

Attached please find the full report, *English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Program Review*. This report was initiated in SY2013 by the Howard County Public School System Division of Curriculum, Instruction and Administration to describe the state of the ESOL Program and identify areas of need. The information gathered was intended to guide internal improvement processes. Since the report, changes to the ESOL Program, including State exam and exit criteria, have occurred and the information reported may no longer be an up-to-date representation of the current ESOL Program.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Program Review
2013 – 2014

Office of Research and Program Evaluation
Division of Accountability
Howard County Public School System

Table of Contents

Table of Contents i

List of Tables ii

List of Figures iii

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms iv

An Overview of the HCPSS ESOL Program 5

 Current ESOL Program Characteristics 6

Effective Instruction for English Language Learners 9

Research Questions 11

Method 12

 Participants 12

 Measures 13

 Procedures 14

 Data Analysis 15

Results 15

 ESOL Service Delivery: Program Models 15

 ELL-Responsive Learning Environment 16

 ESOL Placement Practices 30

Discussion 31

 Recommendations 34

References 38

Appendix A: ESOL Instruction Observational Tool (ELIOT) 39

Appendix B: ESOL Interview Script (ELIS) 40

Appendix C1: Coding Process of Focus Group Responses 41

Appendix C2: Coding Process of Focus Group Responses 42

Appendix C3: Coding Process of Focus Group Responses 43

Appendix C4: Coding Process of Focus Group Responses 44

List of Tables

Table 1 *AMAO 3 Attainment by School Level for SY2013* 9

Table 2 *ESOL Program Survey Response Rates and Respondent Characteristics*..... 12

Table 3 *Characteristics of Schools Sampled for Walkthroughs by Level* 13

Table 4 *Percentage of Staff who Observe ELLs' Cultures Represented in the Following Ways* 19

Table 5 *Average ESOL Instruction Observational Tool (ELIOT) Ratings by School Level* 26

List of Figures

Figure 1. <i>HCPSS English Language Learners racial/ethnic compositions by school level.</i>	6
Figure 2. <i>Newcomer Program students' racial/ethnic composition.</i>	7
Figure 3. <i>Percent English Language Learners who met AMAOs 1 and 2 by school level.</i>	7
Figure 4. <i>Percent English Language Learners who met AMAOs 1 and 2 by race/ethnicity and school level.</i>	8
Figure 5. <i>Percent English Language Learners who met AMAO 2 by race/ethnicity.</i>	8
Figure 6. <i>Percentage of focus group responses that mentioned these contributing factors in determining which ESOL Program Model is used at their schools.</i>	16
Figure 7. <i>Staff-reported adequacy of their School Improvement Plan in addressing ELL needs.</i>	17
Figure 8. <i>Instructional staff reported percentage of their ELLs for whom native language literacy information is gathered.</i>	18
Figure 9. <i>Instructional staff reported percentage of their ELLs for whom they have an awareness of previously mastered academic skills.</i>	18
Figure 10. <i>Frequency with which staff reported adjusting their practices when working with ELLs whose families hold different beliefs about education than they did.</i>	19
Figure 11. <i>Frequency with which staff reported communicating with their ELLs' parents.</i>	20
Figure 12. <i>Percentage of staff indicating whether they observed translated articulation meetings with parents.</i>	21
Figure 13. <i>Percentage of high school staff indicating whether they have observed college and career resources in multiple languages.</i>	21
Figure 14. <i>Percentage of ELLs encouraged by teachers to take grade-level content courses.</i>	22
Figure 15. <i>Percentage of staff who reported having received the listed ELL-related PLs.</i>	23
Figure 16. <i>Percentage of focus group responses that mentioned these accommodation-monitoring practices.</i>	24
Figure 17. <i>Proportion of Focus Group Responses indicating Formal and Informal Practices in Monitoring ELLs' use of Accommodations.</i>	25
Figure 18. <i>Frequency with which non-ESOL teachers reported engaging in these best practices in assessing ELLs.</i>	28
Figure 19. <i>Percentage of focus group responses that indicated the use of assessment data to modify instruction in the ways listed.</i>	29
Figure 20. <i>Percentage of focus group responses that indicated these factors contributed to specific class placements of ELLs at their schools.</i>	31

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACCESS = Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State

AMAO = Annual Measurable Achievement Objective

AMO = Annual Measurable Objective

CO = Central Office

ECF = ESOL Classes Form

ELD = English Language Development

ELIOT = ESOL Instruction Observational Tool

ELIS = ESOL Interview Script

ELL = English language learners

EPS = ESOL Program Survey

ES = elementary school

ESOL = English Speakers of Other Languages

FARMS = Free and Reduced Meals Service

GAfE = Google Apps for Education

HCPSS = Howard County Public School System

HS = high school

LEP = limited English proficiency

MS = middle school

MSDE = Maryland State Department of Education

PL = professional learning

RELL = released English language learner

SY = school year

W-APT = World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment-Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners Placement Test

WIDA = World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment

The purpose of this program review is to describe the current state of the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Program in order to provide baseline information from which the ESOL Office can set clear goals and visions. Information gleaned from this program review will also shed light on areas that require professional learning opportunities for school-based staff that are specific to working with English Language Learners (ELLs) and that focus on instructional and placement practices. This review will proceed as follows. First, an overview of the HCPSS ESOL Program is presented. Then, a brief review of the literature highlights best practices in educating ELLs, and is followed by the questions that guided the current review. Methods used to collect and analyze data are shared and results are presented subsequently. Results are organized by guiding principles in building an ELL-responsive learning environment and summarized for each educational level—elementary, middle, and high. A discussion of the findings in light of the guiding research questions follows. Finally, recommendations based on the current review are presented.

An Overview of the HCPSS ESOL Program

HCPSS offers the ESOL Program as an assistance program for students who come from a background where the dominant language is not English. The ESOL Program of instruction aims to support students' proficiency in understanding, speaking, reading, and writing English across academic content areas. As of January 2014 the ESOL Program employed approximately 121 teachers and served between three to four percent of all HCPSS students.

Students are eligible for ESOL placement testing if a language other than English is reported to be their primary language. The ESOL Office uses the W-APT¹ as its placement test. Once tested, students qualify for ESOL services based on their W-APT English proficiency level scores. Families of ELLs found eligible for ESOL services may choose that their child not receive these services.

ESOL teachers provide instruction in one of several ESOL Program Models. First, 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. Next, 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 entail content-based curriculum designed to teach English language skills and cultural orientation. Third, *sheltered classes* comprise only ELLs in an environment that enables teaching vocabulary for concept development in content areas; it is an instructional approach in which the ESOL teacher instructs ELLs for a course period to make academic instruction in English understandable to ELLs through physical activities and visual aids. The ESOL teacher assigns a report card grade to ELLs in a sheltered class model. Finally, the *Newcomer Program* is a program designed to meet the needs of incoming ELLs, usually those 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 school system in the US. In HCPSS, the Newcomer Program takes place at River Hill High School.

The ESOL curriculum is developed by the ESOL Office and uses the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) English Language Development (ELD) standards (WIDA Consortium, 2012) as a guide. Learning objectives at each grade directly relate to the required core of instruction and provide direction for unit and lesson planning. The ESOL curriculum merges content and language instruction. The expectation is that students master a set of objectives before advancing to the next set.

¹ W-APT stands for World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)-Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs) Placement Test

Since students, even those in the same grade, enter the ESOL Program at a range of English proficiency levels, the length of time a student spends in a proficiency level is determined by individual baseline proficiency and progress rather than pre-determined by the academic year. To monitor English proficiency progress, ACCESS for ELLs assessment is administered annually in the Spring. ACCESS for ELLs scores are also used to determine whether ELLs have met ESOL-release criteria; students are released from ESOL when they reach a 5.0 overall composite proficiency level with at least a 4.0 proficiency level on the literacy composite.

Current ESOL Program Characteristics

Student characteristics. According to the end-of-year attendance file for SY2014, a total of 1763 students in HCPSS are categorized as ELLs, and the vast majority of the ELLs are in elementary grades (71%; $n = 1256$). Figure 1 displays the racial/ethnic compositions of HCPSS ELLs according to the federal categories at each school level.

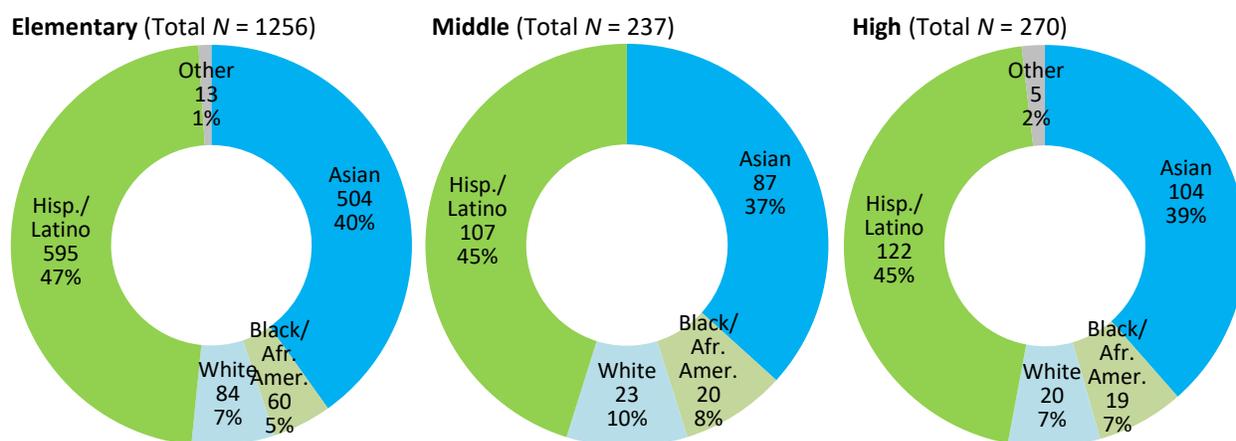


Figure 1. HCPSS English Language Learners racial/ethnic compositions by school level.

Note. "Other" category includes any students identified as American Indian/Alaskan Native, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or of two or more races.

Source: SY2014 end-of-year attendance

As illustrated in Figure 1, at least 80% of the ELLs at all school levels are either Hispanic/Latino or Asian. Between 7% to 10% of ELLs at all levels are White, and 5% to 8% of ELLs are Black/African American. It is noteworthy that, whereas students identified as Hispanic/Latino share Spanish as their common native language, students of Asian origins speak a variety of languages, such as Korean, Chinese, Burmese, Urdu, Telugu, Vietnamese, Gujarati, Hindi, and Tagalog.

In SY2014, the Newcomer Program housed at River Hill High School served more than a third of the high school ELLs. Figure 2 displays the racial/ethnic composition of ELLs in the Newcomer Program according to the end-of-year attendance file for SY2014. Of the 122 Hispanic/Latino ELLs at the high school level, two-thirds ($n = 80$) are Newcomer Program students. These 80 Hispanic students make up about 82% of the ELL student group at River Hill High School. Another eighth (13%) of the Newcomer Program students are Asian.

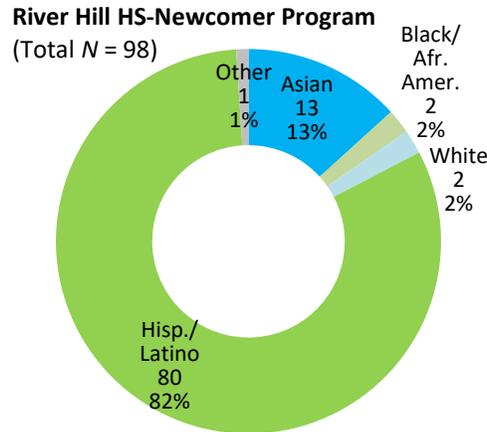


Figure 2. Newcomer Program students' racial/ethnic composition.
 Source: SY2014 end-of-year attendance

For HS ELLs placed into the Newcomer Program, their grade designation is Grade 9; however, these students do not earn English credit toward graduation because of their enrollment in Newcomer English versus ESOL I English. Thus, when ELLs transition out of the Newcomer Program, they must repeat Grade 9 in order to earn enough credits toward graduation. According to the HCPSS *ESOL Essential Curriculum Grades 9-12: Newcomer Program* document, the Newcomer Program is intended to be a one-year program that “introduces students to American culture and school structure to provide a foundation of language and life skills necessary to succeed in ESOL 1 classes, mainstream classes, and practical living.” After one year in the Newcomer Program, ELLs “return to their home schools and regular ESOL classes” (*ESOL Essential Curriculum Grades 9-12: Newcomer Program*).

The ESOL Coordinator shared that almost a third of ESOL Program high school staffing goes toward the Newcomer Program (9 of 30 high school ESOL teachers), and about a third of the overall program materials budget was allocated for the Newcomer Program in SY2015. For a detailed description of the Newcomer Program, please see the *HCPSS Newcomer Program Report* produced in 2012.

Academic performance. Accountability for ELLs takes into account English proficiency, math and reading achievement and participation rates on state tests, and graduation rates for ELLs. These indicators are summarized into three Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs) with annual district-level targets for Local Education Agencies (LEAs). AMAOs 1 and 2 utilize ACCESS for ELLs proficiency levels. For AMAO 1, LEAs must meet annual targets for ensuring ELLs make at least 0.5 English proficiency level growth over the school year; AMAO 2 requires LEAs to meet annual targets for ensuring a certain percentage of ELLs becomes English proficient as measured by a 5.0 overall composite proficiency level and a 4.0 literacy composite proficiency level.

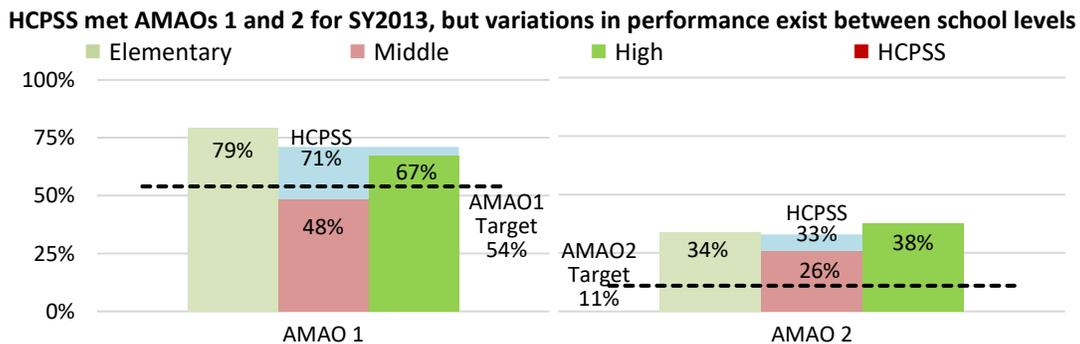


Figure 3. Percent English Language Learners who met AMAOs 1 and 2 by school level.
 Source: MSDE ACCESS scores file received May 2014.

As a district, HCPSS has met and exceeded both AMAOs 1 and 2 targets for SY2013 (see blue bars in Figure 3). When disaggregated by school level, however, the middle school level tends to lag behind elementary and high schools in the percent of ELLs who make at least 0.5 English proficiency level growth as well as the percent of ELLs who attain proficiency in English.

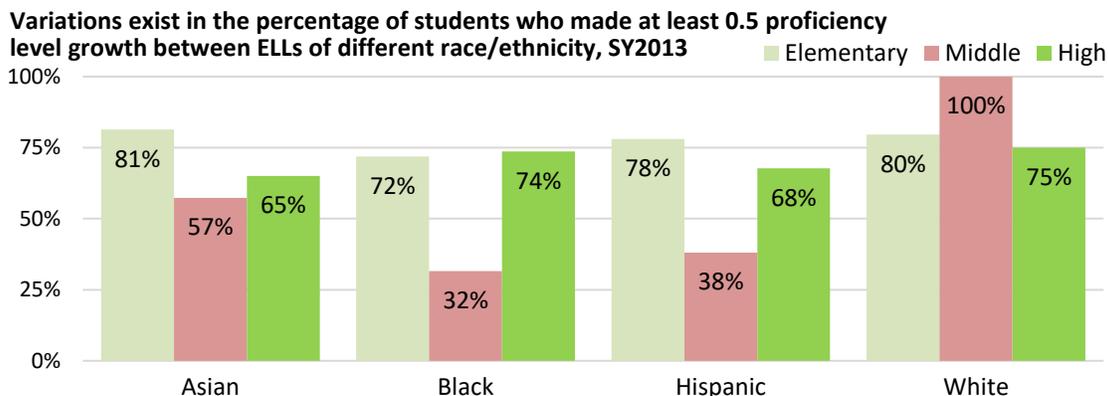


Figure 4. Percent English Language Learners who met AMAOs 1 and 2 by race/ethnicity and school level. Source: MSDE ACCESS scores file received May 2014.

According to the data presented in Figure 4, at the elementary level, at least 75% of the ELLs from all racial/ethnic groups except for Black demonstrated at least 0.5 proficiency-level growth on the ACCESS for ELLs; 72% of Black ELLs made this growth. At the middle school level, only 32% and 38% of Black and Hispanic ELLs, respectively, demonstrated at least 0.5 proficiency-level growth, compared to 57% of Asian ELLs. At the high school level, Asian ELLs, at 65%, had the lowest percentage of students demonstrating at least 0.5 proficiency-level growth, followed by 68% for Hispanic, 74% for Black, and 75% for White ELLs.

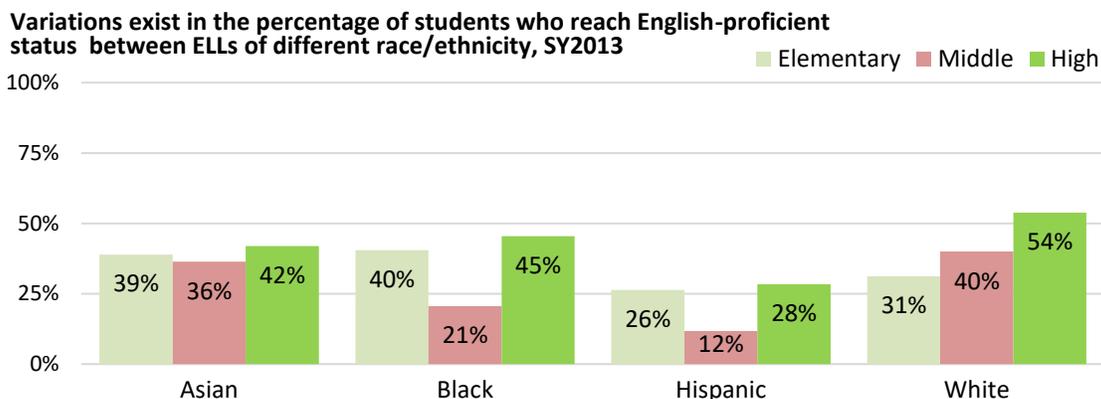


Figure 5. Percent English Language Learners who met AMAO 2 by race/ethnicity. Source: MSDE ACCESS scores file received May 2014.

As displayed in Figure 5, only about a quarter of the Hispanic ELLs at the elementary level met English proficiency criteria, compared to at least 30% in all other racial/ethnic groups. At the middle school level, only about a fifth of the Black ELLs and less than an eighth of the Hispanic ELLs met English proficiency criteria, compared to at least a third in all other racial/ethnic groups. At the high school level, only 28% of the Hispanic ELLs met English proficiency criteria, compared to at least 42% in all other racial/ethnic groups.

AMAO 3 takes into account LEPs² academic achievement and participation on reading and mathematics state assessments, as well as Grade 12 ELLs' cohort graduation rate; these criteria are the Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) used by MSDE to determine School Progress for the LEP student group. As displayed in Table 1, HCPSS did not meet the reading proficiency AMO of 81.4% for the LEP student group in SY2013. Of the 1,500 total LEPs, 77.4% ($n = 1,161$) scored at least proficient on MSA Reading or passed the English HSA, four percentage points short of the reading AMO target. HCPSS also did not meet the mathematics proficiency AMO of 84.4% for the LEP student group in SY2013. Of the 1,492 total LEPs, 78.6% ($n = 1,173$) scored at least proficient on MSA Mathematics or passed the Algebra HSA, 5.8 percentage points short of the mathematics AMO target. Elementary grades exceeded both district-level AMOs for LEPs in SY2013, high school grades met the reading but not the math proficiency target, whereas middle school grades met neither the reading nor math district-level AMO target. In addition, as displayed in the bottom row of Table 1, HCPSS did not meet the five-year cohort graduation rate AMO of 62.62% for the ELL student group in SY2013. Of the 83 total ELLs, 55.42% ($n = 46$) of the five-year cohort graduated, 7.20 percentage points short of the AMO target.

Table 1
AMAO 3 Attainment by School Level for SY2013

Content	School Level	AMO Target	Met/ Not Met	Percent Proficient	Number Proficient	Total LEPs
Reading	All	81.4	Not Met	77.4	1,161	1,500
	ES			85.5	802	938
	MS			64.6	292	452
	HS			58.7	61	104
Mathematics	All	84.4	Not Met	78.6	1,173	1,492
	ES			85.8	805	938
	MS			61.5	278	452
	HS			87.5	84	96
		AMO Target	Met/ Not Met	Graduation Rate (%)	ELL Graduates	Total ELLs
5-year cohort graduation rate		62.62	Not Met	55.42	46	83

Source: 2013 Maryland Report Card, School Progress Data Last Updated 11/5/2013.

Effective Instruction for English Language Learners

Goldenberg (2008) summarized research in the areas of English language learners' (ELLs) education and effective instruction and proposed three main concepts in the effective education of ELLs. First, research supports the use of a student's native language in the development of their second language. Thus, Goldenberg encouraged teachers to assess what their ELLs know and can do in their native language, and to support their students' continued development of literacy skills in their native language. Goldenberg cited studies that provided evidence that certain academic skills learned in the native language can be transferred to the second language, but that the student may need support and guidance to do so. The second main concept that Goldenberg describes is that teachers may need to modify instruction in order to respond to ELLs' language limitations. For instance, the assessment of students' knowledge of the content must be conducted such that this assessment is not also a test of the student's English ability. Teachers may also need to consider additional instructional time for their ELLs (e.g., before or after school; summer school). The application of the principles of effective instruction for *any* student is the third concept that Goldenberg highlighted in the education of ELLs. Goldenberg provided a list of these principles, such as setting clear goals and learning objectives; providing a meaningful, challenging, and motivating context for learning; and providing feedback for student responses; among others.

² LEP is the term used here to distinguish this group, which includes reclassified ELLs (RELLs), from the ELL group, which includes only current ELLs.

Dean, Hubbell, Pitler, and Stone (2011) provided a framework for instructional planning based on research by Marzano (1998, as cited in Dean et al., 2011). Dean et al.'s framework begins with the creation of an environment conducive to learning via teachers setting objectives and providing feedback to students, reinforcing effort and providing recognition, and providing opportunities for peer-to-peer cooperative learning. From this backdrop of a supportive learning environment, effective instruction involves the teacher helping their students in developing an understanding of the lesson. For example, instruction may include the use of: cues, questions, and advanced organizers to help activate prior knowledge; nonlinguistic representations to support understanding of a topic; summarizing and note-taking strategies to help students synthesize information; and homework and practice to review and apply knowledge. Finally, Dean et al. proposed helping students extend and apply knowledge as the third element in effective instruction. For instance, teachers may provide lessons on how to identify similarities and differences and to generate and test hypotheses to expand learning. Hill and Flynn (2006) provided specific strategies for incorporating these components of effective instruction when teaching ESOL students.

Coady, Hamann, Harrington, Pacheco, Pho, and Yedlin (2003) from the Education Alliance at Brown University compiled a handbook based on extant literature to guide improvement efforts in the education of ELLs. Coady et al. proposed nine guiding principles in building an ELL-responsive environment. Goldenberg's (2008) and Dean et al.'s (2011) discussions of effective pedagogy for ELLs can also be found within these principles. Coady et al.'s principles (numbered) and their observable indicators (lettered) are summarized below.

1. Educating ELLs is the responsibility of *all* school staff and faculty
 - a. Explicit inclusion of ELLs in school's vision/goals/reform
 - b. ELL group performance is a part of school's accountability requirements
 - c. School offers ESOL services
 - d. ELLs are not isolated from the rest of the school either programmatically nor physically
 - e. ESOL teachers have equitable access to staff development resources and materials
 - f. ESOL teachers have appropriate development in educating ELLs
 - g. School reform team includes members knowledgeable about ELLs
2. Staff and faculty must recognize the individual needs of each ELL
 - a. Adapt curriculum to match achieved language proficiency
 - b. Individually-matched accommodations to support students in accessing the English language on assignments and tests
3. School climate communicates the message that cultural and linguistic diversity are assets for students in learning
 - a. Multicultural and multilingual presence in school environment (e.g., hallway conversations, displays of student work, school events/activities)
 - b. Adults from students' varied cultural backgrounds are important in the school
 - c. Teachers help students make connections between L1 literacy and knowledge to new knowledge
4. Establish home-school-community links and recognize potential obstacles in any of these environments
 - a. Culturally-sensitive encouragement of family participation in school-related activities
 - b. Regular communication with families in appropriate language
 - c. Adults from multicultural communities are important members of school staff
 - d. Educators have some familiarity and show interest in learning about students' cultures
 - e. Educators are aware of potential obstacles to participation of ELL families
 - f. Understanding of different educational expectations for parents of different cultures
 - g. Explicit communication with parents when new opportunities and expectations for parent involvement arise
5. Ensure that ELLs have equitable access to school resources and programs

- a. ELLs have access to all school programs (enrichment & extracurricular activities, college-prerequisite courses)
- b. ELLs have access to all levels of instruction
- c. ELLs have equal access to student support staff (e.g., counselor) to guide postsecondary education plans
6. Teachers must hold high expectations for ELLs
 - a. Clear sense of what student has already mastered in a different language/country
 - b. ELLs have access to challenging academic content even though it may need to be adapted to match achieved language proficiency
7. Teachers must be prepared and willing to teach ELLs
 - a. Long-term and job-embedded staff development for teachers
 - b. Teachers foster meaningful student-teacher relationship
 - c. Teachers are culturally-responsive (e.g., adapt curriculum based on language proficiency)
 - d. Teachers understand and incorporate standards for ELLs
8. English language & literacy must be infused throughout the education process
 - a. Explicit instruction in academic skills (thinking, learning, reading, writing, studying strategies)
 - b. Reading materials are instructionally matched in comprehension and text difficulty
 - c. Students have opportunities to interact with teachers and classmates (ELLs and non-ELLs) in academic activities
9. ELLs must be properly assessed (e.g., language proficiency versus content knowledge)
 - a. Multiple forms of assessments are used (achievement, engagement, effort, etc.)
 - b. Assess literacy in L1 along with English language proficiency and content area knowledge
 - c. Frequent assessments for progress monitoring (and adjust instruction as needed)
 - d. Individually-matched accommodations to support students in accessing the English language on assignments and tests

Research Questions

This program review aims to describe the current state of HCPSS ESOL instructional and placement practices, as well as the professional learning opportunities provided to related staff in these two practice areas. Ultimately, results from this review are collected to inform the ESOL Office in its efforts to create an ELL-responsive learning environment to support ELLs in HCPSS. In addressing the overarching investigation of the alignment between current HCPSS ESOL practices and research-supported best practices, the following questions were identified.

1. What does ESOL instruction look like in HCPSS? How do these instructional practices vary among school levels?
2. What is the current practice in placing students into the ESOL Program? How do these processes and procedures vary throughout HCPSS?
3. What professional learning opportunities are provided to staff in the implementation of school-wide best practices related to the educational experiences of ELLs?
4. How do ESOL Program practices relate to ELLs' academic outcomes?

Method

Participants

An ESOL Program Survey (EPS) was created and responses were elicited from teachers (ESOL and non-ESOL), school administrators, and other staff at all schools. Table 2 displays the survey response rates after questionable responses were excluded. In total, 1352 individuals responded to the survey with useable data. Of them, 77.8% ($n = 702$) self-reported as an instructional staff, 7.4% ($n = 67$) identified as administrators, and 14.7% ($n = 133$) reported a non-instructional position (e.g., counselor, paraeducator). Overall EPS response rates were 15.2% for instructional staff and 36.4% for administrators.

Table 2

ESOL Program Survey Response Rates and Respondent Characteristics.

	Elementary	Middle	High ^a	Other ^b	Not reported	Total
Total Number of Respondents	512	167	223	0	450	1352
Response Rates by Staff Position						
% Instructional Staff Responded	17.7%	12.5%	14.2%	0.0%	-	15.2%
<i>n</i> Instructional Staff Respondents	395	127	180	0	-	702
Total Instructional Staff	2233	1018	1269	98	-	4618
% Administrators Responded	47.1%	32.5%	25.9%	0.0%	-	36.4%
<i>n</i> Administrator Respondents	40	13	14	0	-	67
Total Administrators	85	40	54	5	-	184
<i>n</i> Other staff ^c Respondents	77	27	29	0	-	133
Respondent Positions						
% Respondents who are Instructional Staff	77.1%	76.0%	80.7%	-	-	77.8%
<i>n</i> Instructional Staff Respondents	395	127	180	0	-	702
% Respondents who are Administrators	7.8%	7.8%	6.3%	-	-	7.4%
<i>n</i> Administrator Respondents	40	13	14	0	-	67
% Respondents who are other staff	15.0%	16.2%	13.0%	-	-	14.7%
<i>n</i> Other staff ^c Respondents	77	27	29	0	-	133

Source. Total instructional staff from IFAS active staff (March 2014). Total administrators from *HCPSS School Administrators List*.

^a includes Applications and Research Laboratory staff

^b Homewood Center and Cedar Lane School

^c staff who reported non-instructional positions (e.g., counselor, paraeducator).

For the classroom walkthroughs, schools with reasonably-sized ELL populations were considered for selection.³ Schools from each educational level (elementary, middle, high) were included; however, the elementary level houses the majority of the ELLs served by the HCPSS ESOL Program. Thus, more elementary schools were identified for the walkthroughs compared to middle and high schools. The sample size was limited to a number that could feasibly be visited within a one-week period. Thirteen schools were selected. The sample comprised six elementary, four middle, and three high schools. Table 3 displays the sampled schools' characteristics by level.

³ It is more useful to the ESOL coordinator to gain an understanding of mid- to large- ESOL Programs in the system to begin setting short-term goals for improvement at a broader scale and then applying information gleaned to schools with relatively smaller ESOL Programs.

Table 3
Characteristics of Schools Sampled for Walkthroughs by Level

School level	N Schools		Mean	Min.	Max.
Elementary	6	N ESOL Teachers	3	2	5
		N ELLs	69	31	100
		% ELLs in FARMS	64	24	89
Middle	4	N ESOL Teachers	1	1	2
		N ELLs	14	1	23
		% ELLs in FARMS	50	0	91
High	3	N ESOL Teachers	5	2	9
		N ELLs	42	15	62
		% ELLs in FARMS	59	47	68

Note. ESOL = English for Speakers of Other Languages; ELL = English language learner; FARMS = Free and Reduced Meals service.

In addition, all ESOL teachers were asked to self-report on the ESOL Program Model they used to deliver instruction for each of their classes.

Measures

ELL-responsive environment. The EPS collected general information about school-wide practices that demonstrate its responsiveness to ELLs' needs. Qualitative data from the ESOL Interview Script (ELIS) items also pertained to this construct. Specific measures that addressed instructional, placement, and professional learning practices are described below.

Instructional practices were measured in several ways. First, the ESOL Classes Form (ECF) was created using Google Apps for Education (GAfE) to document the various ESOL Program Models used by HCPSS ESOL teachers. The ECF collected teacher-reported data on the number of ESOL classes or groups that they taught and the ESOL Program Model used, as well as the grade and English proficiency levels of the ELLs who made up those classes or groups.

Second, the ESOL Instruction Observational Tool (ELIOT; see Appendix A) was developed by the Office of Research and Evaluation and the ESOL Office to look for the presence of various ESOL instructional practices during classroom walkthroughs. A total of 19 items make up the ELIOT which were developed based on best practices in educating ELLs (Coady et al., 2003; Dean et al., 2011; Goldenberg, 2008). The ELIOT also highlights the three areas of rigor (e.g., *Reading materials are differentiated for student English proficiency*), engagement (e.g., *ELLs have an opportunity to interact with same-grade peers in English*), and assessment (e.g., *Students have multiple ways of demonstrating content knowledge*) to align with the HCPSS Vision 2018 strategies. Items were scored 0 when not observed and 1 when observed. The average score across raters was computed for each walkthrough and then aggregated by level such that scores ranged from 0 (never observed) to 1 (always observed).

ESOL teachers who participated in the classroom walkthroughs responded to questions on the ESOL Interview Script (ELIS; see Appendix B) to provide qualitative data that describe ESOL instruction at their schools.

Finally, staff reported on instructional, assessment, placement, and school-wide practices when working with ELLs via the ESOL Program Survey (EPS) developed based on Coady et al.'s (2003) nine principles in creating an ELL-responsive environment.

Placement practices. Respondents reported on ESOL placement practices via the EPS. Items assessed the factors that drive the course placement of ELLs. The ESOL Office also worked with the Office of Continuous Improvement to implement a Kaizen process to gather information about and ultimately improve the ESOL placement process. Qualitative data from the ELIS items also pertained to ESOL placement practices.

Professional learning opportunities (PLs). Staff reported on ELL-related PLs via the EPS. Items asked respondents to indicate whether they had participated in PLs pertaining to ELL-specific topics, the connection among PLs offered, as well as the usefulness of PLs, among others.

Procedures

ESOL Program demographic characteristics were obtained via existing attendance and end-of-year data files. For descriptive information about the ESOL Program Models used for service delivery, ESOL teachers were asked in November 2013 to complete a form on Google Apps for Education (GAfE) to indicate the number of classes or groups they led, as well as the ESOL Program Model they used to instruct those classes.

The ESOL Program Survey (EPS) was developed by the Office of Research and Program Evaluation and the ESOL Office based on Coady et al.'s (2003) principles. The EPS was administered to all school staff via Survey Monkey. ESOL teachers completed the EPS during time allotted in staff meetings (November & December 2013 for ES and HS; April 2014 for MS). Other school-based staff were asked to complete the EPS between April and June 2014 via e-mail with a survey link. Depending on the staff's role, the EPS required up to 45 minutes to complete. Non-instructional staff took up to 15 minutes to respond to the *Communication and Responsiveness*, *School-wide Practices*, and *Professional Learning and Development* sections of the EPS. Staff in instructional roles, in addition to these three sections, also responded to the *Instructional Practices* and *Assessment Practices* sections of the EPS.

Data from the SY2014 September 30 attendance file were used in the sampling process for classroom walkthroughs. HCPSS schools at each level (elementary, middle, high, excluding special schools/centers) were sampled based on ESOL Program characteristics (number of ESOL teachers at the school, number of ELLs, percent of ESOL students who receive FARMS services). Since the resulting sample aimed to represent the present HCPSS ESOL Program, schools with very few to no ESOL students or ESOL teachers were excluded from the population for sampling. The sample of schools was selected to allow for observations of all ESOL Program Models. The walkthroughs spanned 15 to 60 minutes each. During the walkthroughs, observers recorded their observations using the ELIOT. ELIOT data were entered into EpiData using double-entry to avoid mistakes in data entry. Each walkthrough was completed by at least two observers with different CO roles (ESOL or Research) to allow for inter-rater reliability checks. Items that had lower than 80 percent inter-rater agreement were identified and resolved among raters to achieve consistent ratings. These resolved ratings are used in the analyses.

Focus groups were conducted with ESOL teachers whose classes were selected for classroom walkthroughs. The ELIS was used as the interview script during these focus groups, which occurred before or after school on the same day that the classroom walkthroughs were conducted. ESOL teachers at the same school participated together in the same focus group interview, which required 40 to 60 minutes to complete. At least two interviewers were present for each focus group, and focus groups comprised one to five ESOL teachers, depending on the number of ESOL teachers assigned at the school.

Data Analysis

All data are reported at the elementary, middle, or high school level. Respondents are not individually identified to protect their privacy. Descriptive analyses were used to describe the current state of the ESOL Program at each school level using Coady et al.'s (2003) principles for building an ELL-responsive school environment as a conceptual framework. These analyses include descriptive analyses that address the research questions regarding instructional and placement practices, as well as practices related to ELL-related professional learning opportunities.

Qualitative analyses of survey comments and focus group responses were also conducted to supplement data gleaned from surveys and classroom walkthroughs. Responses from the focus groups and comments on the surveys were first coded into short phrases and then categorized into thematic groups. Two Office of Research staff collaborated to agree on coding schemes for these qualitative analyses. See Appendix C1 to C4 for a visual representation of the coding process of focus group responses into thematic groups.

Highlights from Kaizen processes led by the Office of Continuous Improvement are included to provide an additional qualitative account of the state of the ESOL Program's Newcomer Program.

Results

ESOL Service Delivery: Program Models

Data collected from the ESOL Classes Form (ECF) administered via GAfE and the focus groups are reported here. At the elementary school (ES) level, 42 ESOL teachers reported on the ESOL program model they used to deliver ESOL instruction, representing about 61% (42 out of 69) of all ES ESOL teachers. In total, these 42 teachers reported teaching 403 classes or groups⁴. About 50% ($n = 203$) of the classes were reported to be delivered using the *push-in/co-taught* model and just under 50% ($n = 200$) were *pull-out/small groups*.

At the middle school (MS) level, 11 ESOL teachers responded to the ECF, representing about 52% (11 out of 21) of all MS ESOL teachers. In total, these 11 teachers reported teaching 55 classes or groups. Most MS ESOL classes were reported to be *sheltered classes* ($n = 36$ or 65%), followed by *push-in/co-taught classes* ($n = 16$ or 29%), and finally, *pull-out/small groups* ($n = 3$ or 6%).

At the high school (HS) level, 22 ESOL teachers responded to the ECF, representing about 65% (20 out of 31) of all HS ESOL teachers. In total, these 20 teachers reported teaching 62 classes or groups. Most HS ESOL classes were reported to be *sheltered classes* ($n = 27$ or 43%), followed by *Newcomer Program classes* ($n = 18$ or 29%) and *push-in/co-taught classes* ($n = 16$ or 26%), and finally, *pull-out/small groups* ($n = 1$ or 2%).

Based on focus group responses from ESOL teachers at schools selected for the classroom walkthroughs, the most frequently mentioned factor that contributed to which ESOL Program Model was used to deliver services was ELLs' English proficiency levels as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs (Figure 6). The next most frequently cited factor was the school's schedule. Nearly all 15 focus groups indicated that both the *school's characteristics* (e.g., scheduling, administrative direction, class size) and *students' academic needs* (e.g., English proficiency, academic performance) factored into the decision-making process regarding ESOL Program Models used at the schools. About half of the focus groups

⁴ Three additional classes were reported to be *Newcomer Program* classes. At the elementary level, HCPSS does not use the *Newcomer* model and so these three responses are not interpreted.

mentioned something that indicated *teacher input* (e.g., grouping practices, collaboration) in determining the method of ESOL service delivery. Almost half of the coded responses were school-level factors; 38% were student-level factors; and 14% were teacher-level factors. See Appendix C1 for a visual representation of the coding process of focus group responses into thematic groups.

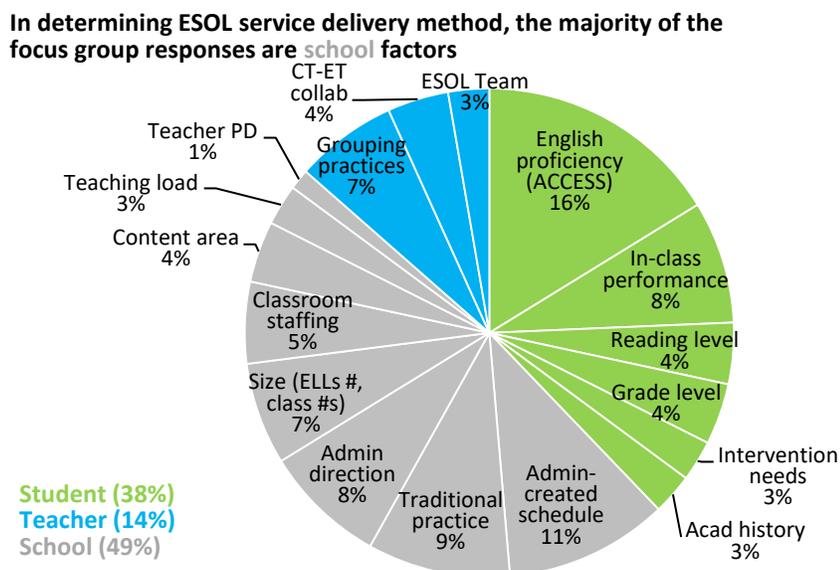


Figure 6. Percentage of focus group responses that mentioned these contributing factors in determining which ESOL Program Model is used at their schools.

ELL-Responsive Learning Environment

Coady et al.'s (2003) guiding principles in building an ELL-responsive learning environment are used as a framework for presenting the ESOL Program review results. Highlights of the findings are interpreted in this report.

Principle 1: School leaders, administrators, and educators recognize that educating ELLs is the responsibility of the entire school staff.

To gauge the extent to which ELLs are included in the school's vision and goals, respondents were asked to indicate how well their School Improvement Plan (SIP) addressed ELLs' needs. As illustrated in Figure 7, at all school levels, most of the administrators reported that the SIP at least adequately addressed the needs of their ELLs; lower percentages of ESOL teachers and non-ESOL teachers compared to administrators agreed that the SIP adequately addressed ELLs' needs.

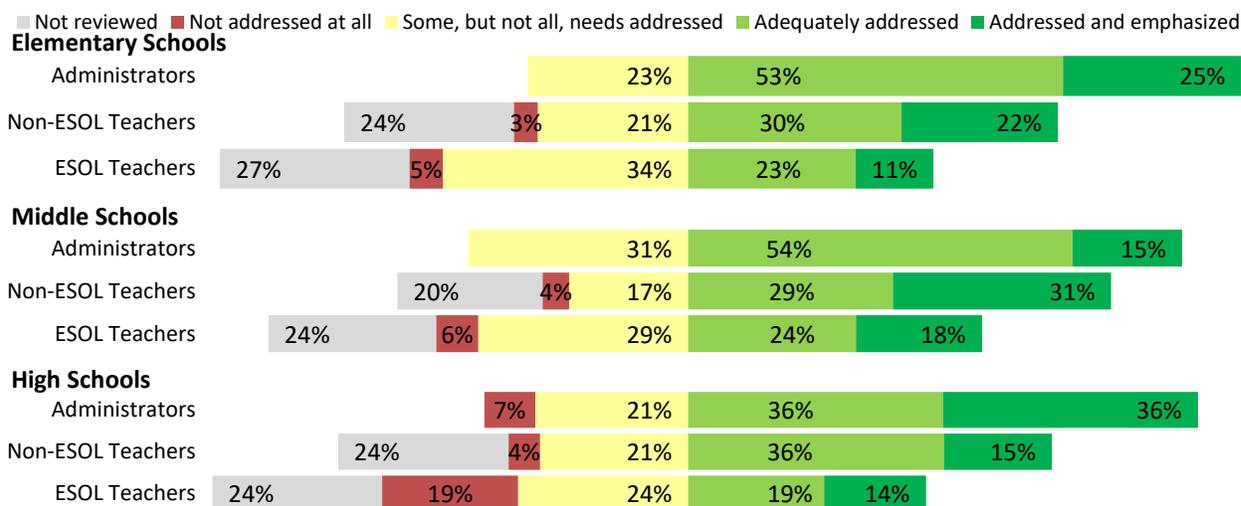


Figure 7. Staff-reported adequacy of their School Improvement Plan in addressing ELL needs.

Under Coady et al.'s (2003) Principle 1, "ELLs are neither programmatically nor physically isolated; rather they are an integral part of the school and they receive appropriate targeted services" (p. 31). It is worth noting that at two of the four middle schools where classroom walkthroughs were conducted, the ESOL classroom was physically separated from the main school building. Furthermore, responses from a focus group with HS ESOL teachers indicated the treatment of that school's ELLs and its ESOL Program as distinct from the rest of the school—ELLs arrive at school later than their peers and subsequently follow a daily schedule different from the rest of the student body. Coupled with the sheltered nature of the ESOL classes at that school, students rarely interact with non-ESOL peers.

To instill a sense of urgency and accountability for all staff members in the education of ELLs, they must be made aware of these students as a first step. However, one group of teachers commented on a lack of communication they receive about ELLs. The following comments by Related Arts (RA) teachers on the EPS point to a need for improved communication.

"Information on ELL students is not usually shared with RA teachers."

"We have very few ELL kids, but often we are unaware of what goes on in the rest of the school for these kids, being in RA."

"I don't remember receiving a list of ELLs at the beginning of this school year."

"I don't know which students are ESOL. The program should include support for students who have passed the test but are still struggling."

"Their proficiency and needs should be communicated to related arts teachers."

Principle 2: Educators recognize the heterogeneity of the student population that is collectively labeled as "ELL" and are able to vary their responses to the needs of different learners.

Instructional staff respondents were asked to indicate the percentage of their ELLs for whom they gathered information about native language literacy, as well as the percentage of their ELLs for whom they had an awareness of previously mastered academic skills as an indication that they have information on their students' diverse linguistic and academic backgrounds. As displayed in Figure 8, non-ESOL teachers reported gathering information about native language literacy for less than half of their ELLs; as for the second item, non-ESOL teachers at the secondary level reported that they had an awareness of previously mastered academic skills for less than half of their ELLs (see Figure 9).

While ESOL teachers reported having information about native language literacy for at least half of their ELLs, non-ESOL teachers were much less likely to have this information for the majority of their ELLs. Similarly, ESOL teachers reported having an awareness of previously mastered academic skills for at least half of their ELLs, whereas middle and high school non-ESOL teachers reported having this information for less than half of their ELLs. From these responses, it appears that ESOL teachers and non-ESOL teachers may not be communicating with one another about academically-relevant information about their ELLs. These results also suggest that teachers at the elementary level are more likely to communicate with each other about their ELLs' academic skills compared to teachers at the secondary grades.

Non-ESOL teachers gather information about native language literacy for less than half of their ELLs

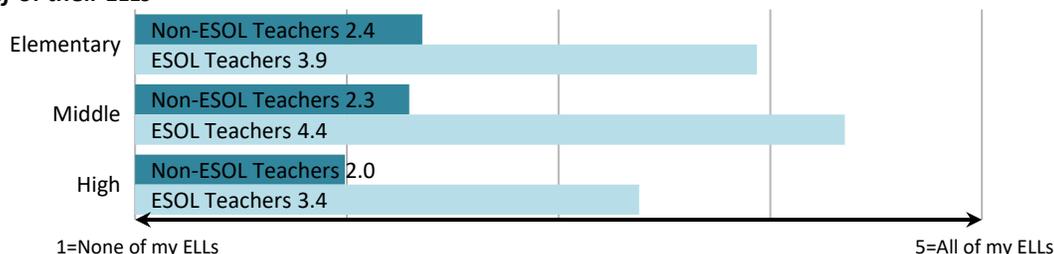


Figure 8. Instructional staff reported percentage of their ELLs for whom native language literacy information is gathered.

Secondary non-ESOL teachers have an awareness of previously mastered academic skills for less than half of their ELLs

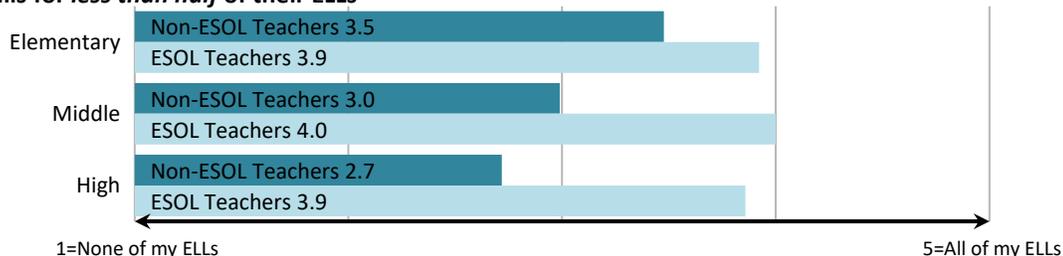


Figure 9. Instructional staff reported percentage of their ELLs for whom they have an awareness of previously mastered academic skills.

Principle 3: The school climate and general practice reinforce the principle that students' languages and cultures are resources for further learning.

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they observed practices at their schools that suggest a school climate that values multiculturalism; results are displayed in Table 4. The majority of ESOL teacher respondents (about 91%), non-ESOL instructional staff (87%), and administrators (95%) indicated that students' cultures were represented through the presence of parent visitors from diverse backgrounds, and more than 75% of respondents in all groups also indicated that they observed students' cultures represented through translated communication materials.

All MS ESOL teacher respondents indicated that students' cultures were represented in multilingual hallway conversations and the majority (88%) observed the presence of translated materials. At least 70% of the MS respondents observed the presence of adults from diverse backgrounds in important roles at their schools. Of the options provided, the least observed representation of ELLs' cultures was reported to be cultural events (54% to 65% across staff).

Over 90% of the HS ESOL teachers and administrators indicated that students' cultures were represented at their schools in multilingual hallway conversations; 91% and 81% of HS ESOL and non-

ESOL teachers, respectively, observed the representation of ELLs’ cultures through cultural events at their schools. At least 71% of respondents in each staff group observed the presence of adults from diverse backgrounds in important roles at their schools. However, about a third of the HS ESOL and non-ESOL teachers indicated a lack of library media that represented ELLs’ cultures.

Table 4
Percentage of Staff who Observe ELLs’ Cultures Represented in the Following Ways

	Elementary			Middle			High		
	ETs (N = 64)	Non-ETs (N = 327-331)	Admins (N = 40)	ETs (N = 17)	Non-ETs (N = 106-109)	Admins (N = 12-13)	ETs (N = 21)	Non-ETs (N = 156-159)	Admins (N = 13-14)
Hallway conversations	54.7 ^L	54.7 ^L	50.0 ^L	100.0 ^H	71.6	76.9	95.2 ^H	76.6	92.9 ^H
Displays of student work	81.3	77.3	87.5	88.2	68.2	84.6 ^H	76.2	65.8	76.9 ^L
Cultural events	76.6	75.1	82.5	64.7 ^L	57.8 ^L	53.8 ^L	90.5	80.5 ^H	78.6
Translated materials	87.5	78.5	82.5	88.2	66.1	69.2	76.2	51.3 ^L	85.7
Parent visitors	90.6 ^H	87.0 ^H	95.0 ^H	76.5	68.2	69.2	81.0	69.0	92.9 ^H
Library media	78.1	77.0	80.0	82.4	75.0	69.2	66.7 ^L	66.0	85.7
School adults fr diverse bkgrds	73.4	77.9	82.5	70.6	76.1 ^H	76.9	85.7	70.7	78.6
Interior decorations*	-	72.4	70.0	-	69.4	38.5 ^L	-	73.6	78.6
Student organizations*	-	30.9	15.0	-	48.1 ^L	50.0	-	86.7 ^H	78.6

^H indicates highest percentage within that column; ^L indicates lowest percentage within that column

* These items were not included in the survey that went out to ESOL teachers.

Respondents had the option to comment on other ways not listed in which they observed multiculturalism at their schools. Many respondents listed school-based events that recognize diverse cultures, such as assemblies and performances. Respondents also reported experiences within specific classes that highlight cultures, primarily through Related Arts classes (Music, Dance, World Languages) and Social Studies curriculum (Holidays Around the World). Several respondents listed an annual Hispanic luncheon for staff organized by parents as a way in which diversity is highlighted.

Principle 4: There are strong and seamless links connecting home, school, and community.

Educators contribute to an ELL-responsive learning environment by being aware of potential barriers that hinder ELL families from full participation in school-based events and “do not disparage parents whose support of their children may not be evident because of its lack of alignment with local expectations” (p. 35). An item on the EPS asked staff to report on the frequency with which they adjust their practices when working with students who come from families that hold different beliefs about education than they do. In general, staff reported that they do in fact adjust their practices (Figure 10).

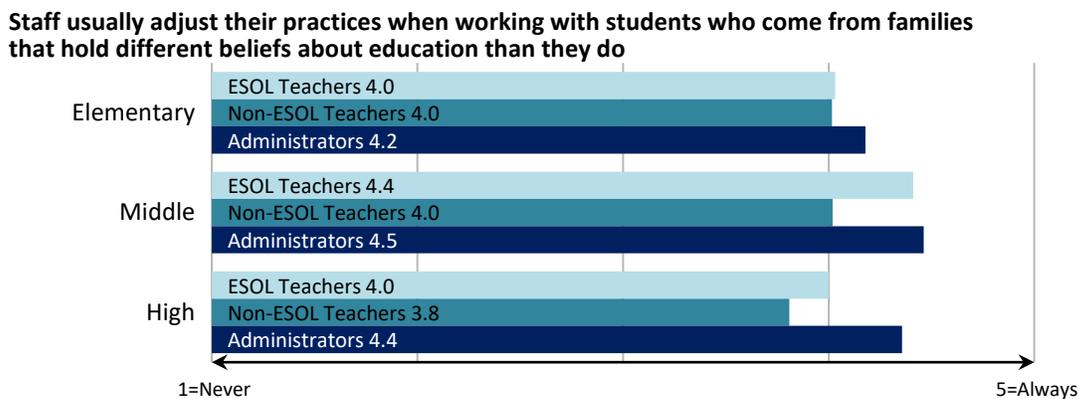


Figure 10. Frequency with which staff reported adjusting their practices when working with ELLs whose families hold different beliefs about education than they did.

Principle 4 also calls for educators to communicate regularly with families in order to exchange information. Figure 11 presents staff-reported frequency with which they communicate with the parents of their ELLs. At the elementary level, on average, ESOL teachers, non-ESOL teachers, and administrators all reported communicating with their ELLs' parents between once-a-quarter to once-a-month. At the MS and HS levels, ESOL teachers and administrators also reported communicating with their ELLs' parents at least once a quarter; however, non-ESOL teachers at the secondary level reported doing so less than once a quarter.

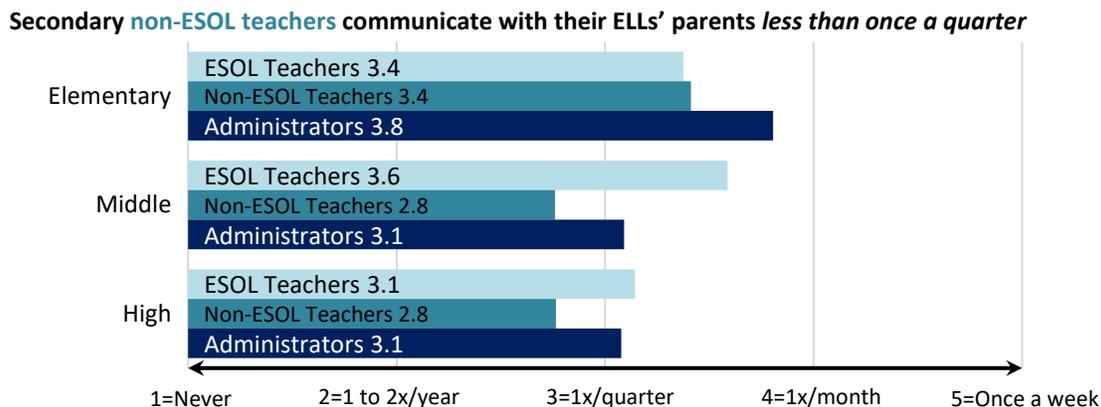


Figure 11. Frequency with which staff reported communicating with their ELLs' parents.

One obstacle mentioned by several respondents on the EPS in their efforts to facilitate ELL families' participation in school events is the school's ability to provide communication to families in their native languages. One ESOL teacher respondent commented,

“Only county-wide translated materials originating from Central Office are provided. The ESOL Department and Central Office have mandated that only those forms deemed ‘county-wide’ are translated. School-specific flyers, newsletters, or notices are not. I have had to go to bilingual staff and relatives to translate invitations to parents for ‘Reading Nights,’ etc. at my home school.”

A non-ESOL teacher observed that “the school does a good job of trying to send translations home. This county does not always provide or allow written translations for all of our populations.” An administrator experienced similar frustrations, stating that it is “difficult to access Spanish translations for documents and phone calls.” A few other respondents also commented on the need for more languages to be available for translation.

Principle 5: ELLs have equitable access to all school resources and programs.

The EPS asked respondents to indicate whether they observed various resources at their schools that support ELLs in transitioning from one grade to the next or from high school into college or career. At the various school levels, 16% to 31% of the ESOL teachers reported that they were “unsure” if an interpreter or translator were provided to parents during articulation meetings to help with transition; another 30% of the ESOL teachers reported that they had not observed translators/interpreters provided at such meetings (see Figure 12).

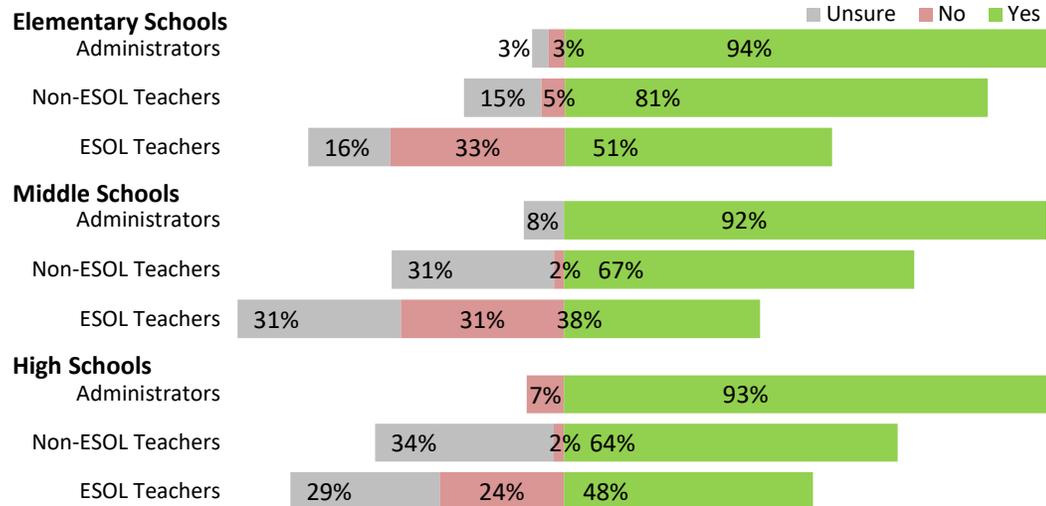


Figure 12. Percentage of staff indicating whether they observed translated articulation meetings with parents.

As for informational resources about college and career at the high school level, two-thirds of the HS ESOL teachers and almost 80% of the non-ESOL teachers who responded to the EPS were “unsure” if college financial aid information in different languages is made accessible to ELLs (see Figure 13).

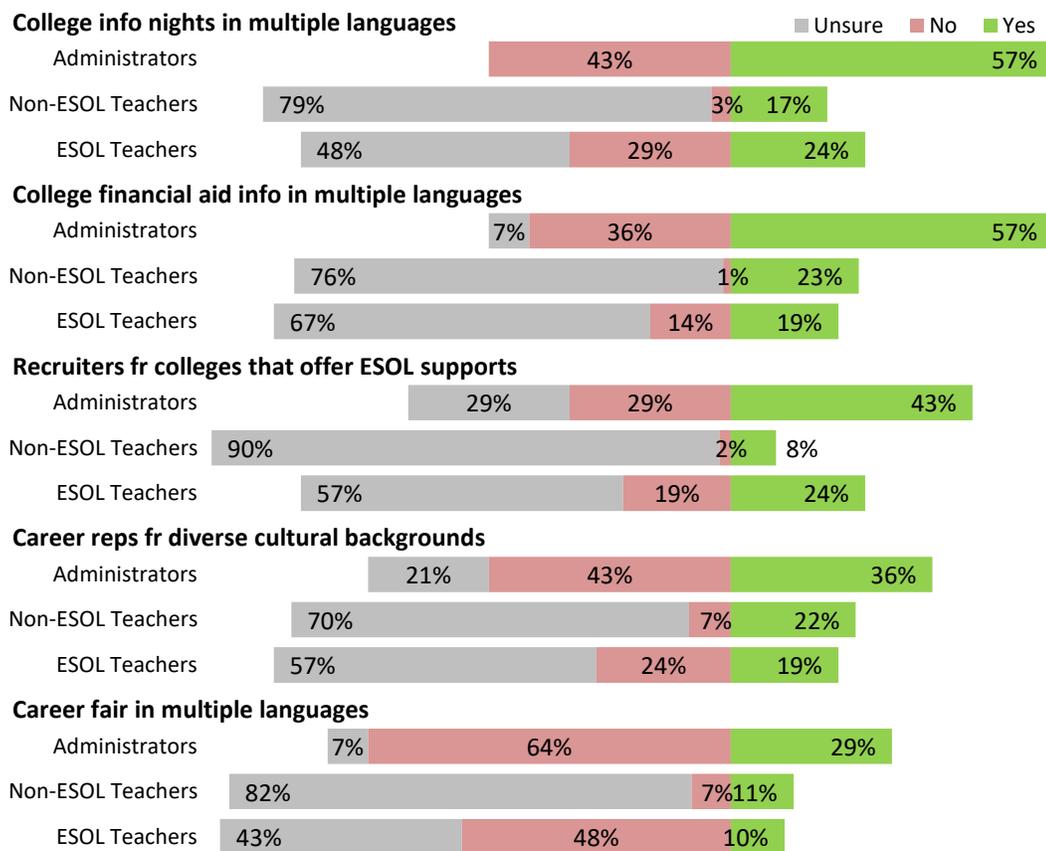


Figure 13. Percentage of high school staff indicating whether they have observed college and career resources in multiple languages.

Principle 7: Teachers are properly prepared and willing to teach ELLs.

Less than 50% of administrators and non-ESOL teachers reported having received any ELL-related professional learning in the past school year.

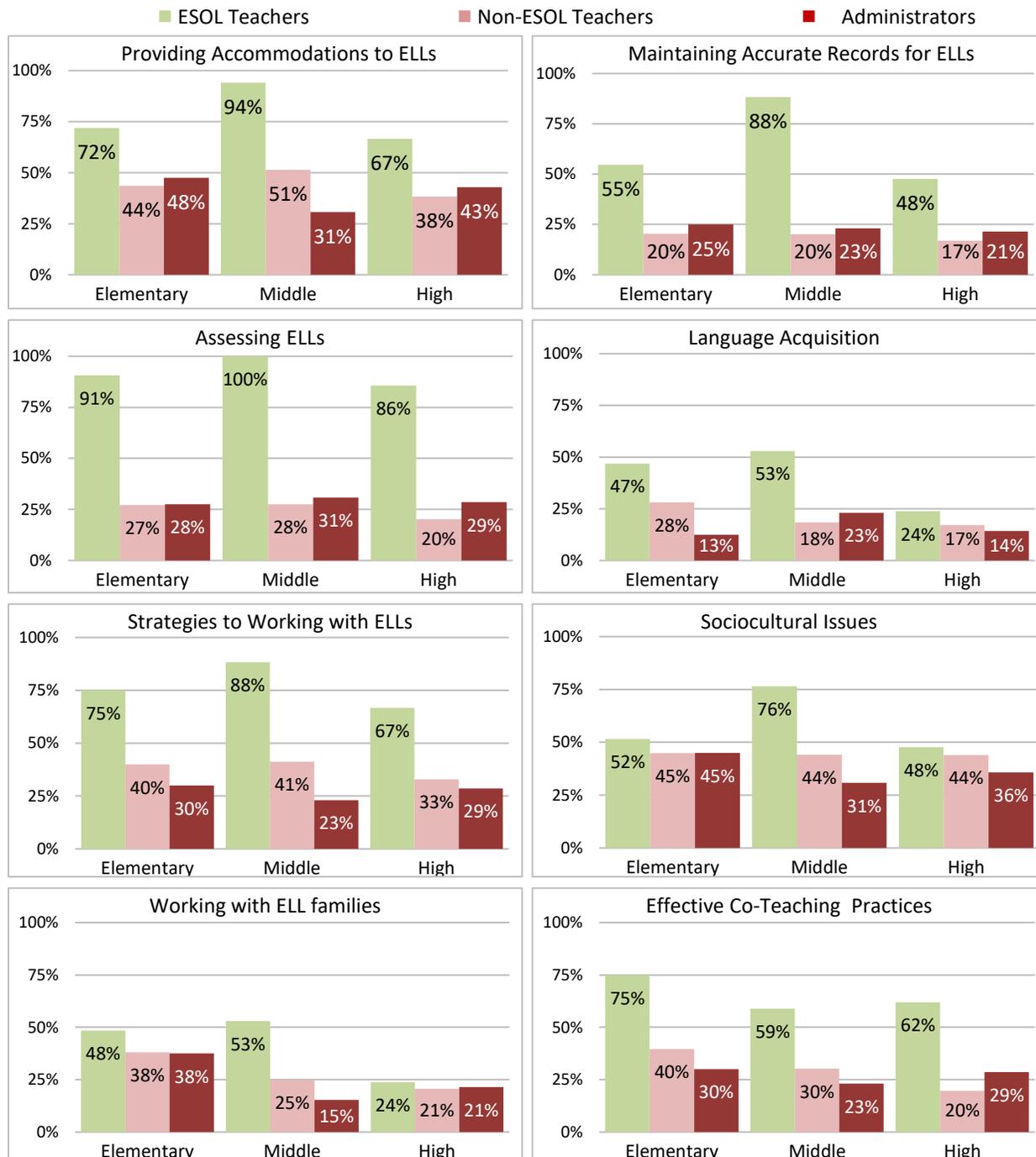


Figure 15. Percentage of staff who reported having received the listed ELL-related PLs.

Respondents indicated whether or not they have received various ELL-related PLs in the past year. As illustrated above in Figure 15, only about half or fewer of the ESOL teachers at all levels reported having received professional learning related to language acquisition and working with families of ELLs in the past year. Across school levels, even lower percentages of non-ESOL teachers and administrators reported having received these PLs.

The majority of ESOL teachers reported having received PL on how to assess ELLs in the past year (86% for HS to 100% for MS ESOL teachers). In contrast, between one-fifth (HS) to 28% (MS) of non-ESOL teachers reported having received PLs on how to assess ELLs. The figures for administrators are similar to those of non-ESOL teachers' across school levels.

Only about 50% or fewer of the ES and HS ESOL teachers indicated having received PL on maintaining accurate records for ELLs. On the other hand, almost 90% of the MS ESOL teachers reported that they had received this PL in the past year. As for other staff who responded, only about 25% or fewer of the non-ESOL teachers and administrators at all school levels reported having received training on how to maintain accurate records for ELLs.

Between two-thirds to three-fourths of the ES and HS ESOL teachers stated that they had received PL on providing accommodations to ELLs in the past year, compared to 94% of the MS ESOL teachers. Across levels, about 50% or fewer of the non-ESOL teachers and administrators reported having received this PL in the past year, with the lowest reported percentage at 25% for MS administrators.

ESOL teachers who participated in the classroom walkthroughs were also interviewed in focus groups. During these focus groups, ESOL teachers were asked to share ways in which they monitored their ELLs' accommodation use (Figure 16). The responses from the 15 focus groups yielded 11 codes that were then categorized into two thematic groups: *informal* (i.e., no documentation) and *formal* (documentation exists) practices (Appendix C2). Almost all of the focus groups mentioned informal ways in which they monitored accommodation use, and nine of the focus groups also mentioned formal methods. Informal monitoring included verbally checking in with content teachers and paraeducators, in-class observations, conversations with the student, and anecdotal information. Formal monitoring included official testing documentation, maintaining and sharing a school-wide document, MSDE accommodations form documentation, articulation notes, team meetings, student work, and meeting with the administrator. Figure 16 **Error! Reference source not found.** presents the monitoring methods that were coded based on the focus groups' responses and the frequencies with which these codes appeared across focus group responses. Of the informal practices reported, the most commonly mentioned was conversations among teachers, followed by in-class observations. Of the formal practices reported, the most frequently mentioned was completing documentation to fulfill state requirements during state tests. Since state tests occur only once a year, this type of accommodation monitoring is not embedded in daily practice. The percentage of responses indicating some type of documentation in monitoring ELLs' accommodation use decreases from 29% to 20% if official testing documentation were removed from the data (Figure 17).

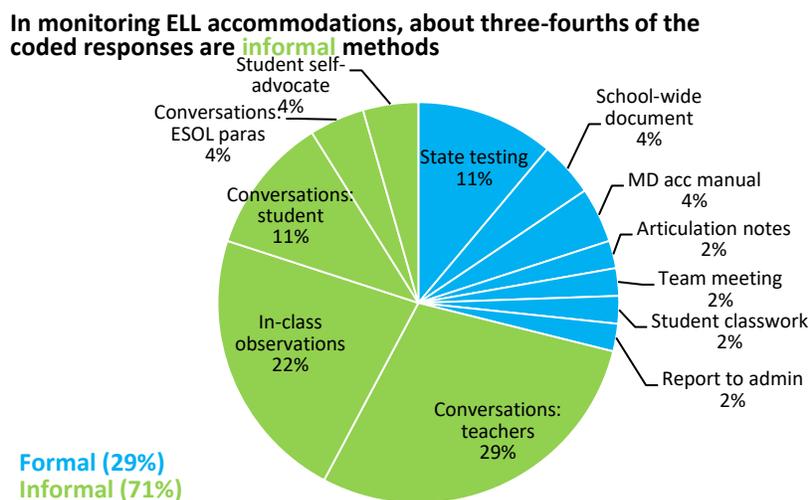


Figure 16. Percentage of focus group responses that mentioned these accommodation-monitoring practices.

Formal practices decrease from almost 30% to 20% of the responses when documenting for official state tests is removed.

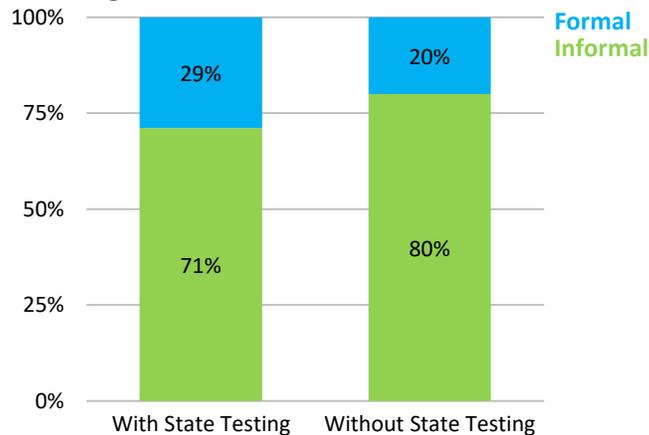


Figure 17. *Proportion of Focus Group Responses indicating Formal and Informal Practices in Monitoring ELLs' use of Accommodations.*

In regards to professional learning, ten respondents, including administrators, commented on the potential benefits of more in-service training for staff on how to work with ELLs. Respondents also stated a need for information on the services provided by the ESOL Program. Several respondents commented on the lack of understanding of what to expect of the ESOL Program and the services it should provide in the classroom. Related to this uncertainty about what ESOL services should look like, respondents commented on the unprofessionalism of their ESOL teacher and the lack of presence of ESOL services in the classroom. The following quotes from different respondents illustrate these feelings (comments are ordered below such that those that denote similar themes appear in closer proximity; note that comments were limited to 140 characters). A more detailed analysis of these comments are provided at the end of this section.

“Coteacher and I’ve done more than [the] ESOL teacher in [the] same class who rarely shows—when there, calls students lazy, [and] treats them that way.”

“Our other ELL teacher spends her time avoiding working with kids.”

“I do not feel that we have a supportive ESOL teacher in our building.”

“I have had to create all of my ELL’s accommodations, the ELL teacher and Para[educator] have offered no support for their instruction or assessment.”

“I am finding my ESOL teacher needs professional development on reading strategies for ESOL students.”

“Not all classes receive assistance when teaching ELL learners in the classroom or through help with modification of materials.”

“I hardly see help with ELL students in the classroom and I also do not see materials being translated for families.”

“There is not a lot of support given to teachers of ELL students, in my experience.”

“I am not sure what resources (dictionaries, translated books, etc.) are available to me to aide my students in their success.”

“I feel the program is not clearly understood. In 15 years as an administrator, I have only had one in-service on ELL.”

“Are there supports for released students if they are BGL in reading (meaning other support than the reading specialist)?”

“What is the role of the ESOL teacher? What are they supposed to be doing/teaching?”

Principle 8: Language and literacy are infused throughout the educational process, including curriculum and instruction.

To gain an understanding of what ESOL instruction looks like in HCPSS, classroom walkthroughs during ESOL instruction were conducted using the ESOL Instruction Observational Tool (ELIOT; Appendix A) to rate whether items related to best practices in rigor, engagement, and assessment were apparent. A score of 1 was recorded when an item was observed; otherwise a 0 was recorded. After resolving differences among raters to achieve at least 80% agreement across items, item scores for each observation were averaged across raters and then aggregated to the elementary/middle/high level. The results presented in Table 5 may be interpreted on a continuum such that an item was less frequently observed across classes as the value goes to 0, with a score of 0 indicating that the item was never observed across raters across classes; an item was more frequently observed as the value moves closer to 1, with a score of 1 indicating that the item was always observed across raters across classes.

Table 5

Average ESOL Instruction Observational Tool (ELIOT) Ratings by School Level

No. Item	ES	MS	HS
R1 Lesson materials are developmentally appropriate for students.	.88	.50	.61
R2 Reading materials are differentiated for student English proficiency.	.48	.33	.50
R3 Teacher provides or monitors language accommodations to support ELLs accessing the content.	.61	.72	.47
R4 Teacher explicitly teaches vocabulary required to access content.	.48	.42	.50
R5 Teacher explicitly models academic skills/strategies.	.76	.50	.76
R6 Teacher engages students in higher-order thinking activities.	.44	.17	.24
R7 Students receive specific feedback about their academic performance.	.52	.56	.55
R8 Lesson objectives are clear to students.	.69	.67	.53
R9 Instructional time is devoted to helping students learn the academic language needed to access content.	.44	.33	.39
E1 Students are provided opportunities to practice academic language in context.	.60	.50	.63
E2 ELLs have an opportunity to interact with same-grade peers in English.	.47	.33	.29
E3 Multiple presentation formats are used.	.62	.67	.53
E4 Instructional materials familiar to students are incorporated to support comprehension.	.79	.42	.68
E5 Student effort is reinforced.	.84	1.00	.58
E6 All students are encouraged to participate.	.80	.50	.50
A1 Students have multiple ways of demonstrating content knowledge.	.67	.56	.45
A2 Teacher has multiple ways of documenting student work.	.15	.17	.11
A3 Teacher actively checks in with all students to ensure understanding.	.71	.56	.56
A4 Teacher adjusts instruction based on student feedback.	.56	.44	.53

Note. ES = elementary school; MS = middle school; HS = high school.

Walkthroughs were conducted in 21 ES classes at 6 different elementary schools, 6 MS classes at 4 different middle schools, and 19 HS classes at 3 different high schools. Leading letters in “No.” column refer to the areas of rigor (R), engagement (E), and assessment (A) that correspond to strategies 1.2.4, 1.4.3, and 1.5.2 outlined in the HCPSS Vision 2018.

The results for the items under the areas of rigor and engagement are interpreted here as they relate to Principle 8. The most frequently observed item of the 15 rigor and engagement items at the elementary school level is “lesson materials are developmentally appropriate for students,” at the middle school level it is “student effort is reinforced,” and at the high school level it is “teacher explicitly models academic skills/strategies.”

Across school levels, the same items are among the least frequently observed. They include “instructional time is devoted to helping students learn the academic language needed to access content,” “ELLs have an opportunity to interact with same-grade peers in English,” and “teacher engages students in higher-order thinking activities.” Although these same items appear among the least frequently observed within each school level, they were more frequently seen in elementary classes relative to secondary classes.

In addition to these items, items that were observed 50% of the time or less across school levels are “teacher explicitly teaches vocabulary required to access content” and “reading materials are differentiated for student English proficiency.”

The following description provides an example of the observation that instructional time was not devoted to student learning. In one of the walkthroughs conducted, students in a sheltered class spent the majority of the period organizing their binders as their teacher handed back previous assignments and quizzes. Although organization skills are important, these walkthroughs were conducted well into the school year when such routines should not require such extensive time devoted during class.

Higher-order thinking activities were observed less frequently at the secondary level than at the elementary level. An example of higher-order thinking activities incorporated at the elementary level was seen when an ESOL teacher guided a Kindergarten class to make predictions for a story and to make guesses about what unfamiliar words might mean before definitions were provided by the teacher; in another example, fourth graders were challenged to link historical events to current concepts, as well as to provide rationales for their thinking by explaining their thoughts to their peers. However, for the most part, such activities were not observed and ESOL lessons mainly consisted of spelling tests, simple recall of information, or rote activities (e.g., choral reading, look up definitions).

One of the largest discrepancies between elementary and secondary ESOL instruction is on the ELIOT item, “lesson materials are developmentally appropriate for students.” Specifically, lesson materials that appear age-appropriate are common among elementary ESOL classes, whereas materials used in secondary ESOL instruction were less likely to be so. To illustrate, in one instance, high school ELLs were taught prepositions using a worksheet with line-drawings of a cat positioned in various locations around the house; whereas a more developmentally-appropriate activity might be to teach the same concept using materials that high school students must use in everyday life, such as completing a registration form (*on* the line, *in* the box)—this activity was observed in another classroom.

Principle 9: Assessment is authentic, credible to learners and instructors, and takes into account first- and second-language literacy development.

Referencing Table 5, the results for the items under the assessment area are interpreted here under Principle 9. For each school level, the same items are among the most and least frequently observed. The most frequently observed item was “teacher actively checks in with all students to ensure understanding.” Although the same item was the most frequently observed across levels, it was more prevalent among elementary than secondary classrooms. The least frequently observed item was “teacher has multiple ways of documenting student work.” Although teachers may check in with students to ensure understanding, follow-up explanations may not occur or may be minimal.

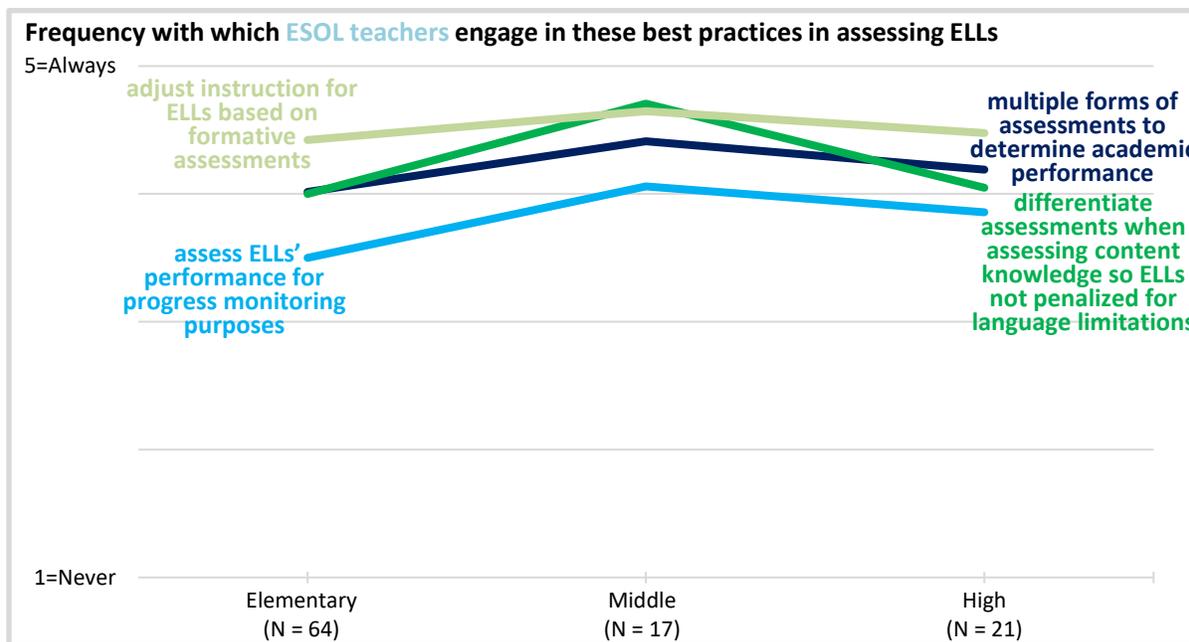


Figure 18a. Frequency with which ESOL teachers reported engaging in these best practices in assessing ELLs.

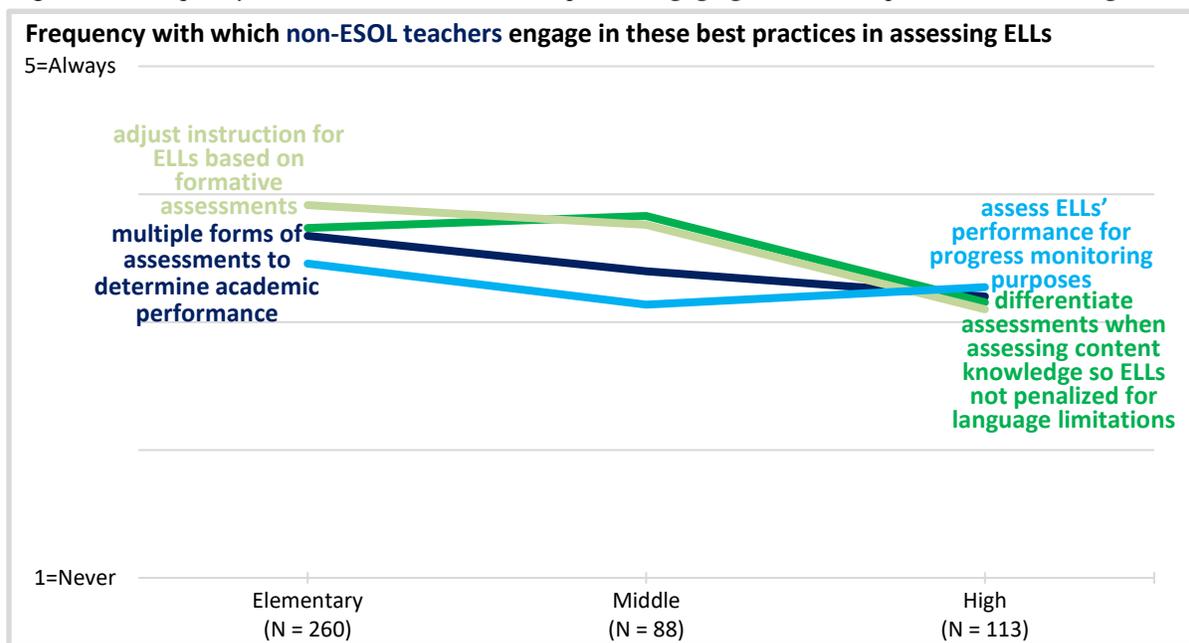


Figure 18b. Frequency with which non-ESOL teachers reported engaging in these best practices in assessing ELLs.

ESOL and non-ESOL teachers reported the frequency with which they engaged in various assessment practices (Figure 18a & b; line graphs were used to facilitate interpretation of findings). Implementation of the listed assessment practices is more similar among elementary ESOL and non-ESOL teachers than among secondary teachers. On average and across levels, both ESOL and non-ESOL teachers reported that, more than half the time, they differentiated assessments when assessing content knowledge so that ELLs were not penalized for language limitation. Teachers across levels also indicated that they used multiple forms of assessments in determining ELLs' academic performance more than half the time. Slightly less frequently but still over half the time, teachers across levels reported monitoring ELLs' progress through the use of assessments. Of all the respondents, middle school ESOL teachers reported the highest frequency with which they engaged in each of these specific assessment-related practices.

To investigate further how teachers use assessment data, ESOL teachers were asked to describe how they used assessment data to inform instruction as part of the focus group interviews. Responses from the 15 focus groups yielded eight codes that were then categorized into three thematic groups according to the instructional area modified as a result of using student assessment data: *content* (i.e., what is taught), *process* (how the content is delivered), and *not used* (Appendix C3). Almost all of the focus groups mentioned using assessment data to change content and two-thirds of the focus groups mentioned using assessment data to change the process aspect of instruction (Figure 19). None of the focus groups mentioned using assessment data to change student task (*product*). Two focus groups indicated that they did not use student assessment data to make modifications to instruction. Instead, lessons were planned based on previous experience. Determining target skills and selecting materials were the most frequently mentioned ways in which assessment data were used to inform instruction.

In using assessments to inform instruction, almost two-thirds of the responses were modifications to the *content* of lessons

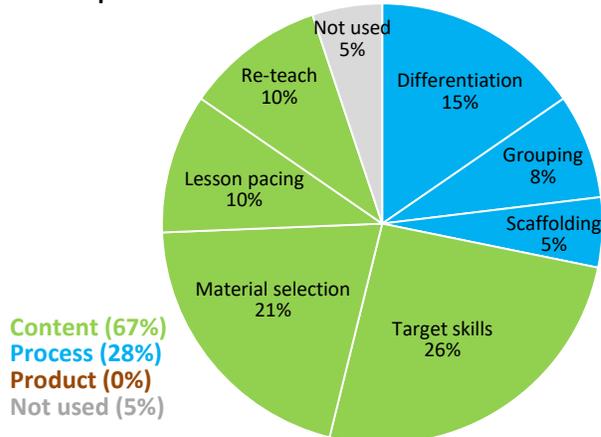


Figure 19. Percentage of focus group responses that indicated the use of assessment data to modify instruction in the ways listed.

General Comments

At the end of the survey, respondents had the opportunity to provide any comments they had about the educational experience of ELLs at their schools. Of the 1311 non-ESOL staff respondents who started the survey, about 12% ($n = 163$) reached the end of the survey *and* provided additional comments. The comments were then reviewed such that only those comments contributing additional information to the current review were analyzed using qualitative methods. This process resulted in about 108 respondents' comments retained for analyses, or about 8% of the total number of non-ESOL respondents who started the survey. Due to the broad nature of these comments, they were coded generally based on a) the subject of the comment and b) the respondent's perception toward this subject. The coding process yielded seven subject areas: ELL students, ESOL teachers, non-ESOL teachers, school practices related to ELLs, the ESOL Program, the ISRC, and HCPSS as a county in the context of ESOL services.

The 108 comments yielded 120 coded responses; one comment could have contained two responses for coding. Many more comments reflected negative perceptions ($n = 87$ or 73%) compared to positive ($n = 21$ or 18%) or neutral ($n = 12$ or 10%) perceptions. A total of 42 coded responses were about school practices in relation to supporting ELLs; 24 were about the ESOL Program, 19 about ESOL teachers, 15 about HCPSS, 14 about ELLs, and the remaining were about the ISRC or non-ESOL teachers. The two most frequently coded responses were a lack of communication about ELLs within schools (subject: school practices), especially in terms of sharing this information with Related Arts teachers, as well as a need for HCPSS to provide more ELL-related professional learning opportunities for staff (subject: HCPSS

practices). Almost all of the respondents who chose to comment on the ESOL Program suggested areas for improvement (e.g., insufficient staffing, staffing to support RELLs). Of the 19 coded responses about ESOL teachers, about half of them perceived ESOL teachers favorably (e.g., “[Our school] has an incredibly skilled and dedicated staff working with our ELL students,” “I am fortunate to have an ESOL co-teacher. She takes care of a lot of the things that I do not. We divide responsibility.”); about half perceived ESOL teachers less favorably (e.g., “ESOL staff members consistently late to school and classes,” “I am finding my ESOL teacher needs professional development on reading strategies for ESOL students.”).

ESOL Placement Practices

The EPS asked respondents to choose the top three factors that affected ELLs’ class placement out of a list of six factors (WIDA ACCESS test results, instructional match, scheduling availability, parents’ advocacy, student’s own advocacy, considerations for maximum likelihood of postsecondary success) plus an option for “other.” Respondents also had the option of selecting “unsure” as a response. Across school levels, the top three factors that drive ELLs’ class placement decisions were reported to be instructional match, closely followed by WIDA ACCESS scores, and scheduling availability. Non-ESOL teachers were more likely to be unsure of factors that influenced class placement decisions for ELLs compared to ESOL teachers and administrators. Many ESOL teachers commented on other factors that contributed to ELLs’ class placement, such as the ELL’s reading benchmark level and teacher input. Another factor cited by several ESOL teachers was class size. Several comments from ESOL teachers on the placement process are noteworthy. They are presented below:

“ESOL Teachers have no say in placement of our ESOL students. We are not invited to attend articulation meetings. Our input is not used. The reading staff makes all placement issues. This is supported by administration. We have tried to advocate for our students and our input was ignored.”

“Student's reading level - this is typically the only or the dominant factor considered during articulation, and really comes down to meeting the teachers' scheduling needs.”

“My children qualify by being income eligible.”

At the middle and high school levels, administrators also reported considerations for maximum likelihood of post-secondary success in determining ELLs’ course placements. Two HS ESOL teachers commented on the use of academic history (course credits, interrupted education) in determining course placement for ELLs.

To support the survey data, ESOL teachers who participated in the classroom walkthroughs were asked in focus group interviews to describe how ELLs are placed into classes at their schools. The responses from the 15 focus groups yielded 18 codes that were then categorized into three thematic groups: *school organizational capacity* (i.e., school-level factors), *student academic needs* (i.e., student-level factors), and *teacher input* (i.e., teacher-level factors) (Appendix C4). Almost all focus groups mentioned factors under each of the three thematic groups. A fairly balanced distribution of the coded responses is observed, with about 38% of the coded responses categorized as student factors, 32% as school factors, and 30% as teacher factors (Figure 20). Across focus groups, the most frequently mentioned factors that determined ELLs’ specific class placements were the student’s English proficiency (as measured by ACCESS for ELLs performance) and input from the ESOL teacher, followed closely by students’ reading level (as measured by the Fountas and Pinnell reading benchmarks).

Code responses of factors that determine ELL class placements are fairly evenly distributed among student, teacher, and school characteristics

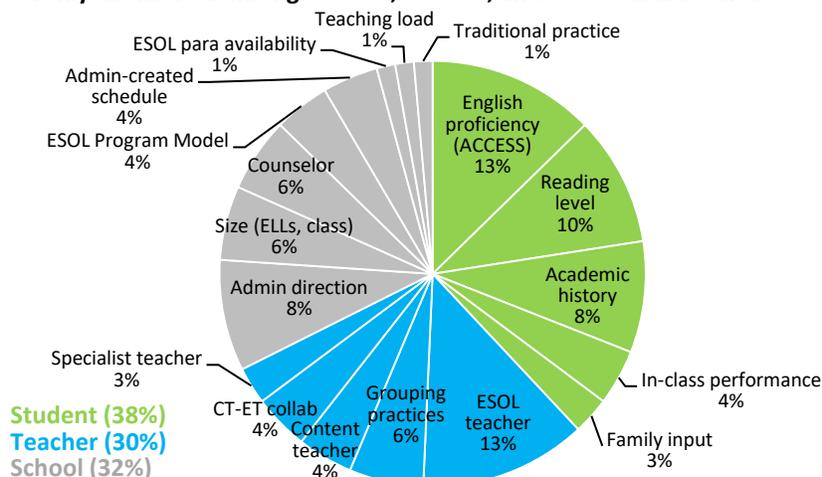


Figure 20. Percentage of focus group responses that indicated these factors contributed to specific class placements of ELLs at their schools.

Discussion

Before a discussion of the current findings, several limitations apply to this review. First, the current review is exploratory in nature. In other words, the review was conducted with no hypotheses to test and the findings are meant to be informative by describing the current state of the ESOL Program. Consequently, the analyses are not meant to imply cause-and-effect relationships. Second, the self-report procedures employed via surveys and focus groups yielded data that are volunteered responses. The experiences of the staff who responded may not necessarily represent the educational experience of ELLs in HCPSS as a whole. Finally, the classroom walkthroughs were only one snapshot of ESOL instruction instead of a full picture of daily instruction. Data collected based on these observations may not be generalizable to all ESOL classes. With these cautions in mind, the following is a discussion of the findings in reference to the questions that guided this review.

Research question one: What does ESOL instruction look like in HCPSS? How do these instructional practices vary among school levels?

At the elementary level, ESOL instruction is delivered either in pull-out or co-taught settings. Middle school level ESOL instruction is most likely delivered in sheltered classes, followed by a co-taught format, and a few are pull-out groups. High school level ESOL instruction takes place primarily in sheltered classrooms followed by co-taught classes. Newcomer Program classes take place at one high school. In terms of which ESOL Program Model is used at the school, based on focus groups with ESOL teachers, the single most frequently mentioned factor is the ELLs' ACCESS English proficiency level score. Many school factors, such as the administer-created schedule, administrative direction, and traditional/existing practices, were also frequently mentioned as contributing factors. This finding suggests the need for increased awareness of the individual needs of ELLs in addition to their English proficiency score such that these needs are considered simultaneously with other factors that determine the environment in which their learning occurs.

The ELIOT was developed as a set of items to look for during ESOL instruction that align with best practices and HCPSS's *Vision 2018*. Data gleaned from these walkthroughs suggest that ESOL instructional practices that support ELL learning were more likely to be observed in elementary classrooms compared to secondary classrooms. Nonetheless, similarities were found across school levels in terms of

which practices were least observed. For example, across school levels, instructional time was often not maximized to teach the academic language that ELLs needed to know in order to support their learning during content instruction. This is alarming because research suggests that time engaged in learning is strongly related to academic achievement (e.g., Fisher, Berliner, Filby, Marliave, Cahen, & Dishaw, 1981; Greenwood, 1991). For ELLs, efficient use of instructional time is critical as these students are learning not only to master the content, but English skills as well. As put forth by Coady et al. (2003), ELLs should be held to the same high standards as their peers, but they may require more time to achieve those standards. In addition, higher-order thinking activities and structured opportunities to interact with peers in English were infrequently observed during ESOL instruction at all school levels.

Survey comments by school staff suggest mixed perceptions of ESOL teachers. In any organization, some members are viewed positively by others while some are regarded less positively; this is also the case for ESOL teachers. While some staff members commended their ESOL teachers in their comments, a handful also noted the lack of professionalism of their ESOL teachers and the absence of services provided to their ELLs. In line with HCPSS's initiative to improve staff engagement, the ESOL Office may offer PLs to communicate expectations to ESOL teachers, as well as to provide continued training on effective strategies for collaborating with content teachers and for instruction.

Concerns about the Newcomer Program led to a Kaizen process in the beginning of SY2013. The ESOL Office collaborated with the Office of Continuous Improvement to discuss instructional time loss, curriculum goals, and transitional supports for ELLs in the Newcomer Program. As recorded in the Kaizen charter's problem statement, "instructional time for Newcomer students is more limited than mainstream students. Because of transportation time from home school to ARL [and] then [to] RHHS, the students lose 2 credit hours each year... Because of the limitations with instructional time, students do not receive instruction in Science or Social Studies. Curriculum has not been developed for Newcomer Center students in all content areas and goals have not been clearly defined for successfully transitioning to mainstream high schools. Some students could release earlier than the year-end; however, our current policy does not allow for this flexibility and students are unable to accelerate into other content areas prior to release" (Office of ESOL, 2013). The Kaizen process included a time study of Newcomer students' typical school day. That time study concluded that, on average, Newcomer students receive 4 hours and 49 minutes of daily instruction. In addition to the observation that ESOL instructional time was infrequently observed to be maximized for learning academic language, Newcomer Program students also receive less instructional time than their peers by virtue of enrollment in this program.

Research question two: What is the current practice in placing students into the ESOL Program? How do these processes and procedures vary throughout HCPSS?

In the summer of 2013, the ESOL Office collaborated with the Office of Continuous Improvement in a Kaizen process to document concerns related to inconsistencies across the county in the registration, testing, and placement of new ELLs; as well as the lack of transitional resources provided to RELLs. The problem statements that guided this Kaizen process are summarized here. First, the ESOL Office shared that information gathered during registration and the identification of ELLs is inconsistent between the International Student Registration Center (ISRC) and each school. Plus, key information about the student may be missing in the registration process while other information may be duplicated on the various registration forms. Difficulty in providing interpreters at the ISRC also resulted in inaccurate or missing data. Second, the ESOL Office recorded concerns about the communication with schools for placing a student into ESOL. Such miscommunication sometimes resulted in a misrepresentation of the ELL's educational needs. Finally, on the other side of the placement continuum is program release. The ESOL Office stated a need for transitional support for ELLs who are just released from the ESOL Program. Although RELLs are included in the LEP category for state accountability measures, the ESOL Program was not designed to provide support for these students.

The current review addressed school-specific class placement of ELLs after they have been identified as ESOL-eligible. Results suggest that instructional match and ELLs' English proficiency level (according to the ACCESS for ELLs) play primary roles in the specific class placement of ELLs, with scheduling availability following close behind as the third contributing factor. However, variation among schools exists in terms of the staff members who are responsible for this process. For example, a handful of comments on the EPS suggested that ESOL teachers are not consulted when placing ELLs in classes, with reading specialists playing a primary role due to the emphasis on reading benchmark levels. Focus group analyses corroborated these findings: ACCESS English proficiency levels, reading levels, and ESOL teacher input were the most frequently cited factors in determining ELLs' specific class placement.

Similar to concerns about transitional resources brought up during the Kaizen process, the current review also elicited concerns related to ESOL Program release in respondents' survey comments. A few respondents wrote about the need for supports for ELLs who have reached ESOL-exit criteria. Others were concerned that ELLs are placed into grade-level content classes before they have reached adequate English proficiency.

Research question three: What professional learning opportunities are provided to staff in the implementation of school-wide best practices related to the educational experiences of ELLs?

Results from this ESOL Program review found that non-ESOL teachers and administrators were unlikely to have received ELL-specific professional learning in the past year, such as workshops on: language acquisition, working with the families of ELLs, maintaining accurate records for ELLs, providing ELL accommodations, and properly assessing ELLs. Voluntary comments provided on the survey also indicated a lack of understanding of the role of ESOL teachers in the schools, as well as the services and resources that the ESOL Program provides. To support staff in providing an ELL-responsive educational environment, professional learning opportunities must be developed and publicized to inform school staff on the roles and expectations for ESOL teachers and the ESOL Office.

For the most part, HCPSS staff reported that they adjusted their practices when they work with students who come from families that hold different beliefs about education than they did. At the same time, a low percentage of staff reported having received PLs on working with the families of ELLs in the past year. The willingness of staff to engage in culturally responsive practices may be supported by the provision of culturally-relevant and appropriate strategies to respond to ELLs and their families' needs.

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 (MSDE, 2012). MSDE suggests that providing accommodations during instruction and assessments is a way to promote equal access to grade-level content for ELLs. The low proportions of non-ESOL teachers and administrators who indicated having received PLs on providing accommodations and assessing ELLs requires attention. Even if this lack of PLs is indicative of the possibility that staff may already have mastered ELL-related accommodation and assessment practices, refresher PLs for staff as the ELL population continues to transform may be beneficial. For administrators who may also serve as the School Accountability Coordinator, such PLs may be critical.

Related to the need for PLs on ELL accommodations, focus groups with ESOL teachers suggest that ESOL teachers do not regularly document their ELLs' use of accommodations; decisions about accommodations are based primarily on the student's ACCESS English proficiency level and informal observations. Accurate record-keeping for ELLs is an area that requires attention. Moreover, in the process of retrieving ESOL Program data for this review, it became evident that the system used to record ELL data requires updating. "System" here refers to the database, data entry, data validation, and other processes

involved in the documentation and reporting of ESOL data. Due to inconsistencies in data entry practices between schools, historical data of ELLs may not be accurate.

Research question four: How do ESOL Program practices relate to ELLs' academic outcomes?

Referencing the SY2013 AMAO data, the middle school level emerged as an area that requires attention. The current review of the ESOL Program is primarily a needs assessment to support program improvement efforts rather than an evaluation that has the statistical power to make inferences about which ESOL practices result in higher academic outcomes. With this caution in mind, the current findings suggest that ESOL instruction at the middle school level may benefit from targeted resources to support ESOL service delivery. In particular, classroom walkthrough data indicate that best practices in ESOL instruction are less frequently observed at the middle school level compared to elementary or high schools. Specific areas were the use of:

1. Lesson materials that are developmentally appropriate for students,
2. reading materials that are differentiated for student English proficiency,
3. explicit modeling of academic skills/strategies,
4. higher-order thinking activities,
5. opportunities for students to practice academic language in context,
6. instructional materials familiar to students to support comprehension, and
7. student feedback to adjust instruction.

Survey data from middle school non-ESOL teachers indicate that they monitor progress for ELLs only about half the time. More frequent progress monitoring may help support instruction planning. ESOL and non-ESOL teachers at the middle and high school levels may have fewer opportunities to communicate about their students compared to elementary teachers. Providing an avenue by which middle school teachers can share information about their students, coordinate services, and analyze performance data may be useful in supporting ELL achievement.

In terms of college and career readiness as an academic outcome, a sizable percentage of high school ESOL teachers reported being unsure of the availability of college- and career-related information in different languages. HCPSS did not meet AMAO 3, part of which is the graduation rate target for ELLs. Helping students understand their options after high school and setting concrete postsecondary targets and what they need to accomplish in school to get there may help reduce dropout before graduation. In addition, for older newcomer students who would likely age out of high school prior to meeting graduation requirements, administrators and ESOL teachers may consider conferencing with them and their families to explore pathways that support their individual needs.

Recommendations

Data obtained from this review may act as a needs assessment and baseline information upon which the ESOL Office can set clear goals and plan actions toward building a school environment that is responsive to ELL needs and aligned to the HCPSS *Strategic Plan: Vision 2018*. Based on this review, the following recommendations may be considered.

Accurate data-keeping

1. The Division of Accountability may consider referencing MSDE policies to establish operational definitions in the labeling of ELLs for consistency in reporting data about ELLs, especially as official figures are required for staffing and accountability purposes. Terms that require clarification include ELL, ESOL, LEP, and RELLE.

2. Along with the first recommendation, school-based data clerks may benefit from trainings on entering ESOL Program data. Such trainings may cover topics on clarifications of terms, what data to enter, where to enter data, how often data should be updated, and when to designate a student as an active, inactive, or released ELL.
3. ESOL staff needs to be trained to serve as leaders in their schools in the documentation and record-keeping of ELL data, including academic progress monitoring, as well as the use and provision of accommodations during instruction and on tests/assessments.
4. ESOL teachers should be encouraged to use multiple measures in determining accommodations for ELLs. The decision-making process for determining accommodations should be documented.

Clear expectations

5. Central Office leaders may consider delineating expectations for the inclusion of ELLs in School Improvement Plans to be communicated to administrators.
6. Clear expectations should be developed and communicated to all staff about their roles in the education of ELLs. This is in line with HCPSS's initiative to improve staff engagement.
7. The ESOL Office may consider developing materials to raise awareness of the services it offers and expectations for the role of ESOL teachers in schools. This information can then be shared with school administrators for appropriate dissemination.
8. The ESOL Office may consider developing clear guidelines for the placement of ELLs into specific classes to be used by school staff. Such guidelines may involve delineation of critical data to gather and consider in the decision-making process (e.g., academic history, content performance, etc.). These guidelines may be derived from a document suggested in recommendation 13 below.
9. All teachers of ELLs must be made aware of their federal obligations in the provision of accommodations to ELLs.
10. The empirically-derived principle that students who start at lower English proficiency levels are those expected to make the most progress in English acquisition compared to their peers should be communicated clearly to ESOL teachers. In particular, newcomer students, whom by definition have the lowest English proficiency, are expected to make the most growth within a year compared to other ELLs.

Communication and collaboration

11. One example of an avenue by which to communicate the role of ESOL teachers in the school, as well as to increase accountability for ELLs at the school level, is to form a school-based committee that meets regularly to discuss and review each ELL's educational needs and plans. For instance, such a committee might comprise an administrator, the School Accountability Coordinator, the ESOL teacher, the school counselor, a general educator, the student's parent, the student, and an interpreter.
12. For both non-ESOL and ESOL teachers, encouraging collaborative planning and co-teaching opportunities may be beneficial for increased communication about ELLs' needs in daily instruction and improved alignment between content and ESOL instruction.

13. The ESOL Office should collaborate with the ISRC to develop a protocol for the placement process of ELLs. This protocol might include information on how and what to communicate to the student's school about the ELL, as well as how to interpret placement recommendations. As part of this protocol, school-based ESOL teachers may be designated as the liaison between the school and the ISRC in obtaining accurate and complete information about the ELL.
14. The process currently used by the ISRC to place ESOL students may benefit from a review and update as necessary. Of note, the grade-level designation of ESOL students should be revisited, especially in the context of high-school-age newcomer students.
15. In line with *Vision 2018's* goal to prepare every student for college and career readiness, the ESOL Office might consider collaborating with the Office of Student Services to investigate and provide postsecondary planning resources accessible to ELLs and their families.

Professional learning opportunities

16. Along with recommendation 12, the ESOL Office may consider providing continuous training on effective strategies for collaborating with content teachers.
17. Non-ESOL staff should be made aware of ELL-related professional learning opportunities and encouraged to participate in such trainings to support their work with ELLs. Topics for these PLs may include: language acquisition, culturally-appropriate ways to work with ELLs and their families, providing accommodations for ELLs, maintaining accurate records for ELLs, and proper assessments of ELLs.
18. Professional learning opportunities on rigorous instruction for ELLs need to be provided regularly to ESOL staff. Topics for such PLs should include guidance on planning tasks that require higher-order thinking, as well as activities that afford structured cooperative learning time to interact with peers in English. Another topic might be on how to create lessons that hold ELLs to the same grade-level standards as their peers by adjusting the language aspect of instruction to accommodate for ELLs' English proficiency, in order for ELLs to be able to access and engage in grade-level learning. The inclusion of such activities coupled with clear learning objectives has potential to result in more effective use of ESOL instructional time.
19. With the common practice of using students' ACCESS English proficiency level scores in determining ELL accommodations and class placements, as well as the development of learning goals and determination of readiness for release from ESOL services, continuous professional learning should address valid interpretations and use of ACCESS scores and how to apply them in practice effectively.
20. Teachers of ELLs might benefit from opportunities to learn about progress monitoring tools to use with ELLs.
21. School-based staff needs to be trained regularly on the provision of accommodations for ELLs.
22. School-based staff might benefit from training on the class-placement process for ELLs once they are found eligible for ESOL services.

Program improvement strategies

23. Central Office leadership may consider compiling results of existing reviews of the Newcomer Program to make decisions about concerns raised regarding the educational experience of ELLs in this program. The most notable concern from the most recent Kaizen process (SY2014) is instructional time loss.
24. To support the implementation of ESOL Program improvement efforts, the ESOL Office may consider implementing strategies in a small number of schools before they are used county-wide so that these improvement efforts are manageable.
25. The ESOL Office may consider continuing data collection of key items from this program review in order to monitor its program improvement efforts; the current data may serve as baseline data upon which improvement goals may be set. This recommendation is in line with *Vision 2018's* Goal 4 for HCPSS to be committed to continuous improvement via a “plan-do-study-act” framework for program development and improvement.
26. ESOL accountability performance metrics may improve with strategic and targeted ESOL Program improvement efforts at the middle school level, where performance lags compared to elementary and high school levels.

Transitional supports

27. The ESOL Office might consider transitional resources necessary for supporting ELLs who test out of eligibility for ESOL services.
28. Students who enroll in HCPSS at an age that precludes graduation may benefit from discussions 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. An example of an existing HCPSS practice that supports reintegration of students into the educational system that may be utilized is the Reinstatement and Enrollment Committee (REC) process.

References

- Coady, M. Hamann, E. T., Harrington, M., Pacheco, M., Pho, S. & Yedlin, J. (2003). *Claiming opportunities: A handbook for improving education for English Language Learners through comprehensive school reform*. Providence, RI: Education Alliance at Brown University.
- Dean, C. B., Hubbell, E. R., Pitler, H., & Stone, B. (2011). *Classroom instruction that works: Research-based strategies for increasing student achievement (2nd edition)*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Fisher, C. W., Berliner, D. C., Filby, N. N., Marliave, R., Cahen, L. S., & Dishaw, M. M. (1981). Teaching behaviors, academic learning time, and student achievement: An overview. *Journal of Classroom Interaction, 17*, 2-15.
- Goldenberg, C. (2008). Teaching English language learners: What the research does—and does not—say. *American Educator, 32*, 8-23, 42-44.
- Greenwood, C. R. (1991). Longitudinal analysis of time, engagement, and achievement in at-risk versus non-risk students. *Exceptional Children, 57*, 521-535.
- Hill, J. D., & Flynn, K. M. (2006). *Classroom instruction that works with English language learners*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). (2003). *English language development standards and assessment: Annual Measurable Achievement Objective (AMAOs)*. http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/title_III/elp_s_a.html#Annual
- Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). (2012). *Maryland accommodations manual: Selecting, administering and evaluating the use of accommodations for instruction and assessment*. Retrieved from http://marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/840EFBB6-CD7D-404E-8A77-E978F6D508AA/32878/2012_MD_Accommodations_Manual_.pdf
- Office of English Speakers of Other Languages. (2013). *Kaizen charter and checklist: Newcomer Center*. Ellicott City, MD: Howard County Public School System.
- Office of English Speakers of Other Languages. (n.d.). *ESOL essential curriculum grades 9-12: Newcomer Program*. Ellicott City, MD: Howard County Public School System.
- Office of Student Assessment and Program Evaluation. (2012). *HCPSS Newcomer Program: Program evaluation report*. Ellicott City, MD: Howard County Public School System.
- WIDA (World-class Instruction Design and Assessment) Consortium. (2012). *WIDA's 2012 amplification of the English language development standards, kindergarten through grade 12*. Madison, WI: Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System.

Appendix A: ESOL Instruction Observational Tool (ELIOT)

ESOL Instruction Observational Tool (ELIOT)

The ELIOT outlines a set of "look-for's" in ESOL instruction. Three areas are highlighted:

- I. **Rigor:** *Vision 2018 Strategy 1.2.4* Incorporate inclusive language development practices and presumed competence for English Language Learners.
- II. **Engagement:** *Vision 2018 Strategy 1.4.3* Provide personalized education experiences.
- III. **Assessment:** *Vision 2018 Strategy 1.5.2* Continuously monitor student achievement across grade levels, content areas, and schools for ... students receiving ... English language learner services.

School: _____	ESOL Teacher Initials: _____	Grade-level(s): _____	Student-Adult Ratio: _____
ESOL Program Model: <input type="checkbox"/> Pull-out/Small group <input type="checkbox"/> Push-in/Co-taught <input type="checkbox"/> Sheltered <input type="checkbox"/> Newcomer			
Observer: _____	Date: _____	Length of Visit: _____ minutes	Class/Subject: _____

Item	Y/N	Evidence
Rigor		
1 Lesson materials are developmentally appropriate for students.		
2 Reading materials are differentiated for student English proficiency.		
3 Teacher provides or monitors language accommodations to support ELLs accessing the content.		
4 Teacher explicitly teaches vocabulary required to access content.		
5 Teacher explicitly models academic skills/strategies (thinking, learning, reading, writing, studying).		
6 Teacher engages students in higher-order thinking activities.		
7 Students receive specific feedback about their academic performance.		
8 Lesson objectives are clear to students.		
9 Instructional time is devoted to helping students learn the academic language needed to access content.		
Engagement		
10 Students are provided opportunities to practice academic language in context.		
11 ELLs have an opportunity to interact with same-grade peers in English (e.g., cooperative learning, chatting about the lesson).		
12 Multiple presentation formats are used (e.g., verbal and nonverbal communication, physical activities).		
13 Teacher explicitly models academic skills/strategies		
14 Student effort is reinforced.		
15 All students are encouraged to participate.		
Assessment		
16 Students have multiple ways of demonstrating content knowledge (e.g., oral, written, nonverbal).		
17 Teacher has multiple ways of documenting student work (e.g., when no student product is collected).		
18 Teacher actively checks in with all students to ensure understanding.		
19 Teacher adjusts instruction based on student feedback.		

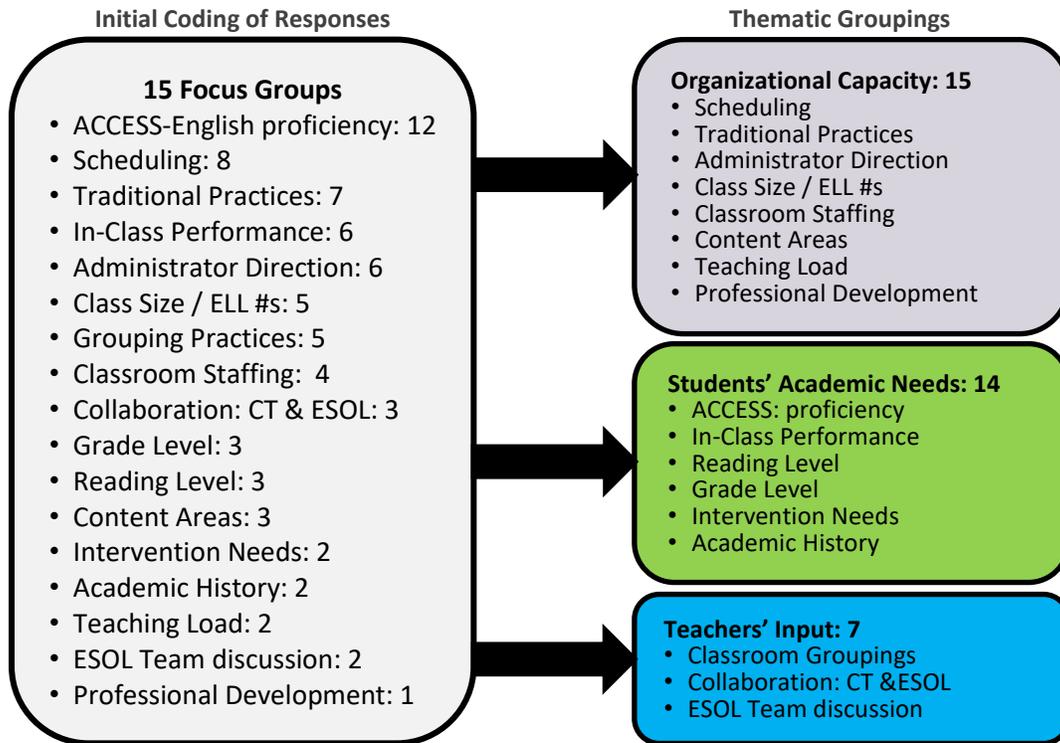
Additional comments (e.g., describe classroom layout/setting, communication style, etc.):

Appendix B: ESOL Interview Script (ELIS)

1. What does a typical day look like for this ELL or this group of ELLs who we will be seeing?
2. How are services (push-in/co-taught, pull-out/small group, sheltered) determined for ELLs in your school?
3. How is class (ES)/course (MS/HS) placement determined for ELLs in your school?
4. Who is involved in planning instruction for ELLs?
5. How often do you collaborate with content teachers in lesson planning?
6. Who helps determine accommodations for ELLs?
7. How do you communicate with your ELLs about their accommodations?
8. How do you monitor ELLs' use of their accommodations?
9. What types of data are used to determine progress for ELLs in your classes?
10. How do you use student assessments to inform instruction?
11. What kinds of activities do you engage in to communicate ELLs' needs to relevant staff?
12. What resources are in place for you and other staff to support ELLs?
13. Do you communicate with the families of your ELLs about academic progress?
14. What strategies do you use to engage families of ELLs?

Appendix C1: Coding Process of Focus Group Responses

1) How is ESOL service delivery (i.e., ESOL Program Model) determined for ELLs in your school?

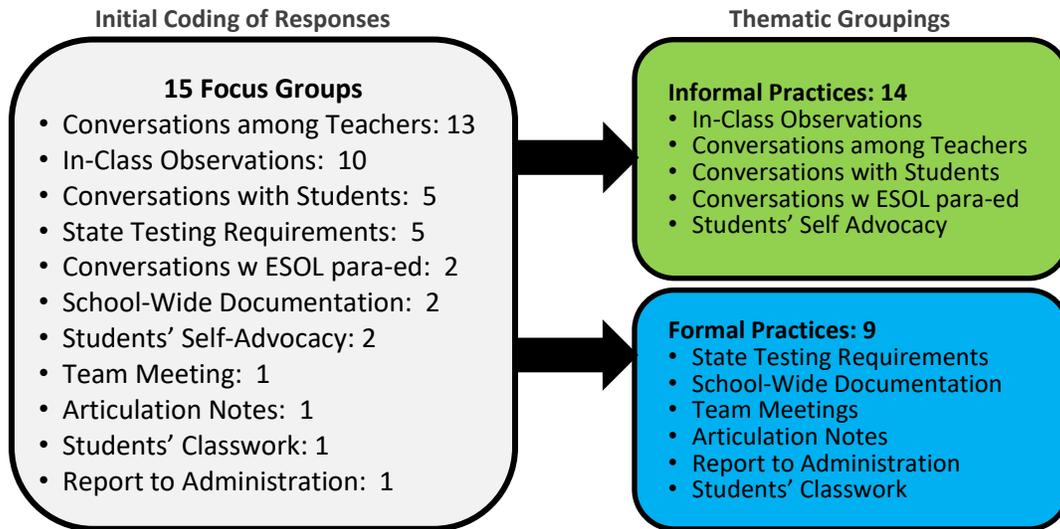


Fifteen interviews were conducted with ESOL teachers in groups comprising between one and five teachers. Responses recorded from these focus group interviews were first coded using 17 codes as shown in the left-hand box above. These codes were generated as part of the qualitative analytical process of these responses. The number next to the coded response indicates the number of focus groups that mentioned that response.

A second round of coding was conducted to group the coded responses thematically. Based on a review of the coded responses, three themes emerged: school organizational capacity, student academic needs, and teacher input (right-hand boxes above). The number next to each thematic group indicates the number of focus groups with at least one coded response categorized into that thematic group. For example, 15 of the 15 focus groups mentioned something that could be categorized under school organizational factors; 14 of 15 indicated at least one response that fell under student academic needs; and 7 of the 15 focus groups mentioned something that indicated teacher input as a contributing factor in determining the school's method of ESOL service delivery.

Appendix C2: Coding Process of Focus Group Responses

2) How do ESOL teachers monitor their ELLs' use of accommodations?

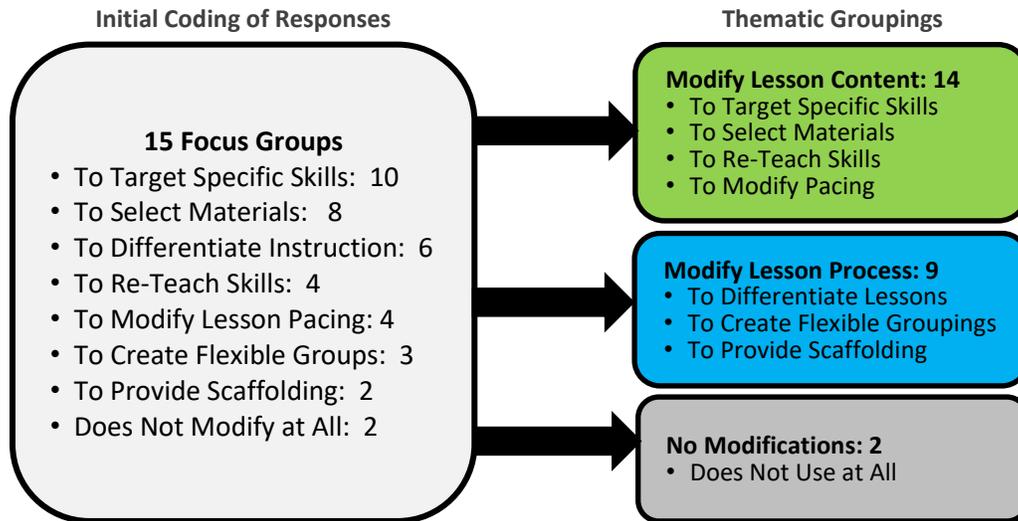


Fifteen interviews were conducted with ESOL teachers in groups comprising between one and five teachers. Responses recorded from these focus group interviews were first coded using 11 codes as shown in the left-hand box above. These codes were generated as part of the qualitative analytical process of these responses. The number next to the coded response indicates the number of focus groups that mentioned that response.

A second round of coding was conducted to group the coded responses thematically. Based on a review of the coded responses, two themes emerged: formal (documented) and informal practices (right-hand boxes above). The number next to each thematic group indicates the number of focus groups with at least one coded response categorized into that thematic group. For example, 14 of the 15 focus groups mentioned something that could be categorized under informal practices; and 9 of the 15 focus groups mentioned something that indicated formal practices in monitoring their ELLs' accommodation-use.

Appendix C3: Coding Process of Focus Group Responses

3) How do ESOL teachers use student assessments to inform instruction?

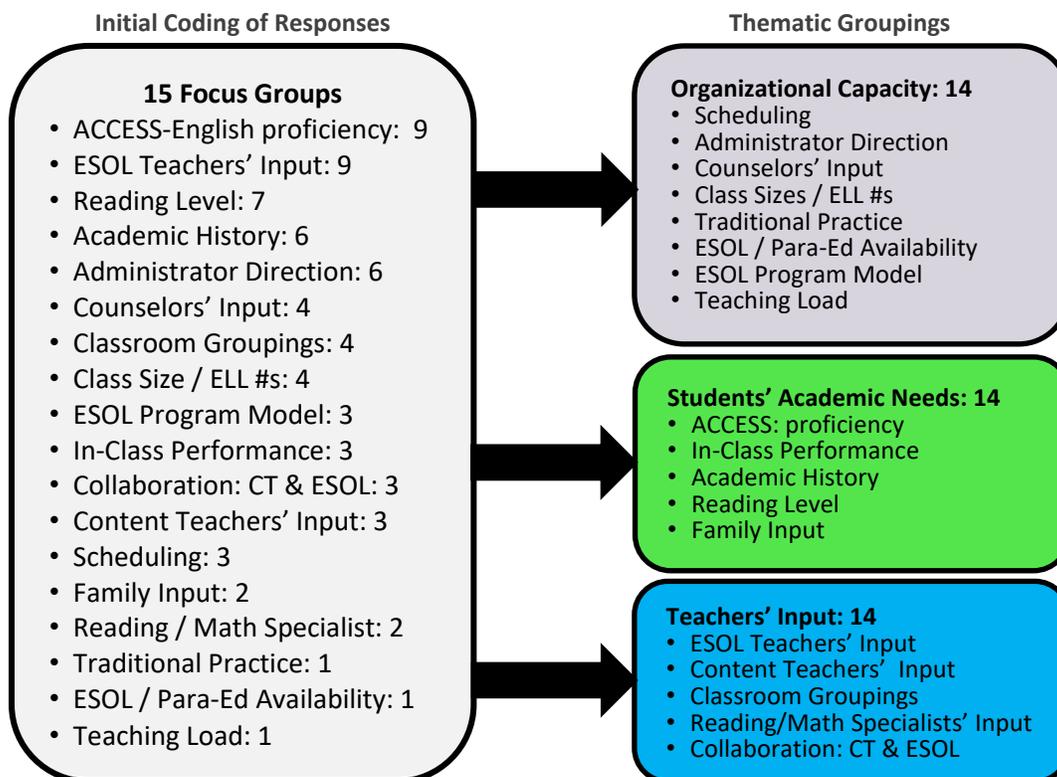


Fifteen interviews were conducted with ESOL teachers in groups comprising between one and five teachers. Responses recorded from these focus group interviews were first coded using eight codes as shown in the left-hand box above. These codes were generated as part of the qualitative analytical process of these responses. The number next to the coded response indicates the number of focus groups that mentioned that response.

A second round of coding was conducted to group the coded responses thematically. Based on a review of the coded responses, three themes emerged: modification of the lesson content, modification of the lesson process, and no modifications (right-hand boxes above). The number next to each thematic group indicates the number of focus groups with at least one coded response categorized into that thematic group. For example, 14 of the 15 focus groups mentioned something that could be categorized under lesson content modification; 9 of 15 indicated at least one response that fell under lesson process modification; and 2 of the 15 focus groups mentioned no modifications to instruction as a result of student assessment information.

Appendix C4: Coding Process of Focus Group Responses

4) How is class placement determined for ELLs in your school?



Fifteen interviews were conducted with ESOL teachers in groups comprising between one and five teachers. Responses recorded from these focus group interviews were first coded using 18 codes as shown in the left-hand box above. These codes were generated as part of the qualitative analytical process of these responses. The number next to the coded response indicates the number of focus groups that mentioned that response.

A second round of coding was conducted to group the coded responses thematically. Based on a review of the coded responses, three themes emerged: school organizational capacity, student academic needs, and teacher input (right-hand boxes above). The number next to each thematic group indicates the number of focus groups with at least one coded response categorized into that thematic group. For example, 14 of the 15 focus groups mentioned something that could be categorized under school organizational factors; 14 of 15 indicated at least one response that fell under student academic needs; and 14 of the 15 focus groups mentioned something that indicated teacher input as a contributing factor in determining the class placement of ELLs in their schools.