

BILINGUAL SCHOOL SERVICES OFFICER (BSSO) PROGRAM

Support and Inclusion Division

Role of a Bilingual School Services Officer (BSSO)

The BSSO Program is a service in which people who are fluent in English and one or more other languages assist English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD) learners in schools.

BSSOs are contracted to work with EALD students for short term or annual contracts.

This service is part of the English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD) Program within Department for Education.

It is provided for EALD learners in the schooling sector of the Department (Reception - Year 12) who have no English or minimal English language skills.

Bilingual School Services Officers are employed as School Services Officers (SSO Level 2) in the Department for Education.

Skills of the Applicant

BSSOs have a rich experience of language and culture and an understanding and knowledge of their own ethnic group in the Australian setting. Because of the special skills and knowledge they possess, they are able to help interpret students' problems, explain aspects of student behaviour and give teachers some indications as to why students may be experiencing difficulties. They also assist students with interpreting teachers' instructions, translate familiar concepts and explain unfamiliar concepts. BSSOs may be called on to provide information to parents concerning school/system issues.

Role of the BSSO

Classroom support

- Under the supervision of the teacher, BSSOs work with individuals or small groups of learners. The roles of a BSSO includes:
 - interpreting the teacher's instructions when required (refer to Supporting EALD Learners)
 - explaining unfamiliar concepts, ideas and terminology in first language (refer to Supporting EALD Learners)
 - assessing the students' language and concepts in their first language
 - supporting English language development (refer to Supporting EALD Learners)
 - letting a teacher know if a student is struggling with the work that has been set
 - identifying students who need differentiated learning programs
 - supporting students to develop routines and behaviour which benefits their learning.

Cross cultural communicator/facilitator

- Explain cultural similarities and differences to teachers, caregivers and learners.
- Work collaboratively with teachers to develop all students' understanding of other cultures and languages.



Interpreting and Translating

- Interpret during enrolment, teacher/parent meetings and in the classroom.
- Translate notices of up to 150 words to improve home/school communication.

Note that schools can apply to the EALD Program for interpreting and translation services.

It is not recommended to use BSSOs to interpret/translate complex or sensitive matters.

Excursion assistant

- Assist with preparations for visits and camps, or attend excursions to make activities more meaningful for EALD learners.

Note that overnight stays are not a requirement for BSSOs.

Other

- Collaborate with teachers – find out what they would like you to do and share insights into students' progress.
- Work within the policies of Child Protection.
- Maintain privacy and confidentiality of personal information. The South Australian Government observes a set of Information Privacy Principles which regulates the way it can collect, use, store and disclose personal information. As employees of The Department, BSSOs are bound by these principles. BSSOs must not discuss or pass on any information about students and their families with people not directly involved with the student at school. They should not share personal information with people outside of the school. If BSSOs are requested to provide this information they should direct the enquirer to the student's teacher or principal.
- Attend BSSO professional development sessions provided by the EALD Program
- Sign the time book each time you work in a school. Keep copies of your contracts
- Maintain your Ancillary Employable Assistant Register (EAR) application up to date, including your certificates for Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse and Neglect- Education and Care Training (RRHAN-EC) and Department of Human Services (DHS) Working with Children Criminal Clearance
- meet the COVID-19 vaccination requirements for education and early childhood settings

