

**BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY
MEETING AGENDA ITEM**

TITLE: Programming for Entering and Emerging English Language Learners at the High School Level **DATE:** January 28, 2016

PRESENTER(S): Maha Abdelkader, Acting Coordinator, International and ESOL Programs
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VISION 2018 GOAL: Students Staff Families and Community Organization

OVERVIEW:

The Howard County Public School System Office of Research and Program Evaluation conducted a review of the ESOL program to help improve learning outcomes for every English Language Learner (ELL). The review revealed that programming changes were needed for Entering and Emerging ELLs at the high school level. Based on the review’s findings and research on current best practices, the International and ESOL Office has developed a comprehensive plan for improving outcomes for high school ELLs.

RECOMMENDATION/FUTURE DIRECTION:

The HCPSS ESOL Program will maximize college and career readiness for beginning ELLs at the high school level through: better alignment of ESOL and content instruction, preferably at a student’s home school; improvement of the scope and availability of ESOL-specific professional learning to all high school staff; and, strengthening of supports for ELLs exiting ESOL instruction and transitioning to post-high school education and careers.

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Overview

As Howard County continues to grow, more students with limited English proficiency (LEP) are enrolling in high school (HS). Many of these English Language Learners (ELLs) have never attended school in the United States before and have very limited proficiency with American English. “Entering” and “emerging” students require unique supports in order to graduate ready for college and careers. Gaining English proficiency is critical in order for these students to access content in all curricular areas.

This report contains recommendations designed to address the needs of ELLs at the high school level who have recently arrived in the United States with low English literacy skills and, often, limited formal schooling in their native countries. These recommendations prioritize changes to how the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) provides ESOL instruction to maximize instructional time and alignment with content courses. Recommendations include increasing the professional learning opportunities afforded all staff who work with ELLs at the high school level to create a robust support system for ELLs and all HCPSS students. Additionally, it is essential to solidify supports that are provided to students to successfully transition from ESOL instruction to success in content courses and onto college and careers.

The HCPSS English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Program

The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) ESOL program provides English language development supports for students in Kindergarten to Grade 12. The program focuses on developing students’ proficiency in processing and producing communicative and academic English.

Students are eligible for ESOL placement testing if a language other than English is reported to be their primary language. The International and ESOL Office uses the Maryland state English language proficiency assessment W-APT (WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test) as its placement test. Once tested, students qualify for ESOL services based on their W-APT English proficiency level scores. The W-APT yields proficiency levels:

- Entering – 1
- Emerging – 2
- Developing – 3
- Expanding – 4
- Bridging – 5
- Reaching – 6.

However, families of students who qualify for ESOL services may opt for their child to be waived from these services.

The ESOL curriculum aligns English language instruction with content standards. Students develop their language and literacy skills in the context of the content curriculum. ESOL teachers analyze the academic language demands involved in grade-level teaching and learning to identify the English language skills required for functional use in discipline specific topics. Aligning English language instruction with content instruction ensures that language functions are differentiated for student's English proficiency while maintaining the cognitive function and rigor of grade-level instruction.

Program Philosophy

English Language Learners are a dynamic group of students. They possess diverse experiences, skills, and knowledge that enhance their education and enrich school communities. The active participation of English learners in classrooms promotes language development while providing all students with opportunities to understand other perspectives and cultures.

The HCPSS International and ESOL Office promotes the development of students' proficiency in English listening, speaking, reading, and writing as they engage in continued study of academic content including language arts, math, science, and social studies.

ESOL teachers recognize and lift up the strengths of English Language Learners to maximize their personal academic growth and their contributions as valued members of our school communities. They apply knowledge of every student's unique cultural background, English language proficiency profile, and academic strengths in order to promote inclusive and rigorous instruction for all students.

Across all grades, ESOL instruction is aligned with the WIDA English language development standards and the Maryland State College and Career-Ready Standards (MCCRS). In partnerships with content teachers, ESOL teachers assess and monitor students' English language development, analyze the language demands of classroom tasks, and apply Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles to ensure that all students are engaged in learning. UDL is a framework to improve teaching and learning for all people based on how humans learn.

High School ESOL Instructional Plan

The HCPSS ESOL Program is a critical component in realizing the goals set forth in *Vision 2018* for English Language Learners in High School. The work of the ESOL program is particularly relevant to the following outcomes:

- **Outcome 1.1** - The instructional program is rigorous, globally-relevant, and aligned with international and/or nationally recognized college and career readiness standards.

- **Outcome 1.2** - Students have equitable access to a rigorous instructional program.
- **Outcome 1.3** - Technology is leveraged so that students have access to learning experiences that meet their needs and interests.
- **Outcome 1.4** - Students are engaged in the learning process.
- **Outcome 1.5** - Students meet or exceed rigorous performance standards
- **Outcome 1.6** - Meaningful measures of student outcomes are in place.
- **Outcome 1.7** - Schools support the social and emotional safety and well-being of all students.
- **Outcome 1.8** - Schools support student well-being and the development of balanced lifestyles.

In order to ensure that all students achieve academic excellence, it is important for all stakeholders to understand, communicate, and support high expectations for Entering level ELLs who are new to HCPSS. Creating an instructional plan for HS ESOL is essential for establishing consistency and quality. Shared goals and actions will connect and focus the varied stakeholders implementing the ESOL program. The instructional plan will also create a reasonable timeframe for implementation and milestones for monitoring instruction and evaluating student data to determine if students are making adequate progress towards graduating college- and career-ready. Celebrating achievements and adjusting the plan, as needed, are also a vital part of any improvement process.

In order to strengthen the HS program for ELLs, HCPSS is currently reviewing four- and five-year high school plans for individual ELLs, as well as conducting a review of how placement decisions for Entering level students are aligned with graduation requirements. The International and ESOL Office is working to ensure that students have opportunities for success in core content classes and are on the path to graduation, regardless of their English proficiency level. For each course, the quality of the content, the appropriateness of the instructional approach, and the fidelity of instruction will be examined.

Current K-12 ESOL Programs

Literacy development is a primary focus of ESOL instruction in grades K-12. ESOL teachers provide instruction through several ESOL Program Models. The *small group/pull-out* model is a program in which the ESOL teacher works with a small group of students outside of the content classroom using curriculum designed to teach English language skills (e.g., listening, speaking, reading, writing, study skills, content vocabulary) and cultural orientation to ELLs. In the *co-taught/push-in* model, the ESOL teacher goes into the general education classroom to work with ELLs by collaborating with the classroom teacher. Instruction may involve the same content-based curriculum designed to teach English language skills and cultural orientation used in the small/group pull-out model. Sheltered *classes* are comprised of only

ELLs. In this instructional approach the ESOL teacher instructs ELLs for a course period to make academic instruction in English understandable to ELLs by developing vocabulary through physical activities, visual aids, and the environment. In the sheltered class model, the ESOL teacher is the teacher of record and assigns a report card grade to the students.

At the high school level, the *Newcomer Program* is a program designed to meet the needs of incoming ELLs, who have recently arrived in the US, with low levels of English literacy skills and, often, limited formal schooling in their native countries. The goal of the Newcomer Program is to help students acquire beginning English and core academic skills, as well as to familiarize them with the US school system. In the HCPSS, the Newcomer Program takes place at River Hill High School. Families of students who qualify for placement in the Newcomer program may opt for their child to be waived from this placement if an ESOL program exists at their geographic home school.

High School (HS) ESOL Data

As with all pedagogical decision-making, the ESOL program tailors instruction at the county, school, and student level based on data. Based on current accountability measures, the primary data sources examined to track for the growth of ESOL students are the ACCESS for ELLs and the PARCC assessments.

Accountability for ELLs

Under Title III of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students, states are required to establish standards related to English language proficiency and to assess, on an annual basis, the progress of ELLs served by language instruction educational programs funded under Title III. States are required to establish three Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs) related to these ELL assessments and the state academic achievement assessments required under Title I.

Federal legislation (§3122 of NCLB) outlines three types of AMAO criteria for State Education Agencies (SEAs) and Local Education Agencies (LEAs). AMAO criteria are described below:

- *AMAO 1 (Progress)*: at a minimum, districts must assure annual increases in the number or percentage of children making progress in learning English;
- *AMAO 2 (Proficiency)*: at a minimum, districts must assure annual increases in the number or percentage of children attaining English proficiency by the end of each school year; and
- *AMAO 3 (Adequate Yearly Progress)*: districts assure the ELL students are making adequate yearly progress on the state's academic content assessments.

Maryland ELL Assessment and Standards

In 2011, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) joined the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium, a multi-state coalition of state departments of education that promotes equitable educational opportunities for ELLs. As part of the consortium, Maryland adopted the WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards. The ELD Standards align directly with the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards and utilize five proficiency levels to measure the progression of a student's English development. ACCESS for ELLs (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners) is an English language proficiency assessment given to students in Kindergarten through Grade 12 who have been identified as ELL. The ACCESS for ELLs is given annually to monitor students' progress in acquiring academic English. The results are used by MSDE to calculate AMAOs at the SEA and LEA levels.

Annual Measureable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs) for ELLs

The MSDE ELL/Title III Office, in collaboration with LEAs, set targets for AMAOs I and II. These targets were set such that LEAs would reach 10-year targets of 62 percent for AMAO I (1.1 percent annual rate of increase) and 21 percent for AMAO II (1.3 percent annual rate of increase). AMAOs I and II are LEA-level targets set by the MSDE and are the same for all LEAs statewide.

AMAO I reflects the percentage of students making at least 0.5 overall composite proficiency level growth on the ACCESS for ELLs from one year to the next.

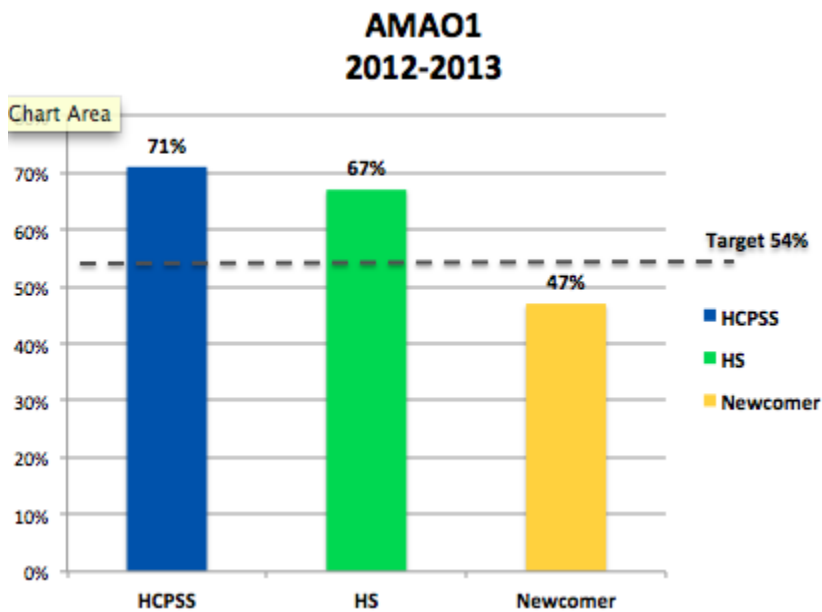
AMAO II focuses on the percentage of students who attain English proficiency, defined as an overall composite proficiency level of 5.0 or higher and literacy composite proficiency level of 4.0 or higher on the ACCESS for ELLs. In Maryland, this is also part of the ESOL exit criteria.

AMAO III criteria are those used by MSDE to determine School Progress for the LEP student group. To meet AMAO III, the LEA as a whole must meet unique Annual Measureable Objectives (AMOs) set for the LEP student group. These AMOs include proficiency on the statewide reading and mathematics assessments, as well as the cohort graduation rate. Reading and mathematics proficiency has been defined as the percentage of LEPs scoring proficient or advanced on the state measures of Reading and Mathematics, respectively, in Grades 3 through 8; and the percentage of the LEP graduating cohort passing the English and Algebra state assessments in high school. AMO targets were set for all schools and for the district as a whole in order to be on track to reduce by half the percentage of students scoring basic on the MSAs or not passing the HSAs by 2017. In addition, AMAO III set a target for the LEP group's cohort graduation rate. MSDE calculated graduation targets by setting annual equal

increments that reduce by half the percentage of non-graduate students in each student group so as to reach the 95 percent overall graduation rate goal by SY2020.

The AMAO scores have served as a valuable resource when examining ways to improve the HCPSS ESOL program. For example, AMAO I scores are being used to evaluate the HCPSS Newcomer program. AMAO I is calculated by comparing the ACCESS scores for students who participated in two consecutive years of testing. First time test takers are not included in this calculation. In 2013, HCPSS exceeded the AMAO I target for ELLs in K-12. Analysis of the AMAO I scores by level showed that ELLs in HCPSS high schools also exceeded the state target. However examination of the group of ELLs enrolled in the Newcomer program for at least two years of ACCESS testing, showed that fewer than half of the students made the 0.5 level growth target.

Figure 1. AMAO 1 Performance 2012-2013



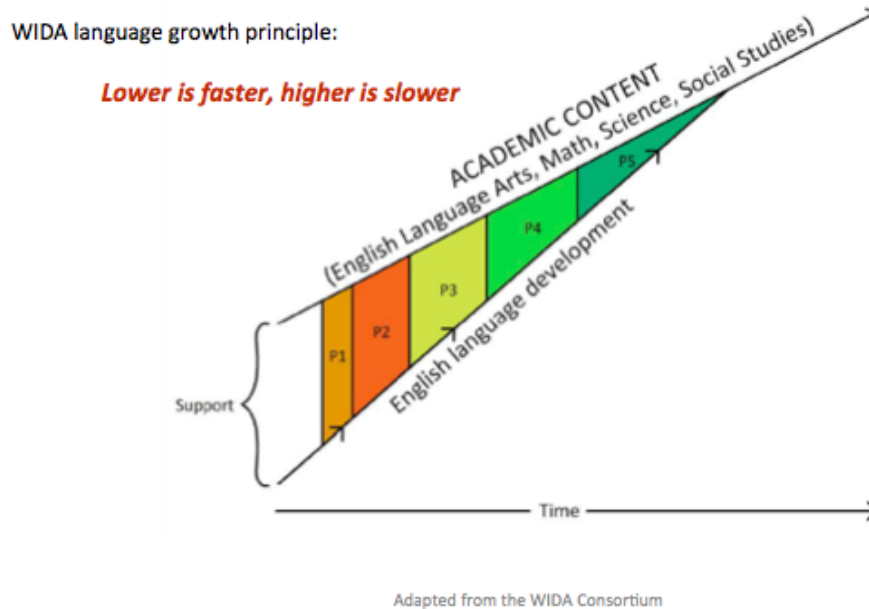
WIDA analyzed prior performance of ELLs and determined ELLs who start at lower proficiency make faster gains than those who start at a higher proficiency. This is the WIDA growth principle. In 2012-2013, ELLs were recommended for placement in the Newcomer Program based solely on scoring at the Entering level of proficiency on the W-APT.

Based on the WIDA growth principle, this group of students with initially low levels of proficiency should have been making the fastest growth of all high school ELLs. Suspicions that actual growth would not meet expectations, born out by these results,

prompted a review of the instructional practices at the Newcomer Program.

Figure 2. Acquisition of Language and Content

Acquisition of Language and Content



The ESOL Program Review

During the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years, the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) Office of Research and Program Evaluation conducted a review of the HCPSS ESOL program to help improve learning outcomes for every English Language Learner (ELL). The program review analyzed instructional practices, enrollment and course placement processes, and professional learning related to ELLs. The review's findings addressed aspects of the ESOL program that were in need of improvement. These included the need to eliminate achievement gaps between ELLs and other students and the need to strengthen delivery of services to newly arrived ELLs at the high school level.

Program Review Findings regarding the ESOL Program in High Schools

In order to ensure that placement and instruction decisions continued to be appropriate given the shifting demographics of the HCPSS student population, the

International and ESOL Office collaborated with the Office of Continuous Improvement to discuss improving the growth of students in the ESOL program. Opportunities for improvement included increasing instructional time, ensuring clear curriculum goals and transitional supports, and providing professional learning for staff working with ELLs. While the program review encompassed the entire K-12 ESOL program, the findings and recommendations discussed below will focus on instruction at the high school level, especially for those students whose English language skills are at the “Entering” and “Emerging” levels.

Initially, the Newcomer Program was adopted at a time when most HCPSS high schools had few ELL students with only beginning English language skills. Because of this, it was not practical (or feasible) for every high school to have a program aligned with the needs of such a small number of students. Consolidating instruction of this unique student population at River Hill HS was practical from both a financial and pedagogical perspective. One significant drawback of this approach was that instructional time for Newcomer students was more limited than for other students due to the transportation time from their home schools to River Hill High School. Travel time resulted in students losing two credit hours every year. As a result, students did not receive instruction in Science or Social Studies and may have led to the below expectations growth on the ACCESS assessments that the program review discovered.

Another barrier to student growth was that a curriculum had not been developed for Newcomer Center students in all content areas. Procedures also prevented students from exiting the program before the end of the school year, even if they showed that they were academically ready for inclusion. Students were unable to accelerate into more challenging content instruction prior to the end of the school year. These challenges with transitioning students out of the program resulted in instructional level mismatches and reduced student engagement.

The HCPSS did not meet AMAO III, part of which is achieving the graduation rate target for ELLs. This may have been due in part to students not receiving sufficient help in understanding their post- high school options and setting and achieving concrete post-secondary targets. In addition, administrators and ESOL teachers did not always meet with older Entering and Emerging level students and their families to make them aware of options for continuing their education and finding well-paying careers before they aged out of high school without having met the graduation requirements.

The ESOL Program Plan for “Entering” and “Emerging” High School Students

In response to the review, essential elements for improving the ESOL program were identified. These include ensuring access to rigorous content instruction provided by

highly qualified educators, providing rigorous English language instruction by highly skilled ESOL teachers, communicating clear expectations to all staff about their role in the education of ELLs, and utilizing multiple measures when determining appropriate placements and services. Additionally, the program needed to ensure that students' access to appropriate content courses and counseling services would not be limited by their English language proficiency.

During the 2014-2015 school year, a multidisciplinary group analyzed the program review's findings that were specific to the services provided to HS ELLs at the Entering level of English proficiency. The group included curriculum coordinators, high school principals and assistant principals, guidance counselors, and high school ESOL teachers. Based on the findings from the program review, previously identified elements for program improvement, and the research literature about supporting high school ELLs at the Entering and Emerging levels of English proficiency, the group developed recommendations to improve programming for newly arrived high school ELLs by increasing supports to students, staff members, families and the community, and the HCPSS organization as a whole. The group identified recommendations in the following areas:

- Registration and Placement
- Enrollment in Aligned Curriculum Content
- High Quality Instruction
- Professional Learning
- Student Services
- College and Career Readiness

Implementation of the recommendations will ensure that ELLs graduate college- and career-ready.

Registration and Placement

The first step in a high quality instructional experience for Entering and Emerging level high school age ELLs is an appropriate instructional placement. For this reason, HCPSS needs to ensure that student registration and placement procedures recognize the heterogeneity of the student population and honor what students have already mastered in another language or in a different country.

Newly enrolled students with Entering level proficiency vary greatly in their academic backgrounds. While some students may have gaps or interruptions in their educational experience, others may have earned numerous credits in their previous school system. Placement decisions need to be based on multiple criteria in order to address the multidimensional aspects of the student's academic profile such as age upon enrollment, literacy in their native language, and interrupted schooling.

Currently, grade level placement is based on English course placement. Students with Entering level proficiency do not have English credits upon enrollment and, therefore, are placed in English 9, putting them on track to graduate in a minimum of 4 years, regardless of their age at enrollment. As a result, our Entering level ELLs are at risk of aging out or dropping out due to lack of engagement.

Age-appropriate grade placement of ELLs is necessary to ensure equal access to quality English language instruction and appropriate academic, cognitive, and social opportunities. This is in alignment with federal legislation such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1968, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Key Components for Registration and Placement

The HCPSS will ensure that student registration procedures recognize the heterogeneity of the student population at the Entering level and honor each student's past educational experiences. The following key components will support appropriate registration:

1. Incorporate multiple criteria for placement decisions that include credits earned in the student's native language, credits in content areas, age upon enrollment, and alignment with student's last grade completed.
2. Provide robust credit recovery opportunities so that students can earn the four English credits required to graduate. This may include scheduling two English courses in one academic year, if needed.
3. Award English credits for English courses taken in a student's home country based on student transcript review using the Metropolitan Area Foreign Student Advisor (MAFSA) guidelines.
4. Actively pursue any available student records to ensure appropriate placement decisions are made for all ELLs. When transcripts are obtained that provide more information about a student's educational experience, placement decisions may need to be revisited and revised to ensure the appropriate instructional match.
5. Ensure that Entering level ELLs enrolling in HCPSS at 18 years or older receive counseling from the Reinstatement and Enrollment Committee (REC) about pathways to a high school diploma.
6. Offer alternative coursework for ELLs entering the system who are at least 18 years of age and have significantly interrupted formal education. Ensure they receive intensive instruction and academic skills to prepare for the GED.

Enrollment in Aligned Content Curriculum

Students' language proficiency should not limit their access to rigorous content instruction. Students who are exposed to on-grade level curriculum, with appropriate

linguistic support, make greater gains than those students enrolled in courses with less rigorous standards which were designed for younger learners.

Content instruction for ELLs in high school must align with the strengths and needs of adolescent learners, such as interests, hobbies, affinity to technology/multimedia, and literacy activities related to part-time work and immigrant household responsibilities. Instructional practices that take into consideration these adolescent and immigrant experiences, and help students develop personal goals, can be strong motivators for developing academic literacy and content proficiency (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007).

In secondary mathematics, for example, academic rigor can be identified as instruction of cognitively demanding material that emphasizes conceptual, versus procedural, understanding (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics [NCTM], 2000). An overemphasis on limited English language proficiency as the rationale for enrollment in less rigorous math courses distorts how underachievement is understood because it detracts from pedagogical and institutional sources of inequity. The low achievement of many Latina/os and other ELLs may be the result of limited access to rigorous content courses (Capraro, Young, Lewis, Yetkiner, & Woods, 2009).

It is essential to provide appropriately targeted services for newly arrived ELLs with Entering level proficiency at their home high schools, when possible. The former demographics that supported the use of the centralized Newcomer Center no longer exist and instruction of students at their home high schools should be the default placement decision. Students should not be programmatically isolated as a result of their limited language proficiency. The current relocation of Entering level students to an alternative high school location has resulted in a reduced school day and 80 minutes of lost instructional time per day. This practice also limits students' opportunities to access robust content instruction, extended day supports, and actively participate in their home school communities.

Key Components for Enrollment in Aligned Content Curriculum

The HCPSS must ensure that course enrollment procedures allow ELLs to access and achieve grade-level standards. It is critical to provide Entering level ELLs with the benefits of participation in their home school community such as developing peer relationships, interaction with native speakers of English who serve as language models, and regular active participation in school community building activities such as assemblies. Research shows that when placed at length in segregated settings, ELLs may be at risk for school failure, delayed graduation, and negative academic self-concepts (Gandara & Orfield, 2010). This is in alignment with the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition recommendations for Creating An

Inclusive Environment for and Avoiding the Unnecessary Segregation of English Learners.

The following key components will support appropriate enrollment:

1. Ensure that content instruction is provided to Entering level ELLs by highly skilled content teachers. For example, ELLs in HS will enroll in a minimum of Algebra I taught by a highly qualified mathematics teacher.
2. Ensure ELLs have equitable access to strategic interventions that support all students at risk for academic underperformance such as Strategic Reading and Algebra I Seminar.
3. Ensure access to beyond school day supports such as 21st Century Community Learning Center/Bridges programs, Academic Achievement programs, and other school level extended day and year supports that provide enrichment opportunities and academic assistance.
4. Provide access to peer mentors and tutors from within the school community through honor societies and partnerships with advanced World Language students.
5. Provide access to participation in school clubs and foster connections with staff and peers within the school community. Adolescent motivation in general is highly variable and is often dependent upon purpose and context, including relationships with peers, parents, teachers, and others (e.g., McCombs & Barton, 1998; Reed et al., 2004).
6. Provide opportunities for ELLs to earn the Student Service Learning required for graduation. Entering level ELLs often enroll in high school without documentation of service learning hours and need opportunities to meet this graduation requirement that their peers have already earned through their middle school coursework.

High Quality Instruction

The focus of any program improvement process must be high quality instruction for all HCPSS students. ELL accommodations are critical supports that help ELLs access developmentally appropriate content instruction and assessment despite their limited English skills. Accommodations and accessibility features must be provided and instruction should be aligned with grade level standards and research-based strategies.

According to federal and state laws, ELLs must be included in large-scale content assessments and be provided with appropriate accommodations so that their data accurately reflect their content knowledge and performance, not simply their English proficiency (MSDE, 2012). The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) suggests that providing accommodations during instruction and assessments is an appropriate means of promoting equal access to grade-level content for ELLs. The ESOL program review found low proportions of non-ESOL teachers and

administrators who indicated having received professional learning opportunities on providing accommodations and assessing ELLs. Even if this lack of opportunities is reflective of a belief that staff may have mastered ELL accommodation and assessment practices, refresher courses emphasizing the HCPSS' changing ELL population and the new high stakes test regime would be beneficial. For administrators who may also serve as the School Accountability Coordinator, such opportunities may be critical. All teachers of ELLs must also be made aware of their federal obligations in the provision of accommodations to ELLs.

Additionally, ELLs must be considered in the improvement strategies and professional learning plans of secondary curricular programs. School leadership's support of the education of ELLs must be evident in each of the high school's school improvement plans and professional learning plans.

Curriculum offices must continue to include expectations and strategies for working with Entering level ELLs in curricular materials and tools to increase the ability of content teachers to provide appropriate accommodations and supports. Strategies must emphasize teaching to the grade-level standards using differentiated materials and processes that provide Entering level ELLs with multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement.

Key Strategies for Instruction

Students should receive high quality instruction from high skilled and motivated instructional professionals. The following key components will support high quality instruction:

1. Expand ESOL summer school program offerings to allow students to earn a full English credit each summer, as needed.
2. Provide Credit Recovery options during and beyond the school day and ensure that students receive accommodations to increase accessibility and comprehensibility.
3. Provide developmentally appropriate, research-based instructional materials for literacy development in older students.
4. Align ESOL English Literature and Composition courses with the English 9 and 10 curricula to ensure all students work towards the same grade-level standards regardless of their English proficiency
5. Provide clear and consistent course expectations for students across ESOL course offerings that ensure students are not simply graded on their language proficiency level.
6. Provide access to co-taught content courses that allow Entering level students to participate in grade-level courses with the support of an ESOL teacher or paraeducator.

7. Provide access to instructional technology and ESOL course materials through Canvas.
8. Promote co-teaching between content teachers and ESOL teachers to ensure that curriculum instruction, teaching strategies, and grouping strategies are implemented in ways that increase accessibility and comprehensibility to Entering ELLs.
9. Give careful consideration to the scheduling of ESOL paraeducators, who provide strategic support to improve comprehensibility of academic language for Entering level ELLs in content classrooms, in order to maximize supports for Entering and Emerging students.
10. Delineate outcomes for ESOL tutorial courses. Set clear expectations and guidelines for ESOL tutorial courses to support ELLs' participation in content classes. Design standardized syllabi and grading procedures for consistency across courses and schools.
11. Provide content teachers with differentiated materials and instructional resources that include options for content, process, and product to ensure accessibility for Entering level ELLs. Adapting the curriculum to match achieved language proficiency will ensure "Entering" level ELLs access to challenging academic content.

Improvements to Professional Learning

As mentioned above, the program review found that most non-ESOL teachers at the high school level do not receive ongoing professional learning on how to best instruct, support, and assess ELLs. Through professional learning opportunities and other supports all staff can better assist high school ELLs.

Content teachers must have access to high quality professional learning experiences pertinent to working with ELLs including:

- Second language acquisition
- Reading and writing in a second language
- Methods for teaching content subjects to ELLs
- Alternative assessment
- Sociocultural issues in education
- ELL Accommodations and Accessibility Features.

ESOL teachers must participate in high quality professional learning experiences pertinent to:

- The role of the ESOL teacher as language instructor and consultant on second language acquisition
- Rigor
- English language development standards
- Formative assessment strategies to identify what students have already mastered in a different language or in a different country.

ESOL paraeducators must participate in high quality professional learning experiences pertinent to:

- Accommodations and accessibility features for Entering level ELLs
- Culturally responsive practices to foster meaningful relationships with newly arrived ELLs with entering and emerging English proficiency.

Literacy coaches must participate in high quality professional learning experiences pertinent to:

- The teacher's role as educational linguist and the function of language in different disciplines
- The features of academic language
- Developing listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills of newly arrived ELLs with Entering and Emerging language proficiency.

Key Components of Professional Learning

The HCPSS will ensure that all high school instructional staff develop expertise in working with Entering and Emerging level ELLs. The following components are key in ensuring all staff are able to support ELLs at the high school level:

1. Development and communication to all staff of clear expectations about their roles in the education of ELLs. This is in line with the HCPSS's initiative to improve staff engagement.
2. Implementation of small group, role-specific professional learning opportunities that are ongoing and job embedded. Teachers' backgrounds, experiences, beliefs, professional identities and levels of commitment to school system goals affect how they approach professional learning. To increase the achievement of newly arrived ELLs, professional learning for content teachers should provide many opportunities to practice new instructional approaches with ongoing assessment, feedback, and coaching so that the learning becomes fully integrated into routine behaviors. This level of professional learning can only be sustained through content-specific professional learning opportunities. The Curriculum Offices will develop resources and professional learning for content teachers. Ninth grade content courses must be accessible to newly arriving ELLs through the use of accommodations, and the principles of Universal Design for Learning. The most critical courses for newly arriving ELLs are Algebra I and Earth and Space Science. In order to make these courses accessible for newly arriving ELLs, the International and ESOL Office will collaborate with the Secondary Math Office, and the Secondary Science Office to provide ongoing professional learning through currently existing learning communities, such as Math Gatherings, Science Gatherings, ITL meetings, and Math Instructional Support Teacher (MIST) meetings. The half credit course, Law and the Citizen is a great Social Studies course option

- to prepare ELLs for the required Government course as well as orient newly arriving ELLs to their new community.
3. Professional learning opportunities related to Universal Design for Learning for both content and ESOL teachers. These opportunities must convey that having multiple means of representing and expressing knowledge helps to create a personalized learning environment for newly arrived ELLs with Entering English proficiency and that personalization of instruction is a goal for working with all students.
 4. Professional learning for all educators working with newly arrived ELLs specific to providing ELL accommodations. This is critical to ensure fidelity in documentation and implementation of ELL accommodations during instruction and assessment.
 5. Provision of on-going professional learning for content and ESOL teachers specific to formative assessment of ELLs. Teachers must use multiple assessment measures frequently and formatively in order to refine placement decisions and teaching strategies.
 6. Professional learning for ESOL teachers specific to teaching literacy skills to older readers. The HCPSS will consider engaging experts from The WIDA Consortium, The Center for Applied Linguistic, and UMBC to share strategies and best practices for literacy development for older ELLs.
 7. Collaboration with curricular programs to share instructional strategies for working with Entering level ELLs during content-specific professional learning opportunities such as Math Gatherings, Science Gatherings, English ITL meetings, and Literacy Coach meetings.
 8. Support of ESOL teachers, content teachers, guidance counselors, and pupil personnel workers attending professional conferences related to ELLs and English language acquisition.
 9. Design and implementation of professional learning where content teachers receive workshop wages to attend and hear from experts in the field regarding best practices for working with ELLs, collaboration with ESOL teachers, Universal Design for Learning, differentiating for proficiency level, and instructional accommodations for ELLs.

Student Services

Newly arrived ELLs with Entering English proficiency must receive equitable treatment from guidance counselors and access to the full range of services they provide. Service providers must recognize and be prepared to work with a subset of newly arrived ELLs who are dealing with challenges related to trauma and resiliency.

Professional learning for guidance counselors, pupil personnel workers, and other service providers is critical to increase their capacity to work with newly arrived ELLs. The following outcomes are key:

- Increase awareness of potential linguistic, cultural, economic, and logistical obstacles to the participation of the families of newly arrived ELLs in school based programs and events.
- Increase capacity to address obstacles energetically, creatively, and in culturally responsive ways.
- Provide access to ethnic community liaisons, interpreters, child care, and transportation.
- Increase awareness that in some families the provision of necessities, protection, and moral guidance consumes all of the parents' time and resources.
- Communicate in a culturally responsive way with parents whose support of their children may not be evident because of its lack of alignment with local expectations.
- Presume competence and identify a rigorous instructional match for newly arrived ELLs.

Key Components

The HCPSS will identify and provide support for high school staff members working with the social-emotional needs of Entering level English Language Learners. It will identify and communicate resources for meeting the varied needs of newly arrived high school English Language Learners with entering and emerging English proficiency. Newly arrived ELLs in high school should have access to services that have already been provided to HCPSS students prior to entering high school, such as vision and hearing screenings. These key components include:

1. Guidance counselors recognizing the heterogeneity of the student population that is collectively labeled “ELLs” and being able to vary their responses to better address the unique needs of individual students (e.g., trauma and resiliency, funds of knowledge and community support, literacy in native language, size and resources of local ethnic enclave).
2. Providing prompt access to health services such as vision and hearing screenings. Newly arrived ELLs entering high school with limited prior access to formal education have also had limited access to health care. It is critical to promptly identify and provide health supports to eliminate potential barriers to academic success.
3. Schools promptly distinguishing between developmental issues in language acquisition, gaps in prior schooling, and learning disabilities in order to provide newly arrived ELLs with disabilities access to special education and 504 services.

Access to Multiple Paths Towards Graduation and College and Career Readiness

HCPSS must ensure that Entering and Emerging high school ELLs are provided with multiple opportunities to transition out of ESOL services and more restrictive placements in order to maximize student engagement in the academic and social activities of their home schools. ELLs must be provided with frequent and varied ways to demonstrate academic growth so that instruction is provided at the appropriate level of rigor. To ensure success for students transitioning out of ESOL services, there needs to be provision of transitional resources and supports for those who test out of eligibility for ESOL services. These resources should be developed and provided jointly by both ESOL and content instructors.

Many Entering and Emerging high school ELLs start high school at a later age than their peers or require more than four years of high school to meet graduation requirements. For this reason, the HCPSS must provide multiple on-ramps to the four-year graduation plan and flexible opportunities for Entering level ELLs to earn full or partial credits.

Key Components of Access to College and Career Readiness

The HCPSS must continue to develop multiple pathways towards graduation and college and career readiness for Entering and Emerging English Language Learners. These should take into account students' age, strengths, prior course work, and educational goals. The setting should be the most inclusive and rigorous available. The following components are key:

1. Create mid-year arrival guidance (possible partial credits, semester classes).
2. Ensure appropriate mathematics assessments are available.
3. Communicate that students need to take the PARCC assessment for English 10 in their 10th grade year in order to have the option for Bridge Plans.
4. Flexibly place students to allow for movement between sections and courses.
5. Identify opportunities in schedules for students who register throughout the year.
6. Provide training for registrars, data clerks, and other schedulers on the unique factors related to placing ELLs.
7. Ensure that preliminary placements do not limit movement once students are being instructed.
8. Identify and share model schedules that allow for movement between classes for English Language Learners.
9. When possible, offer multiple sections of the same ESOL course simultaneously in the school day to allow for movement.
10. Ensure scheduling allows flexible options for student placement. Students should have flexible scheduling opportunities that allow for movement between sections and courses to align with language growth throughout the school year. For example, students enrolled in ESOL Literature and Composition I should have the option to transition to an English 9 course.

11. Identify and recommend flexible and partial credit options across content areas for ELLs enrolling mid-year. For example, Social Studies Department half-credit offerings vary across schools but may include Law and the Citizen, African American Studies, Latin American Studies, and Leadership courses.
12. Ensure Pupil Personnel Workers and registrars jointly review the Exit Interview Data for ELL drop-outs in order to develop strategies for reducing the ELL drop-out rate.
13. Provide training for Data Clerks regarding students who leave the country to reduce the number of dropouts who are identified as Whereabouts Unknown (W50).
14. Continue discussions with students who enroll in the HCPSS at an age that precludes graduation with their school counselors and administrators on specific educational plans. Such discussions should provide information on options that are available to the students that would best fit their postsecondary aspirations.

Conclusion

In the spirit of continuous improvement, the International and ESOL Office has worked with the Office of Research and Program Evaluation to complete a comprehensive program review and develop next steps to maximize college and career readiness for all high school English Language Learners. Due to shifting demographics and recent changes to HCPSS curriculum and Maryland graduation requirements, the HCPSS ESOL Program will shift away from the centralized Newcomer Center towards instruction at students' home high schools in the most inclusive placements possible. The International and ESOL Office will partner with the secondary school curricular leaders to better align content and ESOL instruction at the high school level and ensure all students are instructed at the appropriate level of rigor. New professional learning opportunities will be developed so that all high school staff understand the vital role they play in ensuring that ELLs graduate college and career ready. Special focus will be put on ways to strengthen supports for students as they transition out of more sheltered ESOL placements to more inclusive instruction, exit the ESOL program, and prepare to leave high school for additional educational opportunities or the world of work.

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