

Keystone Academy Charter School

English Language Learners Program

The Charter School recognizes its responsibility to conform with applicable laws regarding students whose dominant language is not English, specifically with the Title 22 mandate that Charter Schools provide a program for every student who is limited English proficient (LEP) or an English Language Learner (ELL).

Every school district shall provide a program for each student whose dominant language is not English for the purpose of facilitating the student's achievement of English proficiency and the academic standards under §4.12. Programs under this section shall include appropriate bilingual-bicultural or English as a second language (ESL) instruction.

The school provides a planned educational program for each student with limited English proficiency (LEP) so that the student may meet state academic standards. These programs would include: 1) standards-based ESL instruction at the student's level of proficiency, 2) content area instruction based on Pennsylvania academic standards and adopted to meet the student's individual needs, and 3) assessment designed to measure progress in relation to the standards and to competence in the English language. The program is based on 1) best practices in educational and language learning theory, 2) is staffed by trained personnel who have access to appropriate materials, and 3) demonstrates its success in regularly spaced assessments.

Statement of Program Goals and Objectives

The English as a Second Language (ESL) Curriculum for grades K – 8 builds and develops linguistic proficiency for non-native English speakers. All students are assured an English linguistic learning experience based on the six language skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, critical thinking/learning strategies, and culture.

The curriculum provides students with the linguistic and academic skills necessary to meet the state's academic standards and transition successfully into the mainstream classroom.

The program is built upon national TESOL Standards and Pennsylvania's Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening.

Students who complete the program will:

- Use English to participate in social interactions.
- Interact in, through, and with spoken and written English for personal expression and enjoyment.

- Use learning strategies to extend their communicative competence in the English language when engaged in social interaction.
- Use strategies to extend their communicative competence in order to achieve in academic content areas.
- Use English to obtain, process, construct, and provide subject matter information in spoken and written form.
- Use appropriate learning strategies to construct and apply academic knowledge in the English language.
- Use the appropriate English language variety, register and genre according to audience, purpose and setting.
- Use nonverbal communication appropriate to audience, purpose, and setting.
- Use appropriate learning strategies to extend their sociolinguistic and sociocultural competence.

Definitions

The July 1, 2001 Basic Education Circular (BEC) quotes the Improving America's School Act in defining a LEP student as one who:

- A. Was not born in the United States or whose native language is other than English and comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; or is a Native American or Alaska Native who is a native resident of the outlying areas and comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on such an individual's level of English language proficiency; or is migratory and whose native language is other than English and comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant and
- B. Has sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language and whose difficulties may deny such individual the opportunity to learn successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English or to participate fully in our society.

Identification and Placement of Students

Once a student has been admitted to the Charter School by lottery and has presented proof of residency and immunization, the staff administers the *Home Language Survey* provided by the Commonwealth in order to identify children who come from a non-English language background (NELB). The results of the survey are filed in the student's permanent folder. If the *Home Language Survey* reveals that one of the following statements is true, the child may be eligible for ESL support.

- the student's primary (first acquired) language is other than English, regardless of which language the student now uses most frequently; or
- the language most often spoken by the student is other than English; or
- a language other than English is spoken in the student's home

If the child is found to be NELB, the original survey form is placed in his/her file and copies are sent to the ESL team (Site Administrator and ESL Teacher/s.) The ESL curriculum that follows has the approval of the Board of Trustees.

Assessment to determine ESL eligibility will occur 1) during the summer prior to enrollment or 2) within ten (10) school days following admission during the school year. If the survey indicates that the child may need ESL instruction, teachers interview the student to ascertain his/her level of proficiency in English and administer academic assessments to determine his/her academic levels.

Parents/guardians are informed of the right of any student learning English as a Second Language to an alternative language program and to academic support services under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. They will also be told that the results of the survey and subsequent screening and placement procedures are not reported to immigration officials. Parent and students are given an orientation to provide them with information concerning school policies and procedures, the ESL program, the classes their child will attend, special programs, homework and attendance policies and assessment practices and procedures.

If the parent/guardian is unable to speak English a translator is provided. Further, all written materials that are sent home subsequently are written in a language the parents can read.

The second step after identifying all students who are NELB is to arrange for a screening.

The screening will involve:

- reviewing school records and relevant documents containing information about the student's language proficiency and academic achievement;
- learning about the NELB student's background (life experiences, educational history, language, and culture); documenting any significant health or special needs.

The goal of the screening is to separate NELB students whose ability to do grade-level work in English is unknown from NELB students who have fluent English proficiency and a proven record of academic success in a regular instructional program. The purpose of the screening of NELB students, then, is:

- to determine the need for a formal assessment of the student's language and academic skills prior to placement;
- to gather information that will be useful in choosing the type of assessment procedures, strategies and tests best suited to the student's linguistic and academic experiences;
- to identify any health concerns or special needs that could impact on the assessment and/or programming for the student;
- to determine whether previously enrolled NELB students are performing grade-level work.

If, as a result of this screening, a student is judged to be fully English Proficient, he/she is released from the program. Other students receive further testing to determine their level of proficiency.

The third step in assigning a student to an ESL program is to determine the level of support NELP students who are not fluent in English will need. This is done by selecting and administering appropriate instruments for:

- assessing the student's level of proficiency in English;
- determining, to the extent possible, the student's fluency in his/her home language and
- determining the student's academic knowledge and skills for instructional placement.

On the basis of the findings of the assessments administered in step three, students are placed in appropriate services and an overall instructional program is planned (step four). This program will include a combination of ESL classes and regular academic sessions at an appropriate performance level. Teachers are expected to adapt their courses of study to meet the ESL student's needs. The Charter School's teachers hold appropriate Instructional I and Instructional II certificates and those assigned to the ESL program are trained to teach ESL classes. Further, when ESL students are enrolled the Act 48 Professional Development Plan includes instruction in areas related to the education of students with LEP such as: cultural information, second language acquisition, adapting /modifying classroom instruction, and assessment practices.

Non-English speaking students may be assigned to 2 to 3 hours of ESL instruction; beginners to 2 hours; intermediates to 1 to 1 1/2 hours; advanced students to 1 hour. ESL students are required to participate in the PSSA. The progress of ESL students is monitored frequently by a variety of measures including curriculum based testing, interviews, standardized tests and observations. While students who have limited skills in English may be graded on a pass/fail basis initially, every effort is made to move them quickly to a standard report card. The ESL grade replaces that of the English/Language Arts of English grade on the standard report card. Report cards, like all other forms of written communication are printed in a language the parents understand if it is at all possible.

ELL students are entitled to participate in any program offered by the school. Students who are suspected of needing special education services will be assessed once it is clear that the potential disability is not solely due to the lack of instruction or proficiency in the English language. At that point the Charter School will follow the same procedures and timelines it uses with any other students. As in all other areas, non- English speaking parents are informed of their child's special education rights and instructional program in a language they can understand.

Exit Criteria

The Exit Criteria for ELL programs has been mandated by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and is as follows:

In order to meet the required State exit criteria for Pennsylvania's English language instructional programs for ELLs, LEAs must use both of the required exit criteria listed below. In addition, LEAs must ensure that students meet one of the two additional exit criteria provided below to exit from an English language instructional program:

State Mandated Exit Criteria:

1. *Score of Basic on the annual Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA).*

Special Circumstances:

- *For students transferring from other states, out-of-state academic achievement assessment results may be considered when the academic proficiency level is comparable to Basic on the PSSA.*
 - *For students that are in a grade that is not assessed with the PSSA, LEA's must use each of the remaining criteria listed below to exit students.*
2. *Score of Proficient (Bridging as per the Pennsylvania Language Proficiency Standards for English Language Learners) in the areas of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing on the annual state English language proficiency assessment. The Proficient (Bridging) score will be based on the total composite assessment results.*

Additional Exit Criteria:

1. *Final grades of C or better in core subject areas (Mathematics, Language Arts, Science and Social Studies)*
2. *Score on district-wide assessments that are comparable to the Basic performance level on the PSSA.*

In accordance with Office for Civil Right's policy, students' performance will be monitored after they are exited from an alternative language program. The purpose of post-service monitoring is to ensure that students reclassified as fluent English proficient make a successful transition into the regular instructional program. A successful transition is one in which the student adjusts socially and is able to comprehend instruction, speak, read and write well enough to participate in class, take tests and complete assignments without difficulty. Because the level of linguistic and cognitive difficulty can increase drastically as students move into higher-grade levels, it is important to monitor their educational program for three years. Student monitoring includes 1) academic information - courses taken, grades, etc., 2) assessment information – standardized test scores, 3) teacher observations, 4) participation in program options, e.g. college bound courses, 5) other criteria such as attendance, punctuality, and satisfaction of parents and student with the program.

Assessment

Student progress in ESL is determined through: 1) Pennsylvania System of School Assessment, 2) Terra Nova, 3) district level assessments (IDEA English Proficiency Test –IPT,) and 4) classroom level assessments aligned with the ESL scope and sequence. Implementing an effective assessment program for ESL is a process of creating and revising classroom and school-wide assessments. The results of all assessments are used to inform teaching and learning.

Instructional Program

a. Type of Program:

Variations of the ESL model are the most realistic option for the Charter School. The school’s ESL program is characterized by:

- monolingual English instruction, using ESL teaching approaches, methods and activities to teach social and academic language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing, and higher-order thinking) to students of varying proficiency levels
- instruction in basic content area concepts using ESL techniques, in order to prepare ESL students for integration into the regular classroom

The most frequently used means of delivery is “in-class ESL instruction” (inclusion) whereby small groups of students receive instruction by the ESL teacher (and sometimes the classroom teacher in a team teaching version) in the regular classroom.

b. Planned Instruction Standards

The program is built upon national TESOL Standards and Pennsylvania’s Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening.

c. Amount of time in ESL classes and Content classes

The findings of the formal interview and the diagnostic assessment of the student’s language proficiency level and academic skills provide the basis for determining the ESL instructional placement, time allocation, and focus of service.

Generally speaking, the lower the student’s proficiency level, the more intensive the ESL program will be. A more intensive program at the beginning helps students progress faster and ultimately speeds up the partial or full mainstreaming

into content area classes. Non-English speaking students may be assigned to 2 to 3 hours of ESL instruction; beginners to 2 hours; intermediates to 1 to 1 1/2 hours; advanced students to 1 hour.

The assessment of the student’s English language proficiency should indicate a classification of proficiency and ESL instructional level. At the time of initial assessment, ESL children should be classified as: non-English proficient, limited English proficient, transitional English proficient, and fluent English proficient. The assessments should also establish the students ESL instructional placement level, e.g. Entry-level, Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, Transitional, and Fluent. Using this information, the student may be classified as follows.

English Language Proficiency Classification	ESL Instructional Level	Identifying Characteristics	Recommended Time Allotment
NEP	Entry-level	No comprehension, verbal production or reading/writing skills in English	2 – 4 hours daily
LEP	Beginner	Limited comprehension Speech limited to isolated words and simple phrases No or minimal reading and writing skills	2 – 4 hours daily
	Intermediate	Improving comprehension of everyday speech and increased fluency, vocabulary and grammatical control Very limited ability to understand classroom discourse and read/write in English for academic purposes	1 – 2 hours daily
	Advanced	Good conversational skills Still lacks control of academic language Requires support in content area classes	1 – 2 hours daily
TEP	Transitional	Excellent conversational skills Level of academic language not yet at full potential or comparable to peers Expanding listening, reading/writing, thinking skills for grade-level academic work	1 hour daily or as needed, to provide support for academic classes
FEP	Monitoring of student progress in regular instructional program	Excellent control of social and academic language Grade appropriate	Monitor progress in the regular instructional program for three years

Adapted from Robert Parker's "Proficiency Classification and Descriptions in Language Proficiency Classification and Instructional Placement Instrument" (1993)

The ability grouping or tracking systems that are used by the school to deal with the special language skill needs of LEP students are designed to meet such language skill needs as soon as possible and will not operate as an educational dead-end or permanent track. ESL children will not be placed in lower ability groups, or special education classes solely on the basis of language proficiency. If students are put in these classes it must be only to prepare them to participate in the school's other instructional programs.

Student Participation in Related and Extracurricular Activities

In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act all students, regardless of limited English proficiency, national origin, race or gender, are given equal access to all educational programs – academic, vocational, computer, compensatory and special education and to all extracurricular activities.

Pupil Personnel Services

a. Counseling

Counseling will be provided by the ESL teacher who will help the student adjust to the school routine, monitor their academic progress, and assist with their social and cultural acculturation.

b. Special Education

The May 1970 Office of Civil Rights Memo states that "school systems may not assign students to special education programs on the basis of criteria that essentially measure and evaluate English language skills. The additional legal requirements imposed by Section 504 also must be considered when conducting investigations on this issue."

The Charter School will carefully evaluate ESL students before placing them in a Special Education Program. Only those students who fit Special Education criteria and whose difficulties cannot be ascribed solely to the student's lack of command of the English language will be placed in Special Education.

c. Other Related Services

All services available to the other students in the school will be available to ESL students. This is in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act which guarantees all students, regardless of limited English proficiency, national origin, race or gender, equal access to all educational programs – academic, vocational,

gifted and talented, computer, compensatory, and special education and with the May 1970 Office of Civil Rights memo that reaffirmed this right and further stated where a language barrier exists, a school “must take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency in order to open its instructional program to students who are unable to speak and understand the English language.”

Staff Development Related to Program

Upon the enrollment of ESL students, the charter school will provide in-service training for both its ESL and non-ESL staff. The purpose of this training is to assure that: 1) the charter school’s ESL program is grounded on sound educational theory, is effectively implemented and successfully reduces language barriers, 2) non-ESL teachers have the knowledge and skills necessary to accommodate ESL’s in content area instruction, and 3) the staff is aware of resources they can use to improve their program. The Act 48 Professional Development Plan includes instruction in areas related to the education of students with LEP such as: cultural information, second language acquisition, adapting /modifying classroom instruction, and assessment practices.

a. ESL Teachers

In-service courses for ESL teachers will concentrate on informing them about: federal and state laws regarding the education of ESL students, the identification of ESL students, best-practices in ESL education, recent research regarding ESL education, and assessment of the progress made by ESL students.

b. Content-Area Staff

The content area staff will receive instruction in such areas as: making content area learning accessible to non-native English speaking students, legal obligations of the school staff with regard to the education of ESL students, best-practices in ESL education, and monitoring the continuing progress of students released from the ESL program.

c. Support Staff

All staff, including the support staff will study the cultural differences between American students and their ESL counterparts and the influence of these differences on their respective beliefs and attitudes about teaching, learning and interaction with other people.

8. Community Involvement

a. Program Planning

Members of the community, including civic and religious leaders, parents, and educators, were invited to participate in the development of broad outlines for the ESL program.

b. Communication with Students' Homes

All information disseminated to the students and their parents, including report cards, is provided in a language or mode that is preferred by them. Students and their parents will be provided with an orientation session when they enter the program. The orientation will include information about the school, the ESL program and the courses the student will be taking. It will also explain what special programs are available, the school's policies on discipline, homework and attendance and it will provide an explanation of the school's assessment practices and procedures.

c. Program Advisory Committee

Upon the enrollment of ELL students a Program Advisory Committee will be formed and charged with assisting in the implementation of the program. Its members will serve as tutors and translators.

d. Assistance Request Process

Should there be a disagreement between the parents of an ESL student and the staff, the school's established "due process" policy will be followed to resolve the dispute.

Program Evaluation Procedures

The ESL program will be evaluated informally throughout the year and formally at an annual meeting of the CEO and the ESL team (ESL teachers and the Site Directors.) The following indicators will be reviewed:

a. Student data

The team will review students' academic progress while they are in the program and after they exit the program. The purpose of this review is to determine how the ESL population performs in relation to the rest of the student body.

b. Quality review

In addition to using data collection, interpretation and reporting as a way to evaluate program effectiveness, the CEO and ESL team will assess the quality of the program by studying how well it is meeting its goals and objectives, the quality of the resources it is using, the expertise and performance of the personnel, and effectiveness of the practices that have been implemented.

