

CCCS ESL Policy 2020

The CCCS District provides an appropriate planned instructional program for students identified as English learners (ELs) which meets Federally Mandated criteria that an LIEP must be based on sound educational and language learning theory; implemented with sufficient resources and staffed by appropriately prepared personnel; and periodically evaluated. Our instructional model is based on Krashen's theory of second language acquisition, and we also focus on content and language integrated learning wherein the PA Standards-based curriculum (including the PA English Language Proficiency Standards) provide the content for language learning.

Our program model is Mixed Classes with English-only support; our students fully participate in all aspects of the curriculum, and language learners receive English language support through pull-out instruction with a certified ESL teacher in small grade level groups. Our ESL staff is highly qualified, and we work closely with the classroom teachers so that students have scaffolded access to grade level content while attaining proficiency in English. Our teachers have a wealth of resources and technology and are dedicated to the success and well-being of our students.

Collaboration between content teachers and ESL teachers is encouraged, and family engagement is fostered through use of interpreters and translation of school documents as much as possible. Many of our classroom teachers have or are working towards ESL certification, which is extremely beneficial to our students. The active encouragement of family engagement and regular collaboration with classroom teachers ensures that students thrive and achieve at high levels. We encourage literacy in and maintenance of the home language, and the full participation of all students and their families in the CCCS community. We support our learners in attaining control of academic language and fluency in the domains of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. By working with students in small groups in addition to push-in collaboration with classroom teachers, instruction for our students can be individualized and language learning accelerated.

The ESL program is designed to provide students with direct language instruction through grade level content using a balance of what Paul Nation describes as "The Four Strands", meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning, and fluency development. Our ESL specialists work with all teachers to scaffold instruction and assessment in content areas, both of which must be commensurate with the student's level of English proficiency. Students in the ESL program are provided with meaningful, comprehensible access to instruction

in all content areas and the grading of ELs reflects what the students “know and are able to do” at their level of English language proficiency. English language development (ELD) is incorporated into all classes through language objectives and a focus on academic vocabulary across the curriculum. ELs cannot be retained based solely on their level of English language proficiency.

The benefits of our program are real and tangible; we support our ESL students in achieving their highest potential, not only by rigorous and individualized language instruction, but by our accessibility as a trusted teacher who can understand and advocate for them. Our students are supported with access to technology, culturally responsive reading materials, small group discussion which emphasizes communication and critical thinking, and a profound belief that they can achieve their goals and dreams.

Families have the right to opt their child out of some or all portions of our language program, but once identified as an EL they must be included in the annual ACCESS assessment and their status will be entered in PIMS accordingly. Families can reinstate services should they choose to do so after choosing to opt-out of the program.

Identification Procedure

Upon enrollment, all parents/guardians are given a Home Language Survey to complete. Based on the results of the Home Language Survey and parent interview, students identified as potential English learners will be screened within 30 days of the beginning of the school year or within 14 days of enrollment for students who enroll during the year. The test used to assess English proficiency for Kindergarten students is the WIDA W-APT, and for all other students who are assessed we use the WIDA screener. If a student is found to need language support, parents/guardians will be notified immediately in writing of the results of this screening test, and the specifics of the schedule and curriculum. CCCS follows the criteria determined by WIDA and the PA Department of Education to make this decision; and a letter will be mailed to the families in the preferred language with the results of the screening test.

Reclassification and Monitoring

CCCS follows the state-mandated reclassification and monitoring criteria for English learners as outlined in current PDE exit criteria and the BEC 22 Pa. Code section §4.26. Program exiting takes place each year when the results of the WIDA ACCESS test are reviewed; determination of students' status is made by September 30 and reported to the state in the October enrollment data. An EL must demonstrate the ability to access challenging academic content and interact with other

students and teachers both academically and socially in an English language setting in order to be considered for reclassification. Evidence of this ability is demonstrated by the student on the annual English language proficiency assessment, ACCESS for ELLs, and gathered by teachers using standardized language use inventories.

Reclassification Criteria

Students are reclassified and exited from the ESL program through two metrics; the ACCESS test score and language inventories from ESL and content teachers. If the total points awarded are 10.5 or greater, then a student should be reclassified. However, if there is compelling evidence to suggest that a student should remain identified as an EL when his/her score exceeds the cutoff, and this evidence is documented along with the ACCESS for ELLs score report and language use inventory forms, then the EL status may be retained.

Monitoring

Exited students are actively monitored for two years; the ESL teacher and classroom teachers maintain communication and complete monitoring forms each quarter. ESL teachers provide support to monitored students as needed, assisting with projects, writing assignments, classwork, and assessments. The student is classified as an exited EL in the first or second year of monitoring. In the third and fourth year of monitoring, students are classified in PIMS as former ELs but are not actively monitored.

Redesignation Process

If an actively monitored EL is not making adequate progress or is not meeting academic standards after supports and interventions have been put in place, redesignation as an EL occurs if it is determined that the former EL student is struggling due to persistent language barriers rather than academic needs. In order for a former ELs who has been redesignated as an active EL to exit the program and be reclassified, they must meet state-required criteria (which includes proficient scores on the annual ACCESS test and teacher inventories). In such a case, the monitoring process starts over from year one upon the second reclassification.

