

ATESOL NSW SUPPORT FOR PROPOSAL TO EXTEND THE NSW DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION EAL/D EDUCATION LEADERSHIP STRATEGY TO 2025 AND BEYOND.

Last year, ATESOL NSW expressed its strong support for recommendations to continue the NSW Department of Education EAL/D Education Leadership Strategy in 2024. We were very pleased that this occurred and now reiterate our support for continuation of the Strategy in 2025 and beyond.

We note that a rigorous final independent evaluation of the strategy over the course of 2021-2023 showed the Strategy as having a positive impact and that Directors, Educational Leadership, principals and staff in schools supported by the Leaders strongly recommended its continuation.

ATESOL NSW strongly supports the two proposals being put forward for approval by Department of Education Senior Executive with our reasons outlined below:

1. Approve the recruitment of 35 permanent EAL/D Education Leaders to commence in January 2025.

Many primary and secondary schools currently serviced by the EAL/D Education Leadership Strategy have high concentrations of EAL/D need where EAL/D learners comprise the majority of the total student population. Such concentrations represent the build-up of EAL/D learning need due to the significant time it takes for English language learners to develop the academic English necessary to succeed in school.¹ These concentrations of need reflect structural educational disadvantage similar to that of socio-economically disadvantaged schools and are reflected in student underperformance and inequitable educational outcomes in literacy and across the curriculum. Such concentrated linguistic disadvantage can only be addressed through a sustained, systemic professional strategy that focuses on an EAL/D approach to whole-school development,

¹ EAL/D learners need to develop two types of language proficiency in English-medium schooling – everyday conversational English (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills -BICS) & academic English (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency - CALP). Research has confirmed development of BICS typically takes English language learners some two years while CALP typically takes five to seven years to reach academic parity with mother tongue speakers, and up to ten years for refugee students with disrupted education. See Cummins, J. (2008) BICS & CALP: Empirical & theoretical basis of the distinction in *Encyclopedia of language and education* (pp.487- 499) Springer US; Slama, R. B. (2012). A longitudinal analysis of academic English proficiency outcomes for adolescent English language learners in the US. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 104(2), 265. Collier, V. (1989). How Long? A synthesis of research on academic achievement in a second language, *TESOL Quarterly*, 23(3), 509-531; Thomas, W. P., & Collier, V. P. (2002). A national study of school effectiveness for language minority students' long-term academic achievement; Hakuta, K. (2000). How long does it take English learners to attain proficiency? *University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute*; Demie, F. (2013). English as an additional language pupils: how long does it take to acquire English fluency? *Language and Education*, 27(1), 59-69; Creagh, S., Kettle, M., Alford, J., Comber, B., & Shield, P. (2019). How long does it take to achieve academically in a second language? Comparing the trajectories of EAL students and first language peers in Queensland schools. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 42(3), 145-155

expertise and practice. The EAL/D Education Leadership Strategy provides such an approach.²

The proposed increase of 5 EAL/D Education Leader positions also responds to increasing numbers of newly arrived EAL/D learners enrolling in outer metropolitan and rural and regional area schools without established EAL/D programs and expertise.

The nature, scale, distribution and duration of EAL/D learning need in schools resulting from ongoing migration intakes to NSW means the current demand for advice and support in EAL/D education from EAL/D Education Leadership Strategy will continue. It requires that the EAL/D Leader positions be made permanent and available as a statewide professional resource.

2. Endorse the development of an enduring EAL/D leadership strategy that is responsive to the growing EAL/D student need.

Based on past and current growth trends, the NSW Government School system can expect a projected additional 100,000 EAL/D learners over the next four years as a result of Australia's continuing migration and humanitarian programs.³ This growth trajectory necessitates a whole-of-department commitment to and planning of ongoing EAL/D Education Leadership support to schools, accompanied by an EAL/D teacher workforce strategy, to meet the sustained and growing EAL/D student need.

An enduring EAL/D Education Leadership Strategy is a proactive systemic response to this growing EAL/D student need. It will provide a strategic, coordinated system of specialist EAL/D professional support to schools to ensure development of effective whole-school EAL/D programs to meet the immediate and longer-term English language and literacy learning needs of growing numbers of newly arrived students, refugees and ongoing English language learners.

Michael Michell
President, ATESOL NSW
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² Commonwealth of Australia, (2011) *Literacy and Numeracy Pilots: Final Report. Report of Successful Language Learners' project*. Australian Government, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Commonwealth of Australia.

Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (2021) *English as an Additional language or dialect (EAL/D) Effective School Practices*. NSW Department of Education, Sydney, NSW. [education.nsw.gov.au/cese](https://www.education.nsw.gov.au/cese)

³. See Attachment A in ACTA's submission to the Teacher Educations Expert Panel Discussion Paper at: <https://www.education.gov.au/quality-initial-teacher-education-review/consultations/teacher-education-expert-panel-discussion-paper/submission/16567>