## Memo

Date: June 18, 2015
To: Melissa Escalante
From: Laurie Lewis
Annette Zehler
Subject: FRSS 107 English Language Learner Programs: Pretest Calls
This memo describes findings from the pretest calls for the FRSS 107 survey on high school English language learner programs. These calls were conducted from May 8 to June 15, 2015. Pretest calls were conducted with district-level personnel most familiar with ELL programs for high school students in their district. This is the approach that will be used for the full-scale data collection in fall 2015.

Pretest calls were conducted with district personnel in 12 districts located in 11 states: Arizona, California, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Texas. The district respondents were asked to complete the draft questionnaire and fax it to Westat, and then discuss it by telephone with the Westat survey manager. Respondents were asked to consider whether the instructions and definitions were clear and helpful, whether the questionnaire items were clear and easy to interpret, whether they had the data available to answer the questions, and how long it took to complete the questionnaire. Respondents reported a range of 15 to 60 minutes to complete the questionnaire, with most reporting that it took them about half an hour.

The districts included urban, suburban, and rural community types and ranged in size from small $(1,300$ total students) to large ( 44,000 total students) with proportions of ELL students that ranged from 4 percent to 50 percent. As in previous rounds, Spanish was the predominant non-English language in most of these districts and districts also serve students from numerous other language backgrounds.

We start with some general observations about the questionnaire. Then, for each questionnaire item, we first present feedback from respondents, including any issues identified during the calls, followed by our recommendations.

## General observations about the questionnaire

Respondents sometimes had trouble keeping their focus on the high school level, even though the questions specified this. We suggest adding a bold boxed header at the top of each page reminding respondents that the survey is about English learners at the high school level.

The tight spacing on a number of the grids and the distance between the items and the response boxes made it hard for respondents to respond accurately and completely. It is important to address these formatting issues to reduce response error. This requires additional space on the questionnaire, which can only be obtained by deleting questions.

The grids with side-by-side sets of responses need to be labeled as part 1 and part 2, with clear instructions about what type of information should be reported in each part of the grid. This will require
additional space on the questionnaire for these instructions. In addition, some of the column headers need to be expanded to include more information about what is to be reported in the columns.

In addition, the questionnaire was already half a page longer than the allowed length for an FRSS survey. Items will need to be eliminated from the questionnaire to shorten it to the maximum 3 pages of questions allowed for an FRSS survey. This is in addition to space needed for better instructions and formatting.

## Definitions and Question 1: Types of instructional programs/approaches

Most respondents indicated that question 1 was clear and the definitions were useful in understanding the instructional programs and approaches listed. However, the responses of a few respondents identified issues that indicated a need for further clarification/specification:

- Pull-out instruction at the high school level was sometimes inaccurately indicated for separate, regularly scheduled classes. In at least two cases, respondents indicated "pull-out" (option b) as a type of service in question 1 , but upon clarification, it was determined that these were not actually instances of pulling students out of ongoing instruction. Rather, the respondents were referring to separately scheduled classes for EL students. Pull-out was referred to by the respondents as primarily an approach used in elementary grades, although a true pull-out was reported by one respondent. At least one respondent mentioned push-in ESL services. Both pull-out and push-in models are approaches to providing ESL instruction that can affect the instruction received by an EL student participating in a regularly scheduled high school class. In pull-out, the student may be taken from the class to a separate location for ESL instruction; in push-in, the student may work separately with the ESL specialist while remaining within the ongoing class. Both approaches may be variable in timing and content compared to a scheduled separate ESL class period.

Recommendation: We recommend clarifying the definition of pull-out and creating a revised option that includes pull-out and/or push-in approaches to providing ESL services.

- A clearer distinction is needed between bilingual instruction and dual-language program options. One respondent indicated both bilingual instruction and dual-language program (options d and g) for the same instructional option.

Recommendation: We recommend editing option d to make it clear that this is separate from the dual-language program response option.

- Co-teaching involving instruction by a content area teacher and a certified EL specialist teacher, or by a teacher with dual-certification, was mentioned as an approach that should be included. Two respondents indicated that they used a co-teaching model but did not know how to indicate it given the options provided.

Recommendation: We recommend including reference to co-teaching as one staffing model for providing sheltered content instruction.

- A respondent pointed out that there was not a clear consistency between the item 1 response options and the definitions.

Recommendation: We recommend revising the ordering and some of the wording of the response options and definitions so that there is clear relationship between them.

Questions 2 through 5: Availability and characteristics of a newcomer program

Most respondents indicated that question 2 was clear. One of the respondents indicated in question 2 that they have a newcomer program in the district that is for students with limited or interrupted formal education. This respondent with the newcomer program indicated that questions 3 through 5 were clear. However, another respondent with a program for the same type of students indicated that "we have SIFE Program" but that the district did not have a newcomer program. Our definition of newcomer program in the survey aligned with her description of the SIFE program, but she was insistent that the program in her district was not a newcomer program. Based on our discussions with respondents during the pretest and three rounds of feasibility calls, this appears to be an issue with this particular respondent. However, including this last respondent, there were two respondents with newcomer centers and both indicated that their newcomer programs were provided to a specific subgroup of newcomers (Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE)). This suggests that obtaining information on the targeted population for the newcomer program would be important information to obtain.

Recommendation: While these questions have been clear to respondents during the feasibility calls and pretest, we recommend reducing the number of questions asked about newcomer programs due to their low incidence. We suggest keeping questions 2 (availability), 3 (structure), and 4a (typical length of time in newcomer program), and deleting questions 4 b (maximum length of time) and 5 (types of services). Removing these questions for which there are very few responses will free-up much needed space for better instructions and formatting on questions that are retained. If these items are dropped, we suggest using some of that space to include an item to identify whether the newcomer program targets only a specific subgroup of students.

## Question 6: Types of online or computer-based programs

While this question generally worked well, there were two important points that emerged from our conversations with respondents that need to be addressed. First, some respondents did not respond yes to any of the options when these were used only for supplements to instruction or for skills practice. Respondents emphasized that instruction was provided by teachers, not on computers, with computer programs playing a supporting role. Second, a few respondents indicated that online or computer-based programs were used for content area instruction which turned out to be distance education or online credit recovery courses that are available to all high school students. That is, the "yes" response was a function of the technology-based instructional delivery being available to all high school students, and had nothing to do with the students being English learners.

Recommendation: We recommend that the stem of the question be reworded as follows:
"In your district, do high school English learners work with online or computer-based programs in the following areas to address any of their needs as English learners?"

## Question 7: Extent of native language instruction and support

Respondents found the format and wording of this question to be confusing. Breaking native language into three groups (most common, second most common, any other) was confusing and overwhelming to respondents. While most respondents understood what to include in row a (most common native language), respondents were less clear about rows b and c, and also found the "not present in this district" column for rows band c to be confusing. Respondents were particularly confused by the header over the second set of columns, due primarily to the way it was phrased, interpreting it as instructional support only received in the native language, rather than as native language used for instructional support only.

Recommendation: We recommend that the question stem be reworded to provide instructions for part 1 and part 2 , and that the number of rows be reduced to two (most common; any other). In addition, we recommend that the "not present in this district" column be dropped and a check box added under the question stem for this information. We also recommend that the column headers for the two sections of
the grid be reworded slightly to ask about native language used for content instruction and native language used for instructional support only.

## Question 8: Materials and services provided in native languages

While this question generally worked well, a few respondents with more than one native language for high school ELs missed completing part 2. It was also apparent that the stem of the question and the headers in parts 1 and 2 should be tied together better. In addition, a few respondents indicated that information to respond to rows b, c, and d (especially c and d) was not available in their office, and would need to be obtained from school or district guidance offices; as a result, they left these rows blank.

Recommendation: We recommend both formatting changes to simplify the item and deletion of row items that pretest findings indicated are best provided by guidance offices.

Formatting changes we recommend are (1) rewording the stem to provide instructions for part 1 and part 2; (2) replacing the parenthetical instruction with a check box under the question stem (as suggested for the revised question 7); and (3) adding "materials and services" to the headers.

In addition, we recommend deleting rows c and d (and possibly row b) since information to respond to these items is more readily available from guidance offices than EL program offices in a number of districts. In addition, the deletion of these rows will substantially reduce the density of the text.

## Question 9: Educational settings of EL services

This question did not work at all. Many respondents could not readily obtain information about older high school ELs. Some respondents did not understand how to use the column for "not available in the district." Some respondents approached it by using row a (regular high school, where almost all ELs are located) and making parts 1 and 2 sum to the total (e.g., of all ELs at the regular high school, 76$100 \%$ are traditionally-aged and $1-25 \%$ are older). If a district had a district-administered adult education program, it was separately administered from the K-12 system, and the students were not considered part of the district for record-keeping purposes and information about them was not included on the questionnaire.

Recommendation: This question should definitely be dropped from the questionnaire. Since we are at the end of the survey development process, we are not able to continue to explore and test ways to make this item useable for this survey. Dropping this question will also help with the required reduction in survey length.

## Question 10: Programs and services available for high school students and EL participation

This question generally worked well. However, a few respondents did not understand that part 1 was asking whether the program or service was available to high school students generally, instead interpreting it as asking whether the program or service was available to high school ELs. In addition, some respondents indicated that they would not know about the availability of programs and services generally, only about availability to and participation of ELs.

Recommendation: We recommend simplifying this question by dropping part 1 and asking only about the participation of ELs in these programs and services. The stem would be reworded to, "In your district, approximately how many English learners in high school participate in the following programs and services?" The part 2 spanner would also be dropped since it would no longer be needed.

Question 11: Programs and services designed specifically for ELs
This question generally seemed clear to respondents.

Recommendation: No changes are recommended.

## Question 12: Before- or after-school period or program designed specifically for ELs

The general reaction of many respondents to this item was that they thought it was asking the same thing that was asked in question 11. When asked to describe the period of instruction or program, respondents typically indicated that it was teachers staying after school to provide additional academic support to students who needed it, which was not a period of instruction or a program.

Recommendation: We recommend dropping this item. It does not appear to be providing additional useful information beyond information already collected in question 11.

## Question 13: Relationships with organizations providing programs and services for ELs

Responses to this question were problematic in several ways. Some respondents thought the question was asking about relationships that were available to all high school students, not just ELs (e.g., dual credit programs with colleges; job training programs such as Job Corps). Other respondents interpreted the question very narrowly as asking only about relationships that their EL department had with various organizations. What constituted a relationship and whether the relationship was informal or formal also varied widely. For example, dual credit programs were sometimes considered informal and sometimes formal relationships. Presentations at assemblies were sometimes considered formal relationships. If an organization had a formal program (e.g., the public library had classes for any English learners in the community), these were sometimes counted as formal relationships, even though the only relationship (if any) was information about the program. Relationships that were described were not always targeted toward students; some were for teachers (professional development or tuition benefits) or for schools (e.g., a teacher education program from a university that supports classes with student teachers), while others were for parents and families of students, or for anyone in the community. While respondents were generally able to stay focused on academically-oriented programs and services for colleges and libraries, some continued to include social services for faith-based and community organizations.

Recommendation: We strongly recommend dropping this item. There is too much variation in interpretation and response to obtain useful, reliable information from this item. Since we are at the end of the survey development process, we are not able to continue to explore and test ways to make this item useable for this survey.

## Question 14: Frequency of ELs ages 18 to 21 newly enrolling in high school in the district

This question generally worked well. A few respondents said they don't know this information (one of the response options) because enrollment takes place at the individual high schools and they don't have this information at the district office. The word order created some confusion for one respondent who wondered if it included transfers from other high schools in the same state.

Recommendation: We suggest reordering and revising the stem to read, "In your district, about how often in the last 12 months have English learners ages 18 to 21 newly enrolled in your district as a high school student?"

## Question 15: District-provided information to ELs ages 18 to 21 about programs and services offered within and outside of the public school system

While respondents generally understood what the stem of this question was asking, there were a number of consistent response problems that need to be addressed in the questionnaire revisions. The wording of the headers threw some respondents off, and they answered about whether the programs and service were offered by their district or other entities, rather than about whether information about programs and services offered by the school district or other entities was provided to ELs. Some
respondents said that they were not sure how to respond to the question, because enrollment takes place at the individual high schools, and there is no district policy or set of guidelines about what information is provided to students. As a result, some of these respondents answered "yes" in the first set of columns to any program or service that was offered by their district, either because they forgot that the question was asking about information provided, or because they assumed that if the district has the program or service, then information would likely be provided about it. Many respondents left the second set of columns (offered by other entities) blank. Reasons respondents gave for leaving the second set of columns blank include that they don't know what is offered by other entities, they don't know what information the high schools provide about offerings by other entities, or another organization (e.g., a resettlement agency) provides information about what is offered by other entities and the district provides information about what is offered by the district.

Recommendation: We recommend revising the format of this question to a list of programs and services with a single set of response columns (which we had in an earlier version of this question), and adding a header to clarify that the options refer to information provided to ELs. Individual programs and services in the list can make the distinction between those offered by the public school district versus those offered by other entities as needed. The response columns could be expanded to be "yes," "no," "don’t know," and possibly also "program/service not offered.

## Question 16: Factors considered when providing information to ELs ages 18 to 21 about programs and services offered within and outside of the public school system

This question generally seemed clear to respondents, although the stem of the question was considered a bit wordy and required some re-reading to understand what was being asked.

Recommendation: We recommend that the stem of the question be simplified by dropping "within and outside of your public school district."

All respondents were easily able to answer this question.
Recommendation: No changes arérecommended.

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| HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER PROGRAMS |
| FAST RESPONSE SURVEY SYSTEM |$\quad$| EXPIRATION DATE: 02/2018 |
| :--- |

This survey is designed to be completed by the person(s) in the district most knowledgeable
about English language learner programs for students at the high school level.

IF ABOVE DISTRICT INFORMATION IS INCORRECT, PLEASE UPDATE DIRECTLY ON LABEL.
Name of person completing this form:
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Telephone number: $\qquad$ E-mail:

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## Definitions for questions 1 through 5

Bilingual education/instruction: An educational program/instructional approach in which two languages, English and the students' native language, are used to provide content instruction to English learner students. Bilingual programs include those that promote development of proficiency in both languages with the goal of students' becoming fully bilingual, and those in which the students' native language is used to assist in students' transition to all-English instruction.

Dual-language/two-way immersion program: Also known as two-way bilingual education, this program provides instruction through use of both English and a non-English language to classes comprised of both English learner and English proficient students. The program goals are for all students to become bilingual and bi-literate, succeed academically, and develop cross-cultural awareness.

English as a Second Language (ESL): ESL programs (also known as English language development (ELD)) provide instruction that focuses on the structure and use of the English language, using carefully articulated English language instruction designed to meet the needs of students at various levels of English proficiency. This instruction may also include use of content materials related to the students' curriculum, and typically involves little or no use of the native language. ESL instruction usually is provided during one or more specific class periods; in some cases, students may receive ESL instruction that is provided as a pull-out session (students move out of a class for a period of ESL instruction) or on a "push-in" basis (the ESL instructor works with the student within the class setting).

Newcomer program: A specialized academic environment that serves newly arrived, immigrant English learner students for a limited period of time. Newcomer programs typically focus on developing basic English language and literacy skills, instruction in core content, and acculturation to U.S. schooling. Students transition to a school's regular language support program for English learners after they have participated in the newcomer program

Paraprofessional: Also known as instructional aides and teachers' aides, these individuals provide assistance to teachers in the classroom. They do not provide instruction, but provide additional support and help clarify material for students. Some paraprofessionals are bilingual in English and the students' native language and in these cases they may provide translation or explanation in the native language.
Sheltered English/ content instruction: A sheltered content program or instructional approach refers to regular grade-level instruction in core content areas that is provided in English through instructional strategies that make the academic content accessible to English learner students while also assisting them to acquire academic English (e.g., Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)).

## Definitions for question 7

Use of the native language for content instruction: The student's native language is used as the primary language for presenting new academic concepts and introducing new academic skills.

Use of the native language for instructional support: The student's native language is used to provide clarification of instruction in contexts where the teacher uses English as the primary language for presenting new academic concepts and introducing new academic skills.

## Definitions for questions 9 through 11

Charter high school: A school that provides free secondary education to eligible students under a specific charter granted by the state legislature or other appropriate authority. Charter schools are privately managed, taxpayerfunded schools exempted from some rules applicable to all other taxpayer-funded schools.
Magnet high school: Magnet high schools are designed to attract students from diverse social, economic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds. They focus on a specific subject, such as science or the arts; follow specific themes, such as business/technology or communications/humanities/law; or operate according to certain models, such as career academies or a school-within-a-school. Magnet schools are established by a school district and, unlike charter schools, are governed the same as the other public schools in that system.

Career/technical high school: Career/technical high schools are those that provide formal preparation for semiskilled, skilled, technical, or professional occupations. For purposes of this survey, please include career/technical high schools that are available to students in your district and are administered either by your district or by a regional entity.
Distance education course/program: A course or program taught through audio, video, or Internet or other computer technologies where the students and the course teacher are separated by location and often by time, as well. This includes courses or programs that have a teacher or assistant in the room with the students who monitors


1. In your district, which of the following English learner instructional programs/approaches are currently provided for English learners in high school? (Check one on each line.)

Yes
a. English as Second Language (ESL) class periods
b. Pull-out English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction
c. Sheltered content class(es)
d. Bilingual instruction in a content class that involves significant ( 25 percent or more) use of the students' native language.
e. Support in mainstream content class(es) provided by a paraprofessional who speaks the student's native language
. Support in mainstream content class(es) provided by a paraprofessional who does not speak the student's native language

g. Dual language/two-way immersion program for English learners and English proficient students
h. Other (please specify):
2. Does your district have a newcomer program for English learners in high school?

Yes................... $\square$ (Continue with question 3.) No.................... $\square$ (Skip to question 6.)
3. What is the structure of the high school newcomer program? (Check all that apply.)
a. Full-day program.

4. What is the typical length of time a high school student spends in the newcomer program, and what is the maximum length of time a high school student is allowed to spend in the newcomer program?
a. Typical length of time (Check one.)

1 semester or less... $\square 2$ semesters... $\square 3-4$ semesters... $\square$ More than 4 semesters... $\square$ Don't know.... $\square$
b. Maximum length of time (Check one.)

1 semester or less... $\square 2$ semesters.... $\square 3-4$ semesters... $\square$ More than 4 semesters... $\square$ No set maximum.... $\square$
5. Which of the following types of services are included in your district's newcomer program for English learners in high school? (Check one on each line.)

e. Cross-cultural/orientation to the United States $\qquad$
$\qquad$
f. Cross-cultural/orientation to school. $\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\square$
g. Organizational/study skills

$\square$
h. Career and technical education/apprenticeships. $\qquad$
i. Other (please specify):
6. Does your district use online or computer-based programs for English learners in high school for any of the following purposes? (Check one on each line.)

## Yes

## No

a. English language acquisition.

b. English language and literacy instruction.

c. Content area instruction.

d. Native language support in content area instruction $\qquad$ $\square$
e. Organizational and study skills. $\qquad$
f. Other purpose (please specify): $\qquad$ $\square$
7. In your district, approximately how many high school English learners receive content instruction and/or instructional support through use of their native language?

| Language background of high school English learners (ELs) | Not present in this district | Number of students receiving content instruction in native language |  |  |  | Number of students receiving instructional support only in native language |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  | No students | Few students | Some students | Most or all students | No students | Few students | Some students | Most or all students |
| a. ELs whose native language is the most common in the district. | . N/A |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| b. ELs whose native language is the second most common in the district....... |  | $\square$ |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| c. ELs whose native language is any other non-English language in the district. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

8. Which of the following materials and services does your district have available in native languages for high school English learners and their parents/guardians? (If your district has only one native language for high school ELs, leave part 2 blank.)

c. Written information about educational options available outside of your public school district for older high school ELs (e.g.,ages 19 to 21) without a high school degree
d. Written information about postsecondary options
e. Translation services upon request for printed materials
f. Interpreters upon request for school meetings or calls.

9. In your district, approximately what percentage of English learners in different age groups are receiving their high school education in the following educational settings? (Please include students receiving their education in more than one setting in the one where they are primarily enrolled. If an educational setting is not available in your district, indicate that with a check mark in the first column.)

| Educational setting | Not available | Part 1. Approximate percentage of traditionally-aged high school ELs (e.g., ages 14 to 18) in this setting |  |  |  |  |  | Part 2. Approximate percentage of older high school ELs (e.g., ages 19 to 21) in this setting |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | in the district | None | $\begin{gathered} 1- \\ 25 \% \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 26- \\ & 50 \% \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 51- \\ & 75 \% \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{gathered} 76- \\ 100 \% \end{gathered}$ | Don't know | None | $\begin{gathered} 1- \\ 25 \% \\ \hline \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 26- \\ & 50 \% \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 51- \\ & 75 \% \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{gathered} \hline 76- \\ 100 \% \end{gathered}$ | Don't know |
| a. Regular high school............. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| b. Magnet high school............. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| c. Charter high school............. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| d. Career/technical high school |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| e. Alternative school or program for at-risk students.. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| f. District-administered adult education program. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| g. Other educational setting (please specify) $\qquad$ |  |  | $\square$ | $\square$ | $\square$ |  | $\square$ |  |  |  |  |  |  |

10. Please indicate in part 1 whether the following programs and services are available to high school students in your district. For each option you mark as available, please estimate in part 2 approximately how many English learners in high school participate.

11. Does your district have the following programs or services designed specifically for English learners in high school? (Check one on each line.)
$\qquad$
b. Summer school $\qquad$
c. Credit recovery course/program $\qquad$
d. Mentoring program $\qquad$
e. Distance education course/program $\qquad$
f. Other (please specify):

12. Does your district have a before- or after-school period of instruction or program that is designed specifically for English learners in high school to provide additional academic instruction or support to these students?

Yes. $\square$ No.
13. What type of relationship, if any, does your district have with the following organizations to provide high school English learners with academically-oriented programs or services (e.g., tutoring, mentoring, job shadowing)? (Check one on each line.)

\left.| Organization | Type of relationship for academically-oriented programs and |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  |  |  |  |  |$\right]$

14. In the last 12 months, about how often have English learners ages $\mathbf{1 8}$ to $\mathbf{2 1}$ newly enrolled in high school in your public school district?

Never............. $\square$ Rarely............. $\square$ Sometimes............ $\square$ Often............. $\square$ Don't know............. $\square$
15. Does your district provide English learners ages $\mathbf{1 8}$ to $\mathbf{2 1}$ seeking to newly enroll in your public school district with information about the following educational programs or services?

16. To what extent does your district consider the following factors when providing information about educational programs or services available within and outside of your public school district to English learners ages 18 to 21 who are seeking to newly enroll in your school district? (Check one on each line.)

| Factor | Not <br> at all | Minor extent | Moderate extent | Major extent |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| a. English proficiency level. |  |  |  |  |
| b. Literacy in their native language. |  |  |  |  |
| c. Limited or interrupted formal education.. |  |  |  |  |
| d. Length of time needed to accrue sufficient credits to graduate. |  |  |  |  |
| e. Whether the student will be able to meet high school graduation requirements in content area classes. |  |  |  |  |
| f. Whether the student will be able to pass state tests required for graduation. |  |  |  |  |
| g. Age of student at time of enrollment. |  |  |  |  |
| h. Other (please specify): |  |  |  |  |

17. What is the current total number of high school English learners enrolled in your school district? $\qquad$
