

PALMERTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT (PASD) ESL PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND GUIDELINES

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Every school district shall provide a program for each student whose dominant language is not English for the purpose of facilitating the student's achievement of English proficiency and the academic standards under PA 4.12. Programs under this section shall include appropriate bilingual-bicultural or English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction. The goal of the program is to successfully place all students in the district's regular program as soon as possible to the ultimate advantage of the student.

All students of the PASD who (1) first acquired a language other than English; or (2) come from a home where a language other than English is spoken will be assessed for potential placement in ESL studies. Instruction will take place in the ESL classroom, and/or in the regular education content classes with the ESL teacher serving as a resource.

The PASD currently addresses the needs of limited English proficient students in grades K-12. An ESL program has been established and is presently operating in all of our district schools: Parkside Elementary (K-1); S. S. Palmer Elementary (2-6); Towamensing Elementary (K-6); Palmerton Area Junior High (7-8); and the Palmerton High School (9-12). There is one ESL teacher servicing the district as well as two ESL Administrators who share responsibility of implementing the PASD ESL policy.

ESL students are provided services that support them through the process of second language acquisition and the development of cognitive academic language skills. ESL and content area teachers teach English language skills including Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening through content based ESL instruction, curriculum integration, cooperative learning, and other effective teaching strategies. Students have the opportunity to participate in art, physical education, music, library, and industrial arts.

The ESL students in PASD are allowed participation in school sponsored activities following the same criteria as non-ESL students. The PASD mandates modifications and adaptations of instruction for all ESL students in the mainstream classroom. All services are provided in the least segregate manner. Students in the ESL program are integrated with the general education population whenever possible.

PASD mandates that instructional materials for ESL students are: age and grade appropriate, sufficient in quality and quantity, and comparable in quality and quantity to those provided to non-ESL students. Materials are ordered as needed for each individual building. The ESL students are equipped with technology comparable in quality and quantity to that provided to non-ESL students.

The facilities provided to ESL students are comparable to those provided to non-ESL students.

PLAN OF ACTION

English will be presented to ESL students as the language of instruction for all content. Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills, as well as Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency, will be developed. Students will receive quality instruction in: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening in accordance with PA Common Core English Language Arts Standards.

ESL students will participate in the regular education content classes. Adaptations and modifications will be made by the regular education and/or content area teacher. The ESL teacher will act as a resource.

ESL PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

An underlying objective of the program is the nurturing of self-pride and self-identity in each pupil's linguistic and cultural heritage. Opportunities will be provided for pupils to learn about the history and customs of their ethnic group. Pupils should be encouraged to participate in activities utilizing their native language and culture. The goals and objectives of the ESL Program include:

- To develop pupil competency in Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening success in the regular program of studies.
- To ensure the opportunity for each student to master commensurate with his/her ability the basic skills which are fundamental to all learning.
- To integrate language and content area instruction which will enable students to acquire English proficiency and subject matter knowledge simultaneously.
- To orient students and parents to the cultural patterns of American life so they can participate fully in the classroom, the schools, and the community.
- To provide educational experiences that will prepare pupils to complete high school and to enter institutions of higher education and/or the world of work.
- To develop student awareness of cultural diversity and to encourage pride in bilingualism.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

PASD makes every attempt to inform language minority parents about all matters for which other parents are notified. When necessary, written notices will be translated and interpreters provided for parent conferences. Every attempt is made to ensure that communication is carried out in the home language. The district maintains a list of all staff or community contacts that are able to act as translators or interpreters. Online translation services are also available (www.tranact.com).

At the beginning of each school year and/or at the time of registration, the district will send a letter to all parents new to the district notifying them of its procedures for communicating with parents in a language other than English. This letter includes the name of a contact person and a telephone number for each building.

CURRENT TESTING PROGRAM

The PASD has aligned its testing of ESL students in accordance with 22 PA Code 4.26, the Basic Education Circulars. All potential ESL students will be assessed initially using the WIDA – Access Placement Test (W-APT) as a placement identification tool. ESL students will participate in the yearly summative state mandated assessment the WIDA ACCESS Test. Both tests measure Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Writing skills of ESL students; and provide a composite ESL proficiency score. Refer to the Can Do Descriptor Chart in Appendix A for guidance on Language Domain and Level of English Language Proficiency.

In addition to the above mentioned English proficiency tests, the Palmerton Area School District ESL teacher, in cooperation with the regular education and content area teachers, will monitor the ESL students' reading and writing growth, portfolios, writing samples, and other performance assessment tools. Literature based reading series, as well as whole language theories, are approaches used during reading instruction at the elementary level.

IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF ESL STUDENTS

Upon entrance into PASD, all students will be given a Home Language Survey (HLS) to be completed by a parent or guardian at the time of registration. The person responsible for registering students will distribute and collect the HLS during the enrollment process.

REFERRAL OF NON-ENGLISH STUDENTS FOR TESTING

New Students

If any answers to the three questions on the HLS are affirmative, the aforementioned individual will forward a copy of the HLS to the administrative office. It will then be routed to the ESL teacher. The original HLS will be kept in the student's cumulative folder. After the initial HLS, the PASD reserves the right to ask more detailed questions that may further explain the language needs of the student and/or parent. If after these assessment(s) the student is determined to have language needs, he/she will then be identified as an ESL student. Parents or guardians of the student will then receive written notification that their child will be administered an English language proficiency test. The W-APT test will be administered and scored by the ESL teacher. Students new to the district at the beginning of the school year must be tested and evaluated within 30 days. Students entering throughout the school year must be tested and evaluated within 14 calendar days of registration. Based on the outcome of the W-APT test, parents or guardians will be notified whether their child is eligible or ineligible for ESL services.

Documentation of the language assessment results and placement determination will be maintained in the student's ESL file until the student is exited. The individual ESL teacher maintains the ESL files. Upon exit from ESL program appropriate records will be placed in the student's cumulative file. Each year documentation of ESL services received by each student will be updated to ensure continuity of and access to this information. Additionally, a list of all ESL students and their placements will be devised by the ESL teacher and will be available to appropriate building teachers.

Currently Enrolled Students

Students who are attending regular classes and experiencing academic difficulties, possibly due to a lack of English proficiency, are referred by the regular classroom teacher to the school ESL teacher.

Special Needs Students

The PASD does not place any student in a special education program based on his/her limited English proficiency. The guidelines and timeframes for Special Education are the same for both ESL and non-ESL students in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Student referrals are made in collaboration with the ESL teacher, the special education teacher, and the regular and content area teachers.

Parents are notified of the results of the Comprehensive Evaluation Report (ER) in their native language. The ER indicates the student's level of English and native language proficiency. Based on these results, when an ESL student has been determined to need special education instruction, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is written for that student. The services, which will address the student's language needs and the language of instruction which is appropriate to meet the student's language needs, are found in the IEP. The multi-disciplinary team, which develops the IEP, may consist of the following people: an ESL teacher, a psychologist, and an administrator. At the meeting, accommodations will be in place to assist the parents in understanding the process as well as to enable the parents to have input in the IEP decision process.

ESL students identified as special education students may continue to receive ESL services as determined by the student's IEP. The ESL teacher, along with classroom teachers, provides ESL instructions and special education services are given by appropriately qualified special education teachers.

PLACEMENT PROCEDURES

ESL students will be placed in a grade level which is appropriate according to educational level/experience and age. Efforts should be made to reduce the possible emotional and psychological trauma which the student may experience in the new environment.

The target population for ESL is defined in terms of the competency of each student in his or her native language and in English. Any student who may be classified within any

of the categories listed below should be provided English as a Second Language instruction.

1. A student, who understands, speaks, reads, and writes in his or her native language fluently, but does not understand, speak, read, or write any English.
2. A student who understands and speaks his or her native language, but has limited or no ability to read and write his or her native language and who does not understand, speak, read, or write any English.
3. A student who has limited understanding of spoken English, but does not speak it.
4. A student who understands and speaks English on a limited basis, but who is unable to read or write English.

The determination of these competencies shall be made by persons who are trained to administer the appropriate procedures.

GRADING

ESL students must be graded using the same grading system as all other students. There are some guidelines for regular education and content area teachers to assist with grading.

Teachers who have English Language Learners for the first time must remember that as these students gain English proficiency they need opportunities to learn in mainstream classes with their peers. The time to make grading decisions is upon entry into the class. With a principal's approval, ESL students may be placed on a pass/fail system if the student is enrolled less than one year at Level 1 proficiency according to the W-APT test. Parents must be notified if any system different than the norm will be used.

Appropriate learning objectives should be set at the beginning of the marking period based on the student's English proficiency. Objectives must be standards-based and measurable. Objectives will be based on PASD approved content curriculum. An ESL teacher may help the content teacher to modify objectives that are in place for native speakers of English to be realistic for the ESL students. Refer to Language Performance Definitions for the Levels of English Language Proficiency in Appendix B.

Paper/pencil test is one way to assess ESL students. ESL students may be better demonstrating what they know or are able to do in ways that are not as language-dependent. Building a model, making a graphic organizer, responding orally, etc. are accommodations that will let the student show his/her capability.

Teachers are encouraged to use multiple measures for assessment. Students then have a variety of ways to demonstrate that they have met, or are in process of meeting, the standard.

After ESL students' objectives and assessments have been modified, it should become clear how he/she is progressing. Indicate that the student is an ESL student and that objectives were modified in parent progress reports. Second language acquisition is a long process that can take as much as 7 – 10 years.

ESL students may NOT be retained in grade due to lack of English proficiency, nor is lack of English proficiency a reason for referral to special education. Grade level teachers should be in contact with ESL teachers when a second language learner is not making appropriate progress. There is a formal process for determining eligibility for ESL classes as stated previously.

Yearly guidance is provided by PDE with respect to standardized test modifications. Go to the PDE website: www.pde.state.pa.us/ESLaccomodations

ESL PROGRAM EXIT CRITERIA

All LEAs must apply Pennsylvania's required exit criteria when exiting ESLs from the language instructional program. Students may not be exited from the language instructional program based only on their oral proficiency; proficiency in academic reading and writing must also be assessed.

The exit criteria provided below for ESL students represent valid and reliable evidence of a student's English language proficiency to exit from an English language instructional program. In order to meet the required state exit criteria for Pennsylvania's English language instructional program for ESL students, all school districts must use both of the required exit criteria listed below. In addition, school districts must ensure that students meet one of the two additional exit criteria provided below to exit from an English language instructional program.

Required Exit Criteria

ESL students must have a score of BASIC on the annual Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA).

ESL students must have a score of 5.0 on a Tier C WIDA ACCESS assessment.

Additional Exit Criteria

ESL students must have final grades of C or better in core subject areas.

ESL students must have scores on district-wide assessments that are comparable to the BASIC performance level on the PSSA.

For special exit circumstances and updated exit criteria, go to the PDE website at www.pde.state.pa.us/esl.

MONITORING OF ESLs AFTER LANGUAGE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM EXIT

Monitoring is required for TWO years after a student exits an ESL/Bilingual program. Appropriate records of student progress must be maintained. Monitoring may include periodic review of grades in content areas, local assessments, required state assessments, and/or teacher observations. Teachers may offer support to monitored students as they would for any student seeking additional assistance with classroom work, instruction, or assessment. Monitoring is NOT an extension of the language instructional program.

Students who are monitored CANNOT be counted as ESL students in any state or federal data collection systems for the purpose of acquiring state or federal funding.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

At the end of each school year, the district will conduct an evaluation of its ESL program. The formal evaluation will examine and make recommendations regarding the following:

1. Program effectiveness with respect to the identification, assessment process, exiting, monitoring, staffing, parental notifications, and adequacy of facilities and instructional materials.
2. The rate of students' progress towards full proficiency in English.
3. Whether the students in the ESL program are keeping up with their peers in other curriculum areas.
4. Whether students in the ESL program are able to participate successfully in the school's full curriculum.
5. Whether students in the ESL program have access to all district programs, including vocational education and special education.
6. Whether students in the ESL program are being retained in grade or dropping out at rates similar to those of their non-ESL peers.

Students' progress is measured using teacher-made tests, portfolios, standardized tests, and performance assessment.

The review process will be carried out by district administration responsible for the ESL program and present the report to the superintendent. Where the program evaluation shows that the ESL program is not achieving its goals, the PASD will modify the program accordingly.