

# Bilingual Assessment Service

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# Background – Schooling Sector

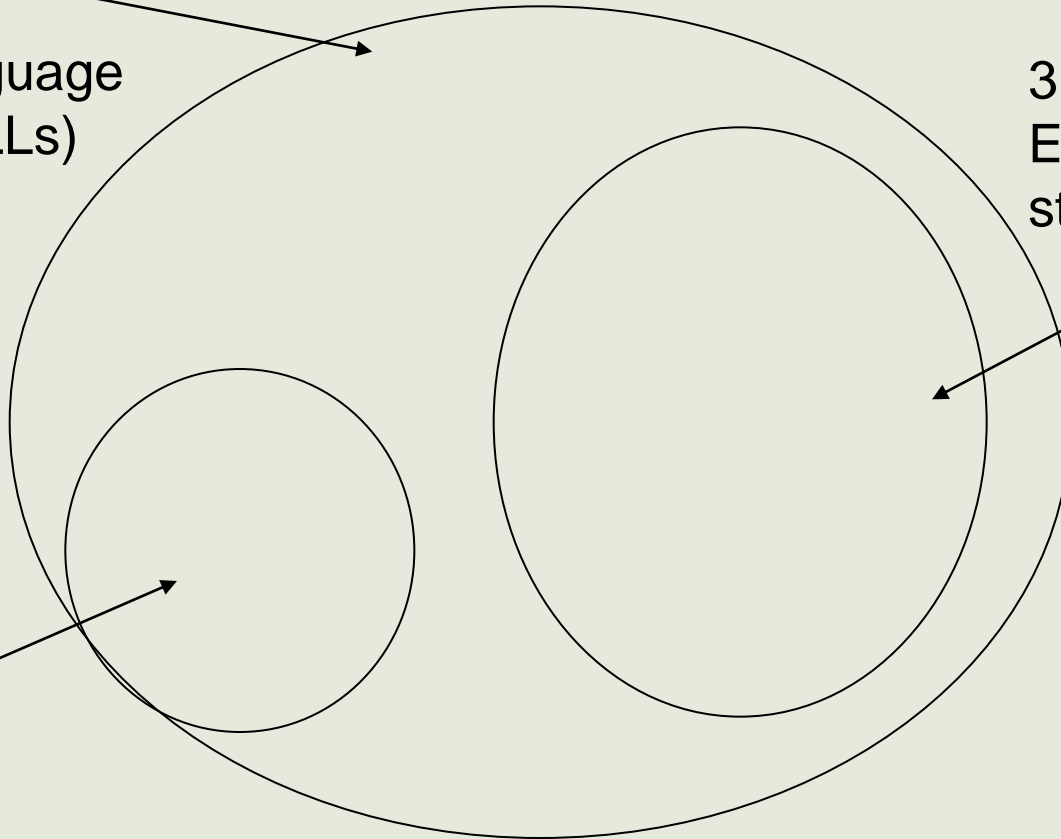
- There are over **120,000** students in New Zealand schools from a migrant/refugee background.
- In 2013 there are students from **156** different ethnic groups from **157** different countries of birth speaking **116** different languages.
- There are currently **31,378** ESOL funded students.
- There is a growing understanding that this diversity is now normal and indeed a positive aspect or characteristic of NZ classrooms.

# Who are English Language Learners?

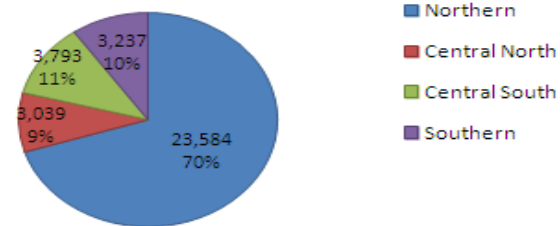
Approximately  
123,828  
English Language  
Learners (ELLs)

31,378  
ESOL Funded  
students

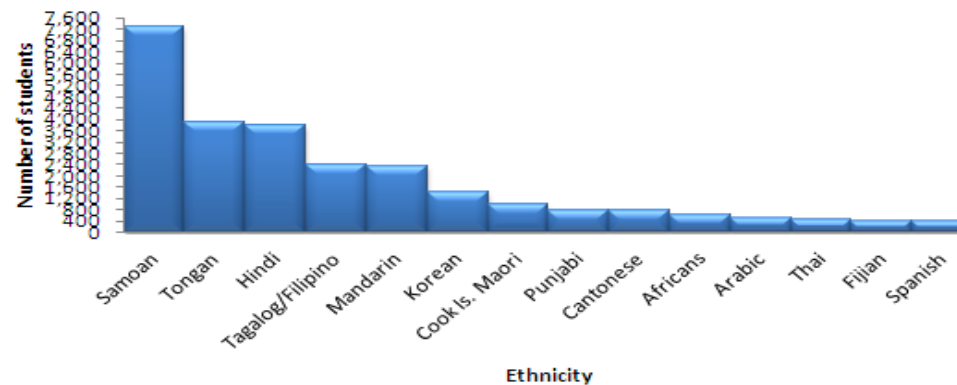
15,500  
International  
Fee-paying  
students



### Regional Breakdown



### First Language spoken



# BAS Rationale

A bilingual assessment can distinguish between **language learning needs**, **special learning needs** and **emotional needs** through a dual assessment in first language and English.

A bilingual assessment removes barriers to communication and enables schools to map realistic pathways for the English learner who is not making expected progress.

# Identifying need and confirming eligibility

A bilingual assessment may be necessary when the student:

- is not making expected gains in English language acquisition for their age and stage
- has an unclear educational history or there is clear evidence of disrupted or no prior schooling before coming to New Zealand
- has identified physical and/or cognitive disabilities or limitations before coming to New Zealand, and is likely to have additional learning needs

# Identifying need and confirming eligibility (continued)

- is behaving in ways that indicate difficulties in adjustment and/or learning e.g.
  - is withdrawn or appears depressed
  - participates to little or no extent in class
  - is disruptive or aggressive or behaves erratically
  - fails to complete any or much work.
- Remember, only a very small number of bilingual or new arrival students need a bilingual assessment. Priorities need to be identified using the indicators above and in consultation with HODs, SENCO and other support staff.

# Information that should be gathered by the school and passed on to the cluster RTLB for referral

- What educational opportunities did the student have before enrolling in a school in NZ?
- How many years did they attend?
- What sort of school was it? Was attendance regular?
- Students from refugee background will need special investigation.
- Details about level, quality and length of ESOL support.
- Other types of support and intervention.
- Documented observation of social interaction.



# Students who are not eligible

- International Fee Paying Students
- New Zealand born students

# Making a referral

1. School identifies concerns.
2. Cluster RTLB confirms eligibility and refers to RTLB: Bilingual Assessor (BA).
3. RTLB: BA completes funding application and sends to Regional Migrant/Refugee Education Co-ordinator at the Ministry.
4. Migrant/Refugee Education Co-ordinator will work with RTLB: BA to locate an appropriate bilingual support person and gather material required for assessment (assessment kit).

# Making a referral (continued)

5. RTLB: BA and bilingual support person administer bilingual assessment.
6.
  - i) Report is forwarded to student's school.
  - ii) An Assessment Completed Notification is forwarded to the Ministry who make funding payment for bilingual support person.
7.
  - i) School acts on recommendations from bilingual assessment report.
  - ii) The Ministry maintains a database of the use of the Bilingual Assessment Service.

# How is a bilingual assessment conducted?

1. An informal interview / discussion with the student and the family to:
  - Gather basic information about the child, family and experiences.
  - Ascertain confidence in first language listening and speaking.
  - Ascertain levels of comprehension and production of spoken English text.
  - Ascertain social and emotional attitudes.

# How is a bilingual assessment conducted? (continued)

2. The student is assessed using their first language for further identification of:

- Sound / letter and word knowledge, spoken vocabulary
- Retention of spoken language and structural strengths and gaps.
- Reading proficiency / competency, fluency, recall, free writing, dictation, editing

3. The student is assessed in English for identification of language strengths / gaps.

# The assessment may indicate any of the following:

The student:

- is cognitively within the 'norm' for their age and progressing normally for a student acquiring a new language
- is cognitively within the 'norm' for their age but has unexpected linguistic difficulties which are affecting learning progress
- is cognitively within the 'norm' for their age but is experiencing cultural and social trauma or adjustment difficulties at school and/or at home, that are affecting English acquisition and learning progress

# The assessment may indicate any of the following: (continued)

The student:

- is struggling and delayed cognitively and linguistically in first language and cultural contexts, affecting also learning and English acquisition
- has existing special needs prior to arrival, affecting all aspects of their learning and linguistic progress in current contexts
- is failing to progress at a normal rate because they are receiving inadequate or inappropriate programming and support.

## What next? Report recommendations may include:

- classroom based support
- RTLB referral
- MOE referral
- other external agency support/intervention
- medical assessment required (e.g. sight, hearing etc.)
- other



# ESOL-funded Students and general support from RTLB services: *Double Dipping?*

If a student's only difficulty is an inability to speak English, the RTLB is not directly involved. **If an ESOL student also has special education needs, then a referral may be appropriate\*.**

*Migrant and refugee background students with special education needs, including those who receive ESOL funding, are entitled to special education services available in New Zealand schools. They would need to meet the eligibility criteria for that particular service (e.g. RTLB and RT Lit support, speech language therapy, ORS funding, Supplementary Learning Support). International fee-paying students are not eligible for these services.*