



Sandusky City Schools

407 Decatur Street, Sandusky, OH 44870-2442 • 419-984-1050 • www.scs-k12.net

Office of Student Services and Family Support

SANDUSKY CITY SCHOOLS

ENGLISH LEARNERS

PROGRAM MANUAL

2020-2021

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Introduction

According to the Ohio Department of Education, Ohio defines a student who is an English Learner as one who has a primary or home language other than English and needs special language assistance to effectively participate in school. Ohio's public school districts are required to identify and serve students who are English Learners. The uniform process begins with the administration of Ohio's Language Usage Survey to all new students upon registration in the school or district. After identifying potential English Learners with the Language Usage Survey, schools assess these students' English language proficiency. A school employee then validates the survey and assessment results to complete the identification.

Statement of Commitment

The Sandusky City School District is committed to establishing and implementing a standardized procedure for the identification of English Learners (EL). The District is committed to providing appropriate placement, along with curricular, instructional, and other related services to ensure all EL student are equipped to participate effectively in the schools' educational programs.

To accomplish this, Sandusky City Schools is committed to implementing the EL Plan, which details the procedural requirements and services to be provided to language minority students, including identification, assessment, registration, tutoring, entry into and monitoring of EL students in mainstream classrooms, and pre-referral procedures to ensure appropriate identification of EL students requiring special education services.

Sandusky City Schools' Department of Student Services and Family Support ensures these services are provided and that all federal and state regulations regarding the education of EL students are implemented in the schools.

Educational Theory

A variety of programs are designed to help English Learners (EL) become proficient in English. Researchers and policymakers may tout some program designs as being better than others, but it is the Sandusky City School District's belief that one must match the program design to the specific needs and resources of the given district.

The services provided to EL students in the Sandusky City School District are predominantly designed around the principles of English immersion, which is sometimes referred to as immersion, sheltered English immersion, or structured English immersion. Due to the diversity of our population, our program design is structured with the intent of providing flexibility to meet individual student needs.

In addition to overall program design, it is important to look at best practices that are aligned with EL needs. Gray and Fleischman (2004-05) stated in their review of effective instructional strategies for linguistically and culturally diverse students, that many of the best practices strategies for EL students are simply extensions of approaches that work well with all students. Furthermore, Garcia contends, "sound principles and practices of classroom organization and management – such as small instruction groups – seem to work well of ELLs" (1991).

In the late 1990s, researchers at Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) identified nine categories of instructional strategies that proved to be exceptionally effective in increasing student performance.

- Setting objectives and providing feedback
- Nonlinguistic representations
- Cue, questions, and advance organizers
- Cooperative learning
- Summarizing and note taking
- Homework and practice
- Reinforcing effort and providing recognition
- Generating and testing hypotheses
- Identifying similarities and differences

English Learners are placed in regular classrooms in the Sandusky City School District. Content teachers provide targeted assistance per student needs. The combination of immersion in the regular classroom and additional support allows students the opportunity to learn another language quickly.

Programs

The goal of English Learner (EL) programming is threefold. First, EL programming will increase the English language proficiency of English learners by providing more effective programs and services. Second, programming will provide effective professional development that improves the education of English Learners and enhances the ability of school staff to understand and implement curricula. Third, the EL program promotes engagement with the parents, family and community of English learners in their education.

Consortium

In order to provide fiscal oversight to the Sandusky City School District English Language Acquisition programming, the district participates in a consortium with North Central Ohio Educational Service Center. Member agreements are signed annually.

Structured English Immersion

The Sandusky City School District utilizes Structured English Immersion. Immersion is a well-researched and documented approach. English Learners are age-appropriately placed into coursework and instruction. The focus of instruction is teaching the subject matter in the target language, English. Teacher adapts the language of instruction to the level of the student's linguistic and cognitive capabilities. Teachers frequently use visual aids, concrete experiences and manipulative materials. Immersion language teaching maximizes the amount of understandable instruction in the new language, and seeks to accelerate language learning by increasing time on task. Students are provided the opportunity to develop the oral and written language skills they need to make academic progress.

Goal

The goal is to equip students with a foundation of English skills, which will enable them to participate more fully in educational programs that have grade level content delivered in English as their focus. After exiting the immersion program, students should be able to participate in classrooms where English is the language of instruction for grade-appropriate subject matter.

Limits

Immersion teaching does not claim to provide students with all the English language skills they will ever need.

Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)

Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) is a federally supported approach to the education of English Learners. Language and literacy instruction is supported for our students identified as English Learners. Teachers of EL students are trained annually in SIOP.

Professional Development

Professional development for content teachers of identified English Learners on effective instruction strategies for English Learners is provided annually via SIOP. Staff further receives content specific professional development supportive of curricular implementation for all district learners. Through high quality, evidenced-based professional development activities, the Sandusky City Schools improves skills and expertise of staff.

Meeting Standards

All students receive standards based instruction and access to Title reading and math services. Furthermore, identified English Learners are instructed by English/Language Arts teachers trained annually in SIOP. English Learner materials are provided, such as supplementary textbook materials and/or educational software, supportive of EL's access to age-appropriate grade-level content.

Activities

The District offers after school and weekend parent events, as well as a Back to School Rally, open house events, community forums, and an annual Parent Summit. Additionally, there is a parent and family engagement specialist acting as a liaison between the school and families. The district provides newsletters, text alerts, and a downloadable district app for smartphones that promotes and announces district events and activities as well as building level announcements.

English Learners Program Staff

The Sandusky City School District utilizes an immersion approach, with English/Language arts teachers trained in Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). District teachers of English Learner students are properly certified or licensed and are fluent in English, including written and oral communication skills. Teacher credentials are maintained by the Human Resources Office at the Sandusky Board of Education Building.

English Learners Program Evaluation

The instructional program and individual student progress will be monitored regularly by general education teachers through OELPA scores, statewide assessment scores, grades, observation, standardized tests, projects, in-class work, portfolio assessment, and other measures as deemed appropriate.

Initially, the focus on this assessment/evaluation process will be on the student's acquisition of language for the purpose of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Eventually, the focus will be specifically on the student's level of performance within the general education curriculum and the pupil performance objectives at that grade level.

The number and percentage of English Learners in the programs and activities who are making progress toward achieving English language proficiency (as indicated on the OELPA) for the entire English Learner population and its subgroups, which includes English Learners with disabilities, is assessed. The number and percentage of English Learners in the programs and activities attending English Language proficiency based on the OELPA by the end of each school year is further assessed. Additionally, the number and percentage of English Learners who exit the English Learner status based on their OELPA score is maintained by the district. The number and percentage of English Learners meeting challenging State academic standards for each of the 4 years after students exit English Learner status, as a full group and as English learner subgroups, which, at a minimum, must include English Learners with disabilities will be gathered and assessed. The number and percentage of English Learners who have not attained English language proficiency within 5 years of initial classification as an English Learner and first enrolled in the local educational agency will be addressed by the district.

Staff realizes program goals and/or procedures need to be reassessed due to legal mandates. These changes may require periodic modifications in the program plan. Furthermore, past EL program evaluations will be used to align future Title III budgets.

Identifying English Learners

Upon enrollment in the Sandusky City Schools the student's registration form is reviewed for the primary language spoken at home. If a language other than English is listed, the registration form is forward to the Student Services Department for further review.

Based on the registration form information, Student Services conducts a Language Usage Survey with the family to verify the student's qualification as an English Learner (EL). Students identified as EL are identified to teachers as such, and the student is screened with the Ohio English Language Proficiency Screener (OELPS) within thirty (30) days of district enrollment. Students are determined initially eligible for EL services based on the results of the OELPS, unless the student is identified as EL prior to enrollment with the district. Thereafter, students are annually assessed for EL eligibility with the Ohio English Language Proficiency Assessment (OELPA)

Parental Notification

Annually, the parents/guardians of each identified English Learner (EL) is notified of the student's EL status and eligibility for participation in the language development program. Notifications are provided in English and the native language within thirty (30) calendar days after the beginning of the district's school year. For other students identified as EL entering during the school year, parents will receive notification of language instruction program eligibility within two (2) weeks of registration. The annual notification of continuing EL identification is mailed to the family along with the Ohio English Language Proficiency Assessment (OELPA) Family Report.

Furthermore, the parents/guardians of each EL student is notified in an understandable and uniform format of English and native language of their right to opt their student out of the EL program. Regardless of the parent/guardian's determination to access programs, the student retains his/her status as an English Learner, and access to allowable accommodations on state tests. The district will continue to monitor the English language proficiency and academic progress of students who opt out of EL programs. If a student does not demonstrate appropriate growth in English Language Proficiency or maintain appropriate academic levels, the district will inform the parents/guardians in a language they understand and offer EL services.

Student identified as English Learners have the right to access grade-level curricula and right to equal opportunity to participate in all programs (academic, co-curricular, extra-curricular, clubs, and honor societies).

English Learner Plan

Students eligible as English Learners (EL) have an English Learner Plan developed annually. The student's communication proficiency level (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing) is indicated. Based on the proficiency levels, goals are developed to increase the student's communication proficiency. The plan describes what the district will do to align instruction of English learners to Ohio's learning standards and local content standards. Additionally, the plans outline services to communicate with families in a timely manner.

English Learners with Disabilities

English Learners (EL) identified with a disability, either through the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA), will have their corresponding 504 Plan team or Individualized Education Program (IEP) team notified of the EL identification. Furthermore, the teams will help determine appropriate accommodations for the student to access their education and educational environment. Accommodations will be reflected in EL Plans, 504 Plans and/or IEPs.

The language needs of students with disabilities are considered in the development of the IEP. Checklists (Referral and Identification of English Language Learners with Disabilities Key Questions Checklist 1, and Multi-tiered Systems of Support Literacy/Reading Instruction for English Language Learners Key Questions Checklist 2) available from the Ohio Department of Education will be utilized to guide intervention processes and take into account state and federal laws regarding the provision of equal educational opportunity for students with limited English proficiency and students with disabilities. The documents are intended to complement federal and state guidelines. The presence of an obvious physical or other disability condition (i.e., blindness, hearing impairment, severe cognitive delays, severe autism) may trigger the initiation of the special education evaluation process. English Learners with clear, organic disabilities should have access to specialized, individualized instruction and supports without delay.

Monitoring of Former English Learners (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act)

For two school-years, students dismissed from English Learner (EL) eligibility will be monitored academically through the existing district monitoring processes. Should academic and/or social deficits be demonstrated by the Former English Learner (FEL), intervention will be provided through the multi-tiered system of supports. Meaningful participation in educational programs will be supported comparably with native English speaking peers. Should a former EL student demonstrate academic deficits precipitating from English language impreficiency, the assessment for English Language Proficiency identification shall be reinitiated as delineated within the above identification procedure. Regardless of student's status as an English Learner, district services, supports, and programming will be available and implemented based on demonstrated/assessed need.

Maintenance of Records

The Sandusky City School District will maintain English Learner records in the student's file in the Student Services Department at the Board of Education. Records will include surveys, OELPS/OELPA results, letters, and English Learner Plans. Copies of the annually developed English Learner Plans will also be maintained in the student's school building cumulative folder.