

LAU PLAN

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) PROGRAM

It is the policy of M.S.A.D. #56 not to discriminate against students of limited English proficiency. ESL instruction will be provided for all students of limited English proficiency who qualify according to established district guidelines and as judged by the Language Assessment Committee. The legal basis for the program is the landmark 1974 U.S. Supreme Court decision, Lau vs. Nichol and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974. The U.S. Supreme Court stated that school systems must take action to see that limited English proficient national origin minority student are able to benefit from an education conducted in English.

LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

A Language Assessment Committee (LAC) will be created to coordinate and oversee the educational program of limited English proficient students enrolled in the MSAD#56 School Department. The LAC will be composed of the guidance counselor, the building principal, the Director of Special Services, classroom teacher(s), parents when appropriate, English as a Second Language Teacher, and other ESL consultants on an as needed basis. The LAC meetings will be scheduled and conducted by the Director of Special Services or the Building Principal. Committee membership will be individualized for each student and change from year to year for each child as appropriate.

The LAC responsibilities will include the following:

1. To review the Home Language Surveys to identify potential LEP students who have not already been identified through mandatory special education screening, parent/teacher referral, or LAC surveys.
2. The administration of multi-criteria evaluations to potential LEP students annually.
3. To make determination from multi-criteria evaluations about placements, programming in regards to amount of services, time of delivery of services, and types of programs (pull out/in class) for ESL students.
4. To meet quarterly to monitor student's language and academic progress. (Grade reports, portfolios, standardized tests, parent and teacher observations).
5. To make recommendations for placement and program type for the next school year.

6. To recommend modification of ESL support services or reclassification of a student from limited English proficiency to full English proficiency (or vice versa).
7. To carry out annual monitoring for three years after student's reclassification to full English proficiency.
8. To recommend revisions and additions to MSAD #56 LAU Plan.

IDENTIFICATION OF LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS

- A. Identify primary/home language of the student with the state required Home Language Survey, to be filled out as part of new students' registration.
 1. This is accomplished at Kindergarten registration and when new students enroll at each school.
 2. Upon receiving the language survey form, the office of each school will send a copy of all language survey forms to the Superintendent's office who will forward them to the state. A photocopy of the form will be returned to the student's school to be placed with the school registration form in the student's cumulative file.
 3. In case of questionable age and/or grade, the Special Services Director, principal, and parents will meet as a group before the child is placed in order to determine proper placement of the child.
- B. For those students who indicate on the form that English is their second language, the Special Services Director will be notified and will:
 1. Inform the classroom teacher of the primary language of the student.
 2. Inform the classroom teacher of the observation period needed for documentation and assessment of need(s) for support services.
 3. Arrange an assessment.
- C. **IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS CURRENTLY ENROLLED AS LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT (LEP)**

If a teacher suspects that a student's achievement is affected by language proficiency factors, action shall be taken to determine the student's English language proficiency using acceptable procedures and instruments, administered by a qualified evaluator. Assessment instruments and procedures should evaluate English listening/understanding, speaking, reading, and writing abilities. Student achievement should be comparable to English-language of the same age, ability, and grade level.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

Once a child has been identified as being from a non-English language background or having spent a considerable amount of time in a non-English speaking country (and that stay has affected the child's ability to comprehend and express in English), the next step is to assess the child's English language proficiency. This must be a multiple-criteria assessment wherein the child's basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) are measured; the CALP component would include listening, speaking, reading, and writing in an academic setting.

The assessment tools for such a task would include:

- * Previous school records
- * Observation of the child in a classroom and in formal settings
- * Interviews with the child and parent(s)/guardian(s) in the primary language
- * An English language proficiency screening instrument (a list of tests available from the Department of Education is included in its most recent Catalogue of Resources on Language and Culture)
- * A grade-level appropriate standardized achievement test for those children who attain a score of fluent English proficient on the screening instrument selected by the LAC
- * A portfolio of work done by the child in a previous school or at the current school
- * A native language proficiency assessment instrument
- * A questionnaire about the child's health, schooling, and culture

The LAC will conduct and review the above assessment and from that make a determination of:

- * the need for a structured language support program
- * the most appropriate and effective program to best meet the student's
- * English language acquisition needs as well as content-area support the individualized learning plan for the child

ASSESSMENT OF FIRST LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

If possible, an assessment of the child's proficiency in his/her first language is advisable since this can give the LAC more enhanced data about the child's learning, comprehension, and retention of information. The data will also be valuable for future reference in the unlikely event the LEP child is referred for a special education evaluation; if this were to occur, a disability in English would have to be reflected in the first language as well.

Two resources would be necessary for a formal first language assessment to take place:

1. A first assessment tool; and
2. A test administrator who is fluent in the child's first language and understands the child's culture

If a native language assessment tool is available, the school department may seek out a person who could administer it. If only a test administrator is available, that person could give an informal, translated assessment to obtain an initial perspective of the child's first language.

CLASSIFICATION OF STUDENTS' ENGLISH FLUENCY LEVELS

The LAC will weigh the assessment information and the other factors to create the most effective and appropriate language support system for the language minority children in question. Features of fluency classification are:

1. A low-beginner student of English as second language would be characterized by:
 - * a level of non-English proficiency
 - * neither BICS nor CALP skill level
 - * the beginning of associating sound and meaning; the way that spoken language relates to their environment
 - * using non-verbal signals rather than words to indicate comprehension
 - * relying heavily on contextual clues (appropriate and unambiguous visuals, real objects and student-student/teacher - student interactive activities)
 - * depending on key words rather than complete utterances, in order to comprehend the main idea
 - * little or no literacy skills in English (for students 2nd grade and older)
 - * little or no receptive vocabulary; little or no expressive vocabulary

2. A high-level beginner (HB) student would be characterized by:
 - * very limited English proficiency (some BICS/no CALP)
 - * attempting speech, although elements may be missing and individual words may be mispronounced (early speech production);
 - * continuing to develop comprehension skills (through the teacher's expansion of vocabulary for passive recognition);
 - * some simultaneous development of literacy readiness skills (for students 2nd grade and older)

3. A low-intermediate (LI) student would be at the stage of speech emergence in which he/she produces frequently heard phrases at first and then later begins to generate his/her own sentences. This would be characterized by the student's:
 - * limited English proficiency

- * attempting more elaborate speech
- * continuing to make errors and at a greater rate because of more speech production;
- * requiring extensive vocabulary development; while continuing to develop comprehension skills;
- * increasing literacy skill development in English

4. High-intermediate (HI) fluency describes the period in which the student produces full sentences and uses them in a connected narrative. This level is characterized by the student's:

- * Developed BIC/low CALP
- * Understanding most of the every day language s/he hears during a typical school day;
- * Beginning to converse with native speakers extensively;
- * Continuing to make errors, although at a lesser rate; and,
- * Continuing to develop comprehension skills; especially in order to acquire higher-level vocabulary.

5. The low-advance student is at a transitional English proficiency level. This level is characterized by the student's:

- * having a wide range of abilities in the instructional setting (BICS and CALP) - both formal and informal
- * having a wide range of literacy skills (students 2nd grade and older)
- * requiring further facilitation of vocabulary and comprehension development
- * almost totally mainstreamed requiring continued though decreased ESL support

The high-advanced student is totally mainstreamed, requiring little or no ESL assistance, only in specialized areas of academic study.

PROGRAM DESIGN

There are many types of structured language support programs which can be beneficial to language minority-limited English proficient children. The ability of the district to provide some of these programs depends on: availability of native-language-speaking personnel & availability of native language instructional materials for sheltered content. The keys to an effective and appropriate program choice are: careful consideration of the child's needs; full research into the resources available (personnel, materials); and, full understanding of the possible program configurations. The LAC will select the most appropriate structured language support program and appropriate modifications for the regular classrooms.

There are many factors that must be considered when determining the most appropriate and effective structured language support program. Some of those factors are:

- * Age of child - If a limited English proficient child is of kindergarten age, the LAC would

not want to allocate lengthy ESL contact with the child because of the short attention span of a kindergartner. However, for, say a 6th grader, the program would have to encompass not only ESL but content area subjects and would require a more substantial time allotment than would a kindergartner.

- * English language proficiency level
- * Native language proficiency level
- * Amount of uninterrupted schooling in the child's background
- * The amount of native language literacy skills the child possesses
- * Amount of trauma (if any) in child's background (family, country...) Especially from refugees
- * Amount of literacy readiness/exposure in child's background

A structured language support program must be provided in a time allotment that will most benefit the ESL learner. For example;

- * appropriate time allotment daily during school hours
- * instruction during all or part of a language intensive class(reading, social studies, language arts) and in collaboration with the regular education teacher.
- * appropriate time allotment daily after school hours if requested by the student or parent/guardian. A document of consent signed by the parent/guardian for ESL services after school will be in the student's file and approval will be requested on an annual basis.

GRADE-LEVEL PLACEMENT

Before making a permanent grade-level placement decision for a language minority student, the LAC will need to have pertinent background information about the child. That information would include:

- the child's chronological age
- the child's educational background
- the child's English language proficiency level

With this information, which should have been collected as expeditiously as possible, the LAC can decide at what grade level the student should be placed. Under no circumstances should a student be placed in a grade level that is more than one year below his/her chronological age. Although it may seem logical to place a language minority child at a grade level that matches the kind of English skills he/she appears to need acquire, it would be a great disservice to the child both socially and cognitively to do so. The school is obligated to provide a structured language support program that meets the ESL as well as content area and equal access need of the student.

If the student is at the low end of the English language proficiency spectrum (see previous section), the necessary ESL services will probably focus on survival skills and the basic communications (BICS) regardless of the child's grade level, even though the focus of the program is to assist that child in

learning the content area information that has been taught in earlier grades.

Regarding the issue of grade level retention, grade level retention is only advisable when a language minority student is lagging behind peers socially and emotionally (and even that may not be appropriate). Consequently, a reasonable argument can be made that a LEP child will not be on grade level academically until he/she has had the opportunity to acquire and learn the English skills and content necessary for success. It is not appropriate to retain a LEP child solely based on limited English proficiency, since such a student has unique needs and must be given ample time from grade level to grade level to acquire English proficiency. As noted earlier, acquisition of a second language for cognitive/academic proficiency can take from five to more than seven years under optimal circumstances.

The most advantageous way to avoid grade-level retention is to make accommodations for the LEP child in the regular classroom and to maintain a close collaborative relationship between the regular classroom and ESL program. If a LEP child is referred for retention, the LAC should be included in that process to ensure that language proficiency is not the sole reason for the referral.

EXIT AND RECLASSIFICATION CRITERIA

If a structured language support program is effective and appropriate, the LEP student will eventually be: (a) reclassified at a higher level of proficiency, or (b) exited from the structured language support entirely. Any member of the Language Assessment Committee or the child him/herself may recommend reclassification or exit.

Once the recommendation has been made for reclassification or exit, an evaluation process and a review of records are undertaken. The evaluation criteria and review of records are similar to those implemented in the entry criteria with one crucial exception - that of the comparability of the student to his/her regular peers and the likelihood/predictability of academic success in a totally-mainstreamed instructional setting. This range of criteria will be identifiable in: the student's scores on a standardized achievement test normed on fluent English proficient children; a portfolio of the student's literacy work; observations in both formal and informal settings; teacher observations; and, interviews with the child and parent(s)/guardian(s). The compilation of this information would necessarily bear out the viability of a recommendation for reclassification or exit.

The criteria would include a cut-off score for the standardized achievement test to determine the child's ability to compete with monolingual English-speaking peers; If the child has difficulty taking standardized achievement tests, the LAC may set up an alternative test-taking situation.

If and when the child is found to be eligible for reclassification or exit, the LAC will need to monitor the child's academic performance and psycho-social well-being after the placement is made. In the case of a student who is reclassified, the decreased ESL instructional time should be monitored in terms of:

continued academic success; adjustment to a longer time period in the mainstream classroom; and, instructional needs being met in the structured language support program. In the case of exit from the program, the full mainstreaming should be monitored for:

academic successes; adjustment to the full-time mainstream classroom; and any emerging language skills needs that may surface once mainstreaming has occurred.

After a child has been exited from a structured language support program, that child's language performance and growth must be monitored for three years (if the child is still in school). This could be done in regularly scheduled LAC meetings. During those three years of monitoring, if the child experiences a pattern of difficulty with language or content skills, the LAC can re-enter the child into the structured language support program.

RECORDKEEPING/THE LANGUAGE PROCESS FILE

In all of the procedures involving the identification, assessment, provision of services, and exit from services for LEP children, thorough record keeping must be implemented and maintained. Such record keeping is necessary to keep track of the components of the individual learning plan and the child's progress within it; the language progress file is also a valuable source of information for the program evaluation. If the child's family moves to a different school, the information in the file can help the new teacher to set up a language support program more expeditiously.

The language progress file (LPF) is also a valuable tool for illustrating a school's commitment to quality services for LEP children. Typically, a LPF would consist of:

- C all test scores pertaining to program decisions
- C recommendations for the individual child's program
- C portfolio of literacy work done by the student
- C ILPs (with program goals and objectives) and outcomes
- C a copy of HLS that initially identified the child as language minority
- C parent interview or questionnaire notes
- C time line of LSC meetings
- C recommendations for reclassification or exit from program
- C notes from observation by school staff
- C copies of rank cards
- C correspondence with parents/guardian

A member of the LAC would need to be designated as the person to maintain the LPF.

TEACHER SKILLS AND CREDENTIALS

Just as with any other teaching specialization, ESL teachers require special pedagogies to provide the

best services for their students. The State Board of Education in 1988 adopted an ESL endorsement for teachers; it requires 15 semester hours of course work in five cluster areas(See Appendix II). If a district has children enrolled who are language minority-limited English proficient, the configurations:

1. An ESL-endorsed teacher provides direct ESL instruction
2. A paraprofessional or non-ESL endorsed teacher provides direct ESL instruction and is supervised and guided by an ESL-endorsed teacher

The presence of an ESL-endorsed professional is imperative for an effective and appropriate program to be implemented. The recommended configuration is the former; recommended by Office for Civil Rights and MDOE. If the second configuration is opted for, one must also realize that if a paraprofessional or non-ESL endorsed teacher is engaged to provide direct services, that person must still participate in training in ESL, though it might be less formal.

The minimal qualifications for ESL tutors who do not possess an endorsement should include the ESL Endorsement for Teachers and/or:

1. Experience in a second language learning setting;
2. Experience in a non-English speaking culture;
3. Experience working effectively with children in an instructional setting;
4. Possession of knowledge of instructional methods for communication skills and content areas; and,
5. Possession of a working knowledge of ESL, second language acquisition, and LEP students.

JOB DESCRIPTION:

Title: Teacher/Tutor - English as a Second Language (ESL)

Qualifications: ESL Endorsement for Teachers and/or

1. Experience in a second language learning setting;
2. Experience in a non-English speaking culture;
3. Experience working effectively with children in an instructional setting;
4. Possession of knowledge of instructional methods for communication skills and content areas; and,
5. Possession of a working knowledge of ESL, second language acquisition, and LEP students.

Reports to: Director of Special Services

Essential Functions:

1. Ability to read, reason, and understand policies and procedures and related information and follow verbal or demonstrated instructions
2. Physical ability to perform all necessary upper and lower body movement
3. Ability to talk, hear, see, speak, correctly perceive
4. Ability to do reaching, lifting, basic math, writing, eye-hand coordination, sitting, stooping

Job Responsibilities:

- < To assist in assessing the needs of students for ESL services
- < To assist in determining the level of services needed and the program design
- < To provide students with skills in understanding, speaking, reading, and writing in the English language so that they can academically compete with English language peers
- < To assist in determining when students are ready to transition to regular program
- < To be the liaison between the ESL Program students and their teachers of English
- < To be a resource to regular classroom teachers in meeting the needs of the ESL Program students in the classroom
- < To be the liaison between home and school and assist both in appreciating cultural differences

To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each duty and responsibility satisfactorily. The requirements are representative of the knowledge, skill and ability required. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential

functions.

Program Evaluation

In order to ensure the most effective and appropriate structured language support programming for limited English proficient children, a model for overall program evaluation must be developed and utilized. An annual program evaluation will illustrate: attainment of program outcomes; attainment of learner outcomes; school climate and support for the program and children; the quality of instructional materials; the maintenance of information about students; the effectiveness of staff development activities; the amount and effectiveness of mainstream-ESL collaboration; the effectiveness of school and program communication with parents; and, the implementation of the Lau plan itself.

The program accountability and demonstration of outcomes will enhance the program's legitimacy in the school and will consummate the work and methods of the program toward the ultimate goal of continually improving instruction to meet learner instructional needs. The LAC will arrange for and participate in program evaluation.

Caveats:

- < Although language minority-limited English proficient students may be eligible for Title One services under the same criteria as other children, any may receive those services. Title One services cannot replace structured language support services, such as ESL.
- < Limited English proficiency is not a disability as defined by the IDEA and state special education regulations. If a language minority child is referred for a special education evaluation, a culturally and linguistically non-biased evaluation must be assured to comply with state and federal regulations. An assessment of the child's native language skills as soon after school enrollment as possible is advisable so that any significant problems can be identified and noted for future references. Students will not be enrolled in special education programs unless a disability is identified.
- < In the event that parents/guardian refuses ESL services for their child, a signed letter of refusal will be placed in the student's file. These ESL services will be offered yearly and a letter of refusal must be signed annually.

ADOPTED: August 12, 1997