native language and English, for mathematics, reading and writing. These tests can be developed through the collaborative efforts of bilingual, ESL and mainstream teachers. The mathematics diagnostic should reflect a graduated range of competencies, beginning with basic skills such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. The literacy diagnostic should also have tiered levels of difficulty in reading and offer options for oral and written responses in both the native language and English.

The assessment results, when coordinated with other information, derived during the intake process, can assist in clarifying the needs of students. Findings from the diagnostics can serve as a guide for appropriate placement and the instructional design process. Some SIFE programs develop their own diagnostic assessments through the collaborative efforts of bilingual, ESL and mainstream teachers. Other programs use commercially developed diagnostics. The following is a list of those tests, which is not exhaustive. Not all tests were reviewed by preparers of this document, but were recommended by educators. Decisions on diagnostic test selection should be made by taking into account such factors as curriculum expectations, the linguistic and developmental profile of students currently enrolled, the content and nature of instructional sequences, and students' prior educational experiences, among other variables.

Tests of Literacy and Numeracy

- **The Academic Language and Literacy Diagnostic (ALLD)** is a cumulative assessment of literacy and math skills, comprising items from grade levels one through eleven. The ALLD is currently available in Spanish and English. Each language version consists of two booklets: a Pre-Literacy booklet and a Literacy and Math booklet. The Pre-Literacy booklet consists of three sections: Sounds and Letters, Word Reading and Sentence Reading. The Literacy and Math booklet consists of five sections: Word Study Skills, Reading Vocabulary, Reading Comprehension, Language, and Math. The ALLD has an online evaluation component which provides individual scores. The ALLD is now being used in 200 New York City middle and high schools to identify the skills of SIFE.
<http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/ELL/KeyDocuments/Academic+Language+and+Literacy+Diagnostic.htm>
- **Bader Reading and Language Inventory** (Pearson) is a diagnostic battery of tests that provides procedures for individual, in-depth assessment in seven areas: English as a Second Language, Emergent Reading, Word Identification and Phonics, Comprehension, Spelling, Writing, Oral Processing.
<http://www.allynbaconmerrill.com>

- **Brigance Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills II** (Curriculum Associates) is available in Spanish and English, and is used to identify student strengths and weaknesses. Subtests include: Writing and Alphabetizing, Oral Reading, Functional Reading Comprehension, Listening, Speech, Word Analysis, Numbers and Computation.
<http://www.curriculumassociates.com/products/BriganceOverview.asp>
- **The Logramos** (Riverside) is a Spanish academic achievement test given in the areas of math, language, and reading. Spanish-dominant students may be given the test to determine their native language proficiency and to guide their instruction.
<http://www.riverpub.com/products/logramos/index.html>

Tests of Literacy

- **English-Español Reading Inventory for the Classroom** (Pearson) is an informal reading inventory in Spanish and English that combines both traditional and holistic methods to determine student's reading level. <http://www.allynbaconmerrill.com>
- **Informal Assessment Literacy Scales**, published as a component of the Learning Record Assessment System (Barr and Syverson, 1998), are samples of informal assessments for reading and writing in English and in the native language for grades K-12. These reading and writing scales describe the stages students typically go through as they become literate across three grade spans: K-3, 4-8, 9-12.
<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/biling/resource/CH09APP.PDF>
- **Language Assessment Scales-Oral (LAS-O)** (CTB/MacMillan/McGraw-Hill) measures speaking and listening skills in either English or Spanish for placement in, and exit from, bilingual/ESL programs. LAS-O assesses four primary language subsystems: phonemic, lexical, syntactical, and pragmatic. <http://www.ctb.com>
- **Rigby ELL Assessment Kit for K-6 Classrooms** (Rigby) is designed to be used four times during the school year. It assesses the progress of ELLs in listening, speaking, reading and writing. It comes with a teacher's manual and student assessment books. http://rigby.hmhco.com/en/ELL_home.htm
- **Woodcock-Muñoz Language Survey-Revised (WMLS-R)** (Riverside) measures reading, writing, listening and comprehension and establishes language proficiency levels in English or Spanish. It provides information on a student's cognitive and academic language proficiency and consists of seven testing categories.
<http://www.riverpub.com/products/wmls/index.html>
- **The Word Meaning Test (WMT)** is an oral test of expressive vocabulary on a website for use. http://www.nifl.gov/readingprofiles/WMT_All_Docs.pdf

Tests of Numeracy

- **FAST Math Entry Assessment Mathematics Evaluation (EAME)** was developed by Fairfax County Public Schools in 2001. The FAST Math program includes the EAME. Volumes I, II and III provide a curriculum for newly arrived limited English proficient (LEP) students in grades 4-12 who are two or more years below grade level in mathematics. The entire program can be downloaded for free at <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/faqs/view/13>

PARENT INTERVIEW

Before placing SIFEs in an appropriate instructional program, staff should obtain comprehensive information on their former schooling, interests and family background. A parent interview includes gathering information on students' educational background, family and social history. To derive accurate information, the interview instrument should be provided in the native language and administered as soon as possible to facilitate educational planning for SIFEs.

Findings from this interview provide insight into the socio-cultural backgrounds of SIFEs, enhance understanding of their educational needs and ensure a more individualized identification and placement. When designing or selecting questions, preserving the privacy and respecting the culture of caregivers is essential.

The parent interview should be conducted under the direction of a coordinator of Bilingual/ESL programs, and by an appropriately qualified professional such as a Bilingual/ESL teacher, bilingual social worker or guidance counselor. The following sample interview questions for parents and students can be useful in identifying the needs of these students and their families. The cross-disciplinary team may want to create additional interview questions.

Sample Interview Questions

Date _____

Student's Name _____

Parent or Guardian's Name _____

Interviewer's Name _____

Interviewer's Title _____

School Background

- What is your son/daughter's name?
- How old is he/she?
- In what country(ies) did your child live?
- Did your son/daughter attend school in another country?
- Did your child attend any other school(s) here in the US before this school? If so, where? When?
- Did your son/daughter attend school regularly?
- If he/she did not attend school, what was the reason?
- Do you have any school records which will help us to understand your child's educational needs, interests and subjects that were studied?
- What subjects did he/she take and how did he/she do in those classes?
- What were his/her favorite classes?
- What grade did your son/daughter complete?
- What languages does your child speak? What language(s) does your child read and/or write?
- Did your child ever work outside the home in your country? What kinds of jobs did he/she have?
- Does your child have any medical problems that you want to bring to the school's attention? If so, what are they?

Family Background

- When did you come to the United States? To what state?
- What languages are spoken in your household?
- Does your child have brothers or sisters? How many? Are they of school age?
- Do you have any friends who are English speaking?
- What work do you do?
- What are your child's favorite games, songs?
- Do you have opportunities to read with your child?
- What are your child's special interests or skills?
- Do you have an opportunity to help your son/daughter with homework?
- Other than yourself, who else cares for your child?
- Do you have any concerns for your child that you want the school to know about?
- What do you hope the school can provide for your child?
- What aspirations do you have for your child?

As information relevant to the socio-academic background of SIFE is retrieved, reviewed and analyzed, it should be integrated to form the foundation for planned, targeted educational interventions.

Personalized Learning Plan

Throughout the educational career of SIFEs, the cross-disciplinary team should develop a Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) (Clarke, 2002) which documents their age, strengths, prior schooling, and native language proficiency, as well as short and long term educational goals. These goals should include graduation timelines, GED options, and career pathways, while also noting social and emotional needs. The PLP is an essential component of the placement process, providing an overview of the students' educational history and charting their progress along a continuum of socio-academic learning goals. It should integrate input from students and parents, and an analysis of diagnostic assessments and recommendations from the cross-disciplinary team. It provides teachers, students and parents with comprehensive educational targets. The PLP should be reviewed and modified periodically by the team to reflect student progress. It also includes instructional recommendations for SIFEs when they exit the program and details procedures for ongoing monitoring. The list below includes suggestions for components of a PLP.

Social-Emotional

- Student background information
- Socio-emotional and cultural goals
- Ongoing parent outreach and follow-up
- Utilization of community-based organizations

Academic Data Analysis

- Academic and linguistic background information
- Analysis of student diagnostic results
- Longitudinal view of student academic performance and attendance patterns

Short and Long Term Goals

- Academic study skills
- Literacy and numeracy targets in the first and second language
- Benchmarks of success and instruments to measure progress
- Instructional strategies, activities and resources
- Course sequences, including scheduling and time distribution, grouping practices, supplementary academic intervention programs, co-curricular activities
- Extended day/year learning options
- Exit criteria, including projected amount of time in program

Strategies and Instructional Supports

- Teaching in the native language and English
- Team teaching and other classroom support, such as bilingual teaching assistant
- Small class size, tutoring
- Use growth models and test accommodations
- Explicit instruction and balanced literacy models
- Grouping and cooperative learning strategies
- Block scheduling, looping
- Technology to promote multimodal/multi-sensorial learning

Vocational Opportunities

- Student career interests and aptitudes
- Recommended career-related exploration and prevocational training, including GED options
- Student work-related products

School-Family Connection

- Parent training to facilitate integration into the community and promote the home/school connection
- Family literacy and numeracy training
- Activities to connect students to peer and adult mentors
- Interventions and outreach to families by guidance staff/social workers, career counselors

Transitional Planning

- Transitional services upon exiting the program
- Follow-up plan to monitor student progress

EFFECTIVE PROGRAMMING

Required Units of Study

Public school districts are required to provide the amount of English language instruction specified in CR Part 154.2 (d) and (e). As specified in Action Step 1, the English language arts standards are the basis for the Native Language Arts, English as a Second Language and English Language Arts curricula. The chart that follows identifies the required units of study for each of these disciplines.

NOTE: A unit of study is equivalent to 180 minutes per week.

English Language Requirements						
English Proficiency Level	GRADES K-8			GRADES 9-12		
	Number of Units			Number of Units		
	ESL	NLA*	ELA	ESL	NLA*	ELA
Beginning	2	1	-	3	1	-
Intermediate	2	1	-	2	1	-
Advanced	1	1	1	1	1	1

* If in a bilingual program.

A detailed chart describing the New York State Language Allocation Policy (LAP) - CR Part 154 for Bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) for Elementary, Middle and High School can be found at: <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/biling/>

Instructional programs should include intensive, consistent, age appropriate, literacy based instruction. It is important to note that in the middle and high schools, the challenges are greater, as the coursework becomes more cognitively demanding and SIFEs have less time to catch up to their peers. Nevertheless, SIFEs should be given every opportunity to earn credits toward graduation. The following charts provide a framework for programmatic options which should be made available to SIFEs.

New York State Education Department Standards-Based Programs for SIFEs Aligned with Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs)	
Mode of Implementation (Grades 2-5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitional SIFE/bilingual education program • Freestanding SIFE/ESL program (self-contained SIFE/ESL classroom or pull-out block) • Collaborative and/or co-teaching models • ESL teacher push-in model alone is not sufficient for SIFEs
Mode of Implementation (Grades 6-12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departmentalized transitional SIFE/bilingual education classes or program (language and content courses designed to enable students to acquire literacy skills and earn credits toward graduation) • Self-contained SIFE/ESL class with departmentalized content support • Collaborative and/or co-teaching models • ESL teacher push-in model alone is not sufficient for SIFEs
Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contingent upon student progress, based upon periodic review of the PLP by the cross-disciplinary team, including the ESL/bilingual education coordinator and ESL or bilingual teachers
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NYSED certified TESOL teacher • NYSED certified content area teacher with bilingual education extension • Bilingual teaching assistant
Support Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going support from bilingual social workers, guidance counselors, psychologists, and community-based service providers for students and families
Student Cohort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age-appropriate grouping by similar linguistic/academic needs • Small class sizes
Language(s) of Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native language used as a means to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access prior knowledge ▪ Provide instruction in the content areas ▪ Validate student’s language and culture ▪ Transfer skills to the learning of English • ESL strategies used as a means to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Model, scaffold, differentiate instruction for acquiring English ▪ Support content area instruction ▪ Develop awareness of the community and American culture
Instructional Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CR Part 154 instructional time at a minimum • Extended day, Saturday, before and after-school homework centers, tutorials, summer programs, or other supplementary academic interventions
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interdisciplinary, thematic, sheltered approaches to instruction • Strategies which promote transfer of native language skills to English • Explicit/guided models of instruction
Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained and focused training on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identifying educational needs of SIFEs ▪ Using data to inform instruction ▪ Explicit instruction ▪ Balanced literacy ▪ Teacher collaboration and co-teaching models

**Grades 2-12: High-Quality Instruction for SIFEs
Aligned with Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs)**

Basic Skills

Self-Managing

- Make progress in social and emotional learning (rules and behaviors in a classroom setting, adjusting to school, working with others)
- Develop intercultural awareness and familiarity with the community
- Learn good health, hygiene and nutrition practices

Emergent Literacy

- Build background knowledge
- Hold a pencil
- Use multiple modalities for self-expression, including Art and Music
- Learn the alphabet and environmental print
- Understand conventions of print
- Use a notebook
- Build tiered vocabulary
- Engage in pre-writing (scribbling), pretend and pre-phonetic writing
- Learn to listen, speak, read, write for social and academic purposes
- Make observations, draw conclusions
- Learn study and test-taking skills

Mathematics Skills

- Learn the language and purpose of mathematics
- Learn mathematical functions and operations
- Understand mathematical concepts
- Use mathematical tools

Social Studies and Science Skills

- Understand the role of science in their lives
- Learn about the community in which they live and attend school
- Listen and read for specific information
- Make accurate observations
- Answer questions orally and participate in discussions
- Find information in charts, graphs, maps
- Understand relationships and draw conclusions
- Understand key concepts
- Use specialized vocabulary
- Write answers to questions

Native Language Arts Skills

- Build upon oral literacy
- Access and use background knowledge
- Expand and appreciate cultural knowledge
- Learn to listen, speak, read, write for social and academic purposes
- Use native language literacy skills as a foundation to acquire English

STAFF SELECTION

Throughout the process of identification, placement, instruction and assessment, it is necessary to have appropriately trained and qualified staff. Schools providing programs for SIFEs should follow staffing requirements, aligned with CR Part 154 Guidelines. Staff that provides instruction to SIFEs should have appropriate NYSED Certification in one or more of the following areas:

- NYSED certified TESOL teacher
- NYSED certified content area teacher with bilingual education extension

In creating a targeted instructional program for SIFEs, it is essential to identify teachers who possess the skills, motivation and commitment to teaching these students. As SIFEs require a holistic educational approach, their teachers should be flexible, have versatile strategies and broad general background knowledge. Schools should create advisory committees to interview prospective SIFE teachers to determine their preparedness and need for ongoing professional development. This committee should be composed of the ESL/bilingual education coordinator, bilingual guidance staff, and ESL, native language and content area teachers. It is strongly recommended that staff chosen to educate SIFEs be:

- Sensitive to their needs.
- Knowledgeable about their backgrounds.
- Trained in the requisite skills.
- Proficient in the student's native language and English.
- Able to implement an additive, enriched model of instruction.
- Experienced in teaching early literacy and numeracy skills in the native language and English.
- Willing to collaborate with other service providers.
- Committed to participate in sustained staff development.

Appropriately trained and dedicated staff can capitalize upon one of the key assets that SIFEs possess - a range of life experiences mediated by the native language.

NATIVE LANGUAGE

SIFEs are fluent in their native language, although they may not possess a versatile and expansive vocabulary due to their limited access to schooling. The native language is the medium through which SIFEs self-identify, interpret their environment and forge interpersonal connections. It is the vehicle by which they acquire and retrieve their knowledge and the most accurate means to assess what they have learned. It is important to access this knowledge and broaden it. It is also the most effective way to introduce the content areas early in their education. First language oral fluency impacts positively upon second language acquisition.

The development of academic skills in English depends not just upon exposure to English, but equally on the knowledge and concepts children have in their heads that help them make sense of English. Thus, instruction that builds up students' reading and writing in the native language is creating a conceptual foundation upon which academic skills in English can be built (Cummins, 1979).

Consequently, the development of native language skills facilitates the acquisition of English and provides an efficient medium through which to deliver content. Academic content area instruction should begin expeditiously, using English and/or the native language. Focusing upon both content area knowledge and language learning offers a meaningful context and rich dynamic for literacy development. Delaying introduction of content area instruction or presenting it in an abbreviated form can adversely affect students' acquisition of foundational skills and knowledge. Thus, SIFE transitional bilingual/ESL programs should be created to capitalize upon the importance of the native language in developing general literacy skills.

Having interrupted or no formal schooling, SIFEs have limited understanding of classroom protocols and behaviors. Consequently, they benefit from enriched academic and language experiences, and from opportunities to acquire social and emotional skills.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Academic learning occurs best in environments which are socially and emotionally supportive. SIFEs may have come from war-torn countries and/or experienced economic disadvantage with attendant, educational and social barriers. Upon arriving in the United States, they face a different culture whose expectations, options and guideposts are unfamiliar. They benefit from experiences which assist them in developing heightened self-awareness, socio-cultural competencies, interpersonal skills and goal setting/decision making strategies. These socio-emotional learning experiences, which are indispensable for the effective education of all students, should be embedded in core subject areas and in structured guidance sessions provided by bilingual guidance counselors or social workers. Providing these opportunities assists students to become invested in their own progress towards personal and academic goals.

Social and emotional competence is the ability to understand, manage, and express the social and emotional aspects of one's life in ways that enable the successful management of tasks such as learning, forming relationships, solving everyday problems, and adapting to the complex demands of growth and development (Elias et al., 1997).

The Benefits of Social and Emotional Learning

Children and youth with well-developed social and emotional learning skills have:

- Enhanced academic motivation, commitment to learning and a sense of school as a caring place.
- Improved academic performance, skills and grades in math, language arts, and social studies, better problem-solving and planning skills, and subject mastery. (Durlak & Weissberg, 2005; Elias et al., 1997; NYSED, 2010)

The following are key skills in social and emotional learning, which should be addressed in planning instruction for SIFEs (Payton et al., 2008).

Self-Awareness

- Identifying one's feelings and their causation

Self-Regulation

- Verbalizing and coping with anxiety, stress, anger, culture shock

Self-Monitoring and Performance

- On task behaviors
- Setting short-term and long-term goals
- Modifying behavior based on feedback
- Working toward optimal performance in school

Empathy and Perspective Taking

- Becoming a good listener
- Understanding other perspectives, feelings

Social Skills

- Harmonizing diverse viewpoints
- Exercising assertiveness, persuasion and leadership in socially acceptable ways
- Working collaboratively
- Exercising decision making and problem solving skills

SURVIVAL SKILLS

SIFEs may not have assimilated the behavioral and sociolinguistic skills to interact successfully with peers and adults in an academic setting. It is thus important that they learn survival skills. SIFEs knowledge of school behavioral and social norms, and the appropriate language used with peers and teachers in a school setting is influenced by the amount of time they have been in an instructional setting. It is important for staff to assess the range of survival skills that students possess. Each of the skills, listed below, are readily acquired by SIFEs if they are consistently modeled (Falchetta et. al., 2001).

TARGET SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS	
Interpersonal/Social	Classroom
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accepting criticism• Agreeing/disagreeing• Apologizing• Asking for assistance• Collaborating• Expressing feelings• Getting someone's attention• Greeting others• Interpreting non-verbal cues• Maintaining health/hygiene• Making friends• Making requests• Passing in hallways• Reporting a problem• Requesting clarification• Resolving conflict• Showing empathy• Taking turns	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adjusting to a school setting• Completing homework• Following directions• Keeping a notebook• Reading school/street signs and other environmental print• Recognizing numbers• Recognizing/writing date of birth, address, telephone number• Spelling/writing one's name• Telling time• Understanding classroom routines• Using a calculator• Using a calendar• Using a map• Using a pencil/pen• Using a ruler

In order for SIFEs to develop the adaptive skills necessary for integration into the larger community they should have an awareness of the cultural norms, values, attitudes, beliefs and customs which shape their everyday life. Acquiring these skills is an important aspect of social and emotional learning and should be included in the PLP.

CULTURAL AWARENESS

Culture is a broad concept that embraces all aspects of human life. It may be defined as what a society does and thinks (Damen, 1987). Like language learning, culture is both acquired and can be taught. Language is the verbal expression of culture. To become an effective language learner or communicator within a culture one should understand the broader social context: the symbols, belief systems, values, customs and behaviors which shape the language and are influenced by it.

As SIFEs have had limited or no schooling, they should develop cultural proficiencies necessary to function effectively as participants in a school community and to navigate a new culture. It is essential that cultural learning be integrated into language and content area instruction. Furthermore, schools should acknowledge and access the prior cultural knowledge of SIFEs in order to create a supportive learning environment in which students feel that their experiences are validated and that they can meaningfully contribute. A welcoming, secure, comfortable learning atmosphere should be evident and sustained by the school.

According to the research literature, newly arrived students experience different stages of cultural adaptation. In some cases, they may have culture shock, which refers to the anxiety and feelings of surprise, disorientation, uncertainty and confusion experienced when they are within a different and unknown cultural or social environment (Barker, 1980). Students observe that there are significant differences between the old and new culture. They may long for food the way it was prepared in their native country, find the pace of life here too fast, and the customs unfamiliar and challenging. This phase is often marked by changeable moods, precipitated by a variety of factors which may not be apparent to school staff.

These feelings can negatively impact school performance and adjustment. Incorporating stress management/coping strategies to address students' feelings of uncertainty will support them during this difficult transition. Thematic instruction that addresses daily activities such as shopping, going to a doctor, and using local transportation, among other experiences, can be of value in easing transition into the new society. SIFEs can also benefit from guidance activities, cultural resources, and a strong home/school partnership. As situations and encounters become more predictable, students develop greater confidence in negotiating the unfamiliar. They eventually become accustomed to the new culture.

In addition to the above-mentioned interventions, schools can optimize their efforts on behalf of SIFEs by enlisting support from the home and engaging the student as part of a family unit.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

New York State CR Part 154.1(4) Guidelines specify parental involvement for ELLs as follows:

Parents or other persons in parental relation to a pupil designated as limited English proficient who is a new entrant, as defined in section 117.2 (d) of this Title, shall be provided an orientation session on the state standards, assessments, school expectations and general program requirements for the bilingual education program and the freestanding English as a second language program. Such orientation shall take place within the first semester of their child's enrollment in the school and, when needed, shall be provided in the first language of the pupil's parents or other persons in parental relationship to the pupil (NYSED, 2007).

It is essential that schools convey information to the parents of SIFEs in a timely, accurate manner in their native language. This involves crafting messages which are culturally sensitive and creating opportunities for meaningful dialogue. Information derived from the SIFE Parent Interview can provide initial baseline information about the family unit.

In addition to orientation sessions, educators, when designing parent participation workshops, should consider the impact of the following factors which affect the home/school partnership. They include:

- Differences in perception of teachers and parents relevant to the goals of schooling
- Parents' challenges of adapting to a new environment and their prior experience with schools
- The assumptions that influence educators' perceptions of parents
- The learning environment in the home influenced by the demands of daily living
- The resources that exist in the community to assist the school in maximizing parent input and active participation

By involving parents, schools promote alignment between the goals/expectations of the educational program and the home. Home/school synergy is promoted by providing parents opportunities to participate in their child's education. This includes conducting orientation sessions in the parent's native language, providing conversational English classes and encouraging familiarity with American customs. In addition, parents need to be informed about civic responsibilities and procedural skills in order to navigate the new culture. Such classes as family math, adult ESL and computer literacy programs are useful. Sessions should be available in the native language and English. Workshop topics, designed to garner the support of parents and forge home/school connections, are enumerated below. Epstein (2002) and Arias (2008) identified topics, such as:

- Addressing intergenerational/intercultural issues
- Becoming acquainted with the community and its resources
- Orientation to schooling in the US (school rules, regulations, expectations, learning standards, graduation requirements, nature and content of coursework and the function of homework)
- Parent leadership training
- Parental rights and responsibilities

- Peer outreach, parent volunteer programs
- Promoting school readiness, creating beneficial home learning environments

Building this knowledge base is particularly important for the parents of SIFEs, who may have limited schooling and lack familiarity with the process and experiences associated with formal education. Parents can become valuable allies and help to promote a shared vision of success with the school if they are effectively and respectfully engaged.

Educators and parents should be proactive and plan for the eventual exit of students from the SIFE program as they acquire targeted academic proficiencies.

SIFE PROGRAM EXIT CRITERIA

A cross-disciplinary team including the ESL/bilingual education coordinator, guidance counselor, bilingual and ESL teachers, social worker, and other professionals should, throughout the school year:

- Use assessment data and observations to monitor student progress.
- Evaluate the impact of instruction and modify PLP accordingly.
- Create flexible timelines that allow the student to exit the SIFE program when academically ready.
- Prepare a plan for monitoring student progress after exiting the SIFE program.

Based upon analysis of student portfolios, inventory checklists and local assessments, teachers should make recommendations relevant to exiting the student at an appropriate time. Using information in the PLP, the cross-disciplinary team should determine which skills students need to acquire in order to transition out of the SIFE program.

SIFEs are a diverse group of students, with differing levels of language proficiency, literacy, numeracy, and content area acquisition. Thus, decisions should be made on an individual basis which objectively, accurately and fairly take into account the student's readiness and progress. Social/emotional, academic and linguistic factors should be considered, among other variables. If a student has made satisfactory progress and is ready to transition to another program, his/her exit from the SIFE program should be recommended and occur in a timely manner.

The team should develop a transitional plan for each student when he/she is ready to exit a SIFE program. The plan includes transition to a CR Part 154, standards-based bilingual or ESL program. Student progress should be followed for several years upon exit from a SIFE program. For older students, a career and technical education (CTE), general education diploma (GED) or alternative educational program are additional options.

SECTION II: WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

Research and evidence on effective practices for educating SIFEs is limited. They are a subgroup of LEP/ELLs and progress through the same language acquisition and developmental stages. A goal of this document is to find where the needs of LEP/ELLs and SIFEs converge and identify best practices advocated in the literature.

As this population is heterogeneous, it requires differentiated instructional approaches. Therefore, it is incumbent upon educators to develop a language and educational profile of these students in their schools as a reference point for making thoughtful, evidence-based decisions about the most effective strategies to use.

Research identifies component literacy skills as the core elements in planning instruction for all LEP/ELLs. The literacy skills described in this section can be used to support academic growth and create effective learning environments for SIFEs.

Principles of Emergent Literacy Instruction

The following initial literacy principles are derived from research and should serve as the foundation for instruction for SIFEs across the curriculum (Cloud, 2009).

- 1) Literacy activities should be meaningful, interactive, useful and interesting, allowing SIFEs to stay motivated and build the skills they need.
- 2) Literacy instruction should build and expand on SIFEs oral language skills and link to their background knowledge.
- 3) Reading and writing skills should be taught directly and modeled for students.
- 4) The component skills of literacy (e.g., sound-symbol correspondence; letter formation/handwriting) should be taught systematically, but in an integrated fashion.
- 5) Reading and writing instruction should be reciprocally related, with each facilitating the other.
- 6) SIFEs should have opportunities for extended practice to ensure that they close the gaps in their education.
- 7) Literacy acquired at school should connect to and build on experiences encountered in the home and community.

Research studies indicate that native language literacy ability is one of the greatest predictors of academic performance in school for English language learners (Ford, 2005; Thomas & Collier, 1997). Teaching students to read in their native language promotes higher levels of reading achievement in English (Goldenberg, 2008). The research literature further mentions that first and second language ability appears to contribute to the development of a common bilingual reservoir. This common underlying proficiency supports LEP/ELLs in drawing upon their knowledge of the first language in the service of developing literacy in the second (Riches and Genesee, 2006).

Direct Instruction: Research literature has a variety of views relevant to best practices for LEP/ELLs in their literacy development. *The National Reading Panel* (2000) identified the following skills as critical components in learning to read English as a first language: phonemic awareness, decoding/encoding abilities, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. *The Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language Minority Children and Youth*

(2006) found similar results for LEP/ELLs. However, Cloud, Genesee, and Hamayan have stated that comprehension be given priority (2009). One research study found that the most effective strategies for teaching reading to LEP/ELLs include a combination of direct instruction of specific reading strategies within interactive lessons (Riches and Genesee, 2006).

Research-Based Recommendations for Serving Adolescent Newcomers from the Center on Instruction (2006), describes six specific elements of effective instruction for adolescent newcomers. These elements are:

- 1) Explicit instruction in word-reading skills
- 2) Content-based literacy approach
- 3) Instruction in academic language
- 4) Reading comprehension instruction
- 5) Intensive instruction in writing for academic purposes
- 6) Effective assessment system to inform instruction

Oral Language: *The National Literacy Panel on Language Minority Children and Youth* (August and Shanahan, 2006) states that instruction in the key components of reading: phonemic awareness, decoding/encoding abilities, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension is necessary, but not sufficient, for teaching SIFE's to read and write proficiently in English. Oral proficiency in English is critical as well, but student performance suggests that it is often overlooked in instruction. Well-developed oral proficiency in English is associated with English reading comprehension and writing skills for these students. It is not enough to teach these students reading skills alone. Extensive oral English development should be incorporated into successful literacy instruction.

Content Areas: Deshler (2006) advocates that subject matter teachers of LEP/ELLs should select and present critical content information that is potentially difficult to learn in a way that is understandable and memorable to all students in an academically diverse class regardless of literacy levels or experiential background. Teachers of SIFE's can ensure learning by:

- Actively engaging students in the learning process
- Distinguishing important from incidental information
- Explicitly discussing relationships among pieces of information
- Structuring or organizing information to provide clarity
- Transforming abstract content into concrete forms
- Tying new information to prior knowledge

The following is excerpted and adapted from *Effective programs for English Language Learners (ELL) with Interrupted Formal Education* (2010) promulgated by the Indiana Department of Education Office of English Language Learning & Migrant Education.

Literacy Acquisition: Word-level skills, such as decoding, word recognition and spelling, are often taught well enough to allow language-minority students to attain levels of performance close to those of native English speakers. However, this is not the case for text-level skills, reading comprehension and writing. Language-minority students struggle to approach the same levels of proficiency in text-level skills achieved by native English speakers. Specifically, English vocabulary knowledge, the ability to provide definitions of words, sentence/phrase structure skills, listening comprehension and metalinguistic aspects of language are linked to English reading and writing proficiency. These findings help explain why many language-minority students can keep pace with their native English-speaking peers when the

instructional focus is on word-level skills, but lag behind when the instructional focus turns to reading comprehension and writing.

Reading Comprehension: Additionally, students with interrupted formal schooling are more likely than native English speakers to lack the background knowledge necessary for understanding texts. Teachers need to adapt strategies that will consistently build background knowledge for ELLs. Since an ESL student's knowledge of vocabulary is only a fraction of what it is for native speakers of English, the failure to understand even a few words of a text can have negative effects on comprehension. The integration of intensive oral language development with reading instruction is highly recommended for SIFEs at all levels of language proficiency to help bridge this gap.

Comprehension strategies, such as reader-generated questions, summarizing, and monitoring comprehension need to be explicitly taught to students with interrupted formal education. However, teaching these strategies is not enough. Students should practice them with texts that are accessible at their level of language proficiency. If students don't experience successful application of comprehension strategies, they won't try to use them with other texts. Interactive activities, properly scaffolded, should be planned around reading and interpreting texts. Sharing ideas, comparing perspectives, and coming to agreement (or agreeing to disagree) are strategies that students use to make the language of the text meaningful and progress to higher levels of language proficiency and reading comprehension.

Vocabulary: Since ELLs do not possess the depth and breadth of word skills and vocabulary knowledge as their native English speaking peers, they need multiple exposures to new vocabulary in order to retain it. A major instructional focus for SIFEs should be vocabulary acquisition - explaining, demonstrating, drawing, repeating, rephrasing, reading, writing, and using words in varied contexts with different nuanced meanings. The meanings of words are acquired through multiple opportunities to hear, say, read, and write the words in slightly different meaningful contexts. Teachers will have to create these contexts in the classroom, since incidental learning of vocabulary cannot be relied on for SIFEs. Collaboration between the mainstream and ESL instructional programs serves to deepen vocabulary development because the word learning experiences of students become related and consistent.

In *Literacy: Helping Children Construct Meaning* (1997), Cooper writes that vocabulary development is facilitated when the curriculum is taught thematically. Thematic units should build upon LEP/ELLs prior knowledge and interests, supporting them to engage content in interactive and collaborative ways. Thematic units are interconnected webs of common concepts, themes and vocabulary across the content areas. Use of thematic units provides LEP/ELLs with consistent, sustained reinforcement. Repetition of vocabulary in diverse contexts and situations maximizes retention and learning.

Fluency: Phonics and phonemic skills, though important for newcomers, do not facilitate reading comprehension if students' oral language proficiency is not developed to the level of the texts they are expected to read. Reading instruction should be combined with intensive development of the oral language needed to understand the text. The most effective reading programs for SIFEs combines systematic phonics instruction with a print-rich environment that provides exposure to appealing reading materials in varied genres.

Contextualized Phonics: Contextualized phonics instruction can be very effective in helping newcomer LEP/ELLs, even those at fairly low levels of language proficiency, to learn to

decode words. Most SIFEs will need additional time and practice to hear, learn and produce the sounds of English; the meanings of the words used in phonics instruction; the multiple combinations of letters that make the same sound; and, the sight words they need. Additional time for using phonics contextually should be built into reading programs for SIFEs.

The reading of meaningful, natural texts combined with contextualized phonics instruction can improve reading performance. There should be an appropriate balance between contextualized phonics activities, developing an appreciation of print, and reading/writing activities geared toward comprehension. Phonics is useful to practice letters and word patterns. It is only one step in a continuum of balanced activities which should include direct practice in using language in both oral and written form with different audiences and in varied contexts.

SECTION III: INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGIES AND RESOURCES FOR SIFE_s

Instruction for Native Language and English Literacy

The literature addresses levels of language acquisition relevant to LEP/ELLs but no validated, research-based studies were found addressing SIFE_s alone. Consequently, models and practices that have been found by educators to facilitate the instruction of LEP/ELLs, were considered for SIFE_s, with the assumption that both groups have some intersecting and shared needs.

Each suggested model has components relevant to explicit instruction, modeling and scaffolding, the use of literacy and numeracy strategies to promote comprehensible input, and accessing students' prior knowledge. The importance of learner-centered, experiential, multisensorial activities to concretize key concepts is also emphasized. Moreover, the choice of instructional models used with SIFE_s should be based on an accurate assessment of their background, skills and needs in each instructional context.

A wide range of literacy skills are manifest by SIFE_s, so it is necessary to select varied strategies from several of the models which promote differentiation of instruction. At any stage along the literacy continuum, one model may be more useful than another, but all should be concurrently vetted in determining an appropriate intervention. Ultimately, discretionary professional judgment should be made by the teacher based on an informed understanding of the student's linguistic/cognitive profile, prior learning experiences, and stages of developmental growth, aligned with the student's PLP.

Building Background Knowledge

Background knowledge that a learner possesses consists of skills, strategies, facts and concepts needed for acquiring new information (Biemans, 1996). What students already know about the content is one of the strongest indicators of how well they will learn new information; therefore, it is critical that educators begin to spend more time with focused instruction to build background knowledge (Marzano, 2004). Teaching students important background ideas for a narrative or expository text led to significantly greater performance on comprehension questions than no pre-reading background knowledge instruction (Dole, 1991).

For SIFE_s, recognizing, accessing and building background knowledge becomes an indispensable requisite for effective learning as the curriculum in US schools is organized in a spiraling fashion. SIFE_s, who have had limited or no schooling, lack sufficient academic knowledge and therefore should receive instruction which builds this background information.

Marzano (2004) emphasizes several propositions relevant to background knowledge. Background knowledge is stored in memory as "*I*" events. That is, one in which the student is directly involved: what "*I*" did; how "*I*" felt; what "*I*" did to something; where "*I*" did something; what "*I*" did for or gave to someone; what happened to me during the event; what someone else did for me; and, how "*I*" felt at the end of the event. The specific details of the experience are "translated" into generalizations that the student then has available in his/her fluid intelligence. Although the target for instruction should be content-specific information, a student personalizes the new information. Background knowledge can also be built through

vocabulary acquisition. A feedback loop of old and new ideas sustained through student/teacher interaction and practice using scaffolding is a core element in this process.

Flippo (2002) suggests techniques to promote exploration of prior knowledge during pre - and emergent literacy stages. Some of these, which have been excerpted and adapted below, include:

Free recall: The teacher asks students to tell everything they know about a chosen topic. This approach provides information within a short time interval but may be problematic for younger learners who may have problems organizing their thoughts. Asking students to draw a picture can be most helpful.

Word association: The teacher selects several key words and asks students what comes to mind when they hear each one.

Structured questions: The teacher prepares specific questions and asks them. Responses can begin as yes or no and include more extended discourse.

Recognition: The teacher prepares several statements and key terms and encourages students to select those which they recall.

Unstructured discussion: Students freely generate their own ideas about a word or topic.

Explicit Instruction

Explicit instruction is referenced in the research literature as an approach which can be useful with students who are acquiring literacy. Explicit instruction should be thematically-based and involves directing student attention toward specific learning in a contextualized, meaningful, highly structured environment. It is focused upon producing specific learning outcomes in a purposeful manner. Content is broken down into smaller, more manageable segments with extended practice to reinforce clearly predetermined objectives. It incorporates consistent, methodical explanation, modeling, scaffolding and feedback. Explicit instruction moves systematically, within a meaningful thematic context, from extensive teacher input to increased student responsibility at the conclusion of the learning cycle (Boyles, 2002).

Scaffolding

Scaffolding uses consistent, targeted guidance by modeling tasks and language, and by building background knowledge and offering ongoing feedback. Scaffolding reduces the complexity of a task and assists learners in progressing to the next stage or level. The nature, duration and intensity of scaffolds are modified as the language proficiency of the learner evolves (DeCapua, 2009). Tiered, differentiated lessons, aligned to the students' interests, age, readiness, and preferred learning styles should be provided. The following table lists ways that instruction can be scaffolded for SIFEs as teachers develop and implement their lessons.

Instructional Scaffolds		
Targeted Instruction	Lesson Delivery	Student Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate background knowledge with brainstorming and graphic organizers • Teach students how to use writing tools • Concretize difficult concepts by providing pictures and diagrams • Develop/adapt/secure high interest, predictable English and native language materials of varying age and reading levels • Move incrementally from the concrete to the abstract • Emphasize high frequency words • Explicitly teach vocabulary • Incorporate adjustable levels of challenge • Incorporate student's interests, cultural perspectives, knowledge • Model an activity before students are asked to complete one that is similar • Present familiar information in new contexts • Provide clear directions and explain the purpose of the task • Relate information to the student's real-life experiences • Teach word learning strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt lesson delivery by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Simplifying language ▪ Checking often for comprehension ▪ Pausing between sentences and thought groups ▪ Providing periodic summaries and reviews ▪ Using key words frequently • Break a task into easier steps and connect learning experiences • Highlight critical features, core facts and skills • Incorporate Total Physical Response • Introduce pen/pencil, crayons, magnetic board, letter and design stencils • Respond to student progress with encouragement • Pace the lesson according to student needs • Provide multiple examples and continuous practice • Reduce the number of concepts introduced at any one time • Teach directionality • Use environmental print extensively • Use labeling, drawing, gesturing • Use Think-Alouds and Read-Alouds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow for play writing (scribbling) • Employ multiple modes of communication and elicit frequent student response • Focus initially on the message or idea rather than on grammatical accuracy • Include extensive opportunities for practice and reinforcements • Offer flexible opportunities for demonstrating skills and knowledge • Place less emphasis on paper/pencil tests until students are ready to write • Promote guided conversation • Provide practice for sorting words and pictures to build letter and sound correspondence • Use leveled books and questioning techniques

Pre-Emergent and Emergent Literacy Instruction

The following instructional approaches are useful in constructing lessons for SIFEs across the content areas.

Total Physical Response (TPR) synchronizes both language and body movement through action responses and use of the imperative (direct commands). TPR is linked to the trace theory of memory, which holds that the more often or intensively a memory connection is traced, the stronger the memory will be. TPR can be used in conjunction with some other kinetic techniques wherein the teacher gives a variety of commands with the students then responding by “acting out” the command: “Stand up”, “Go to the door”, “Sit down”, etc. Kinetic movement of the hands and arms is incorporated in lieu of rote memorization (Asher, 1979).

The Language Experience Approach can be used with students in the pre-emergent and emergent phases of literacy as it emphasizes the importance of listening and speaking as a predicate for language development. With its emphasis on building upon the personal experiences of the student, it serves to scaffold instruction. Students are involved in planning, experiencing, responding to, and recording an experience and later, in participating in conversations to discuss it (Allen, 1976).

The Natural/Communicative Approach conceptualizes communicative competence progressing through three stages: aural comprehension, early speech production, and speech activities. All stages foster “natural” language acquisition, much as a child would learn his/her native tongue. Real language acquisition develops slowly. Speaking skills emerge later than listening skills, a phase called the silent period. The best methods acknowledge the importance of providing comprehensible input to students in low anxiety situations and not from forcing and correcting production (Krashen & Terrell, 1983).

Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) offers teachers a model for lesson planning and implementation that provides LEP/ELLs access to grade level content and language standards by making concepts comprehensible. It serves as a lesson plan framework or planning guide which delineates the necessary features of a lesson which should be addressed in designing and implementing instruction (Echevarria, 2000).

Balanced Literacy is a blend of instructional strategies. A critical component is a balanced reading approach and *explicit instruction* in:

- Alphabetic knowledge and letter-sound correspondence, blending, structural analysis
- Comprehension strategies in order to evaluate, synthesize, analyze, connect, infer, and inquire
- Contextual clues, high frequency words, spelling and vocabulary development
- Phonemic and phonological awareness

A balanced literacy approach has students read both orally and silently. Students are also read to from a variety of high-quality increasingly complex fiction and non-fiction texts, including those in the students’ first language. Beginning readers practice fluency in predictable and decodable texts with phonetically regular patterns. Students read both teacher-assigned and self-selected literature and textbooks. Formal and ongoing informal assessments allow teachers to intervene early. Balanced literacy is often implemented through the reading and writing workshop and extensive use of learning centers (Zygouris-Coe, 2001).

Teaching Mathematics to LEP/ ELLs with Interrupted Formal Education

Mathematics teachers working with all LEP/ELLs, including SIFEs, have a dual instructional task: assisting them in developing mathematical concepts and operations, and in acquiring content specific academic language. ESL and English language teachers can enhance mathematics learning by strategically integrating into their lessons some of the basic language required to communicate mathematically. Mathematics teachers can facilitate student mastery in their subject area by addressing the language challenges that SIFEs confront. Additionally, SIFEs should learn how to utilize a notebook, take notes, and manipulate conventional mathematical tools such as a calculator, ruler and compass. This effort requires the collaboration of both content and language teachers.

The following is excerpted and adapted from *Mathematics Strategies for Teaching Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students: A Supplemental Resource to the K-12 Mathematics Standards of Learning Enhanced Scope and Sequence (2004)* promulgated by the Virginia Department of Education Division of Instruction.

Conceptual Knowledge

SIFEs often do not have mathematical knowledge gained in a formal school setting. Some may have acquired functional mathematics skills in informal settings. It is important to determine the range of their prior knowledge and experience with mathematical formulations, processes and tools in order to fashion timely and relevant interventions. Moreover, students should develop a conceptual understanding of the pertinent mathematical process. Instruction can make concepts more concrete and consequently accessible by using visual and tactile media such as manipulatives. Teachers should use site-developed, curriculum sensitive assessments or those developed in other venues for this population, such as *Fast Math*, which is briefly described in the section on diagnostics.

Procedural Knowledge

Lacking schooling, SIFEs should be explicitly taught and have expansive practice to develop and use procedural skills. Many of the concepts learned in mathematics are linked to memorizing and following steps. Learning mathematics procedures involves three stages: constructing models (a model of the process is displayed and explained), shaping (the process originally followed is modified, students develop their own ideas and an understanding of the process); internalizing (skills become automatic). Teachers should also be sensitive to the fact that cultures have different ways of representing and processing algorithms and may use different symbols and processes in representing calculations. SIFEs may be unfamiliar with math concepts such as the US monetary and measurement systems, computational methods or the use of commas instead of decimal points.

Linguistic Knowledge

Mathematics has its own specialized language, grammatical patterns, operations and rules. Research indicates that there is a high correlation between reading skills and mathematics achievement, particularly when tasks involve reading texts or solving word problems. Mathematics texts are conceptually packed, require up-and-down as well as left-to-right eye movements, are read more slowly, and have symbolic devices such as charts and graphs. (Dale, 1987) Moreover, mathematics uses day-to-day vocabulary in a specialized way (e.g. table), specific vocabulary (e.g. divisor), and specific rhetoric (e.g. if...then) which should be explicitly taught.

Instructional Strategies that Increase Comprehension

Mathematics is a subject area whose mastery requires knowledge of operations, processes, concepts and the ability to use its specific vocabulary and language. The following provides some perspectives and tips, which have been excerpted and adapted from a document promulgated by the Virginia Department of Education (2004), on implementing instruction to make mathematics accessible to these students.

- Accept non-verbal responses - pictures, models, demonstrations.
- Allow ample wait time for student response.
- Apply word problems to daily life situations (cooking, shopping).
- Concretize math concepts with TPR activities and use models, manipulatives, multimedia, graphic organizers, hands-on activities to make connections between the concrete and abstract.
- Create opportunities for students to practice the language of mathematics.
- Demonstrate how to read a mathematics textbook.
- Encourage students to explain the sequence of steps used to arrive at an answer.
- Explicitly teach the language functions used in mathematics as they are intricately connected to the processes and concepts in the discipline.
- Integrate language and content.
- Make interdisciplinary connections to what students are learning in math.
- Model steps when teaching computation and problem solving.
- Provide multiple ways to demonstrate mastery.
- Repeat, rephrase, and paraphrase.
- Review and summarize frequently.
- Simplify the language used rather than the mathematical concepts taught (use known vocabulary and simple sentence constructions).
- Tap into students' culture-specific knowledge of mathematics (symbols, algorithms, tools).
- Teach math concepts in the context of a story or game.
- Teach mathematical vocabulary (i.e., estimate, measure) and language structures daily. Develop strategies for teaching new vocabulary (e.g., vocabulary section in mathematics notebooks, class word walls, student-made bilingual dictionaries, flashcards).
- Teach note-taking, test-taking, study skills.

Instructional Materials

The selection of appropriate instructional materials is an important element in the implementation of a successful SIFE program. Instructional materials in the native language and English should be linguistically sensitive, culturally relevant, developmentally and age appropriate and enriching for SIFEs. These materials should incorporate:

- Topics or themes that tap into students' prior experiences and curiosity
- Modeling and scaffolding
- Active learning
- Contextualized information and ideas
- Differentiated instruction

- Extended practice in using language and acquiring content
- Integration of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills
- Multi-sensorial representations that incorporate technology, visuals and other multi-media
- Multiple ways to demonstrate mastery

Some publishers carry ESL, bilingual and basic adult educational materials for teaching SIFEs. Schools may also want to supplement these materials with online resources. Cross-disciplinary teams of educators should collaborate to select these materials and to determine how they can be employed in the classroom. Teachers can also utilize books for SIFEs which have graduated levels of difficulty. Instructional materials should be available in sufficient quantity and quality. They should be aligned with the program's goals and those delineated in the student's PLP.

As the instructional needs of SIFEs are diverse, differentiated materials should be utilized. SIFEs often have gaps in their knowledge relevant to grade level expectations. Educators may find it necessary to adapt grade level instructional resources. If there is an insufficient diversity of texts, schools should consider adaptation and/or materials development projects to meet the unique needs of these students. The development of a curriculum map often assists staff to identify, select or adapt materials within and across grades. Instructional materials used should be consistent with the model of instruction implemented.

CONCLUSION

Over the last five years, LEP/ELL/SIFEs, a subgroup of LEP/ELLs, have been enrolling in New York State schools over wider geographical areas. Due to their interrupted formal education, SIFEs present different educational profiles from long-term LEP/ELLs and special education students. As a diverse, recently-arrived, at-risk group of students with limited or no schooling in their homeland, their progress has been impeded by lack of exposure and access, on a sustained level, to academic instruction.

SIFEs pose challenges to our educational system because school staff may be unfamiliar with their socio-academic backgrounds and have not had experiences in identifying and addressing their needs. Schools should be proactive and plan challenging, enriching, culturally relevant, linguistically sensitive, and age appropriate, native and English language literacy instruction. This will foster equitable learning opportunities for SIFEs. When provided with strategically designed educational programs, SIFEs can overcome their academic gaps and attain promotional and graduation goals.

The integration of LEP/ELL/SIFEs into the school community and larger society is shaped by the expectations and actions of all stakeholders. The educational community should advocate for and promote equal educational opportunities by identifying the latest research findings, applying them to classroom instruction and adjusting educational programs to meet the multi-dimensional needs of these students.

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