

The Harrison Township School District ESL Program Narrative

The goal of the English as a Second Language (ESL) program in the Harrison Township School District is to provide an environment in which the district's Limited English Proficient (LEP) can develop their social and academic skills in order to become successful and proficient users of the English language (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). The students will be provided with the educational opportunities to learn language through the content areas to enable ELLs to acquire age/grade appropriate standards while developing English language proficiency. The ESL services are designed to increase the students' understanding and fluency in the nuances of the English language. Academic English is a critical component to a student's college and career readiness. ELLs must be able to converse with classmates and teachers and complete high-level academic assignments. By implementing a tiered (time-intensity) and varied model (push-in and pull-out) the Harrison Township ELL students are provided with a language-rich environment that promotes high-academic achievement. The Harrison township School District strives to create a learning environment that values bilingualism and respects the cultural and linguistic heritages represented in our community.

The goals of the ESL program are aligned to the district mission statement:

The mission of the Harrison Township School District, in partnership with the home and community, is to provide all children with the opportunity to develop their intellectual, physical, emotional and social potential; to become confident, capable, life-long learners. It is the expectation of the Board of Education that students at all grade levels achieve the New Jersey Core Content Curriculum Standards. Together, we are committed to fulfill our mission by providing the necessary resources to foster a safe, caring, supportive environment of mutual respect, communication, teamwork and appreciation of the individual.

Twenty-first century skills require global awareness. Harrison Township School District strives to create an environment that encourages the integration into the English language and culture while maintaining respect for and pride in their culture and linguistic heritage. Fluency in two or more languages is an asset that is valued by the Harrison community.

The development and implementation of the ESL program is supervised by the Director of Curriculum and Instruction with continued consultation with the district's ESL-certified teacher and the grade level reading interventionists. The reading interventionists (ESL/BSI) and classroom teachers that support our ESL learners are provided with continuous support in order to develop strategies that will assist them to meet the needs of the LEP students. Trainings include in- and out-of district workshops and partnerships with local universities (Rowan University (EIRC) and Arcadia University).

The instructional setting of the ESL delivery is dependent upon the individual student needs but follows some general educational designs.

Our kindergarten students are immersed in the oral and written language of the NJCCCS curriculum. For much of the time, the ESL students are engaged in the daily lessons. When needed, they may work with an early literacy trained instructional aide. The IAs have been instructed to work with the district curriculum (NJCCCS & CCSS) and other early literacy development programs (Reading ASSIST, Great Leaps, etc.). Additional instructional support may be provided by one of our reading interventionists and/or the ESL-certified teacher in a one-on-one or small groups. Depending upon the level of the intervention, the instruction may take place in- or out-of the general education classroom setting.

Students in grades 1 through 6, receive tiered supports throughout the school day. Typically, ESL students are assigned to a homeroom which will receive supports from an interventionist for 45-60 minutes daily. These supports include listening, speaking, reading, and writing based on the grade level content and skills being instructed. Additional time (44 minutes daily) has been set aside for the students to receive support in the content areas (SS and Science) and writing as needed; these supports include further language/vocabulary and communication (speaking and writing) development while the students is immersed in the district curriculum. Scaffolding of the lesson content and skills as well as pre-teaching and re-teaching strategies are used to support our ESL students.

Historically, we have been able to offer an Extended School Day and Extended School Year program for our identified ELL students as well.

An explanation of how the ESL curriculum is aligned to the World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)™ English Language Proficiency Standards for English Language Learners in PreK through Grade 12:

The English as a Second Language (ESL) program is provided to *immigrant* students in our district whose native language is not English and who meet specific criteria as identified by the ACCESS (Accessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State for English Language Learners) assessment which was developed by the WIDA Consortium. A student's English language proficiency level is determined based on this state-required assessment.

Student's Proficiency Levels (as identified by ACCESS):

- Entering (Level 1)
- Beginning (Level 2)
- Developing (Level 3)
- Expanding (Level 4)
- Bridging (Level 5)
- Reaching (Level 6)

The above proficiency level is determined by assessing students in each of the following academic areas (depending upon the appropriate grade/age level of the student):

- Oral Language: 50% Listening score and 50% Speaking score
- Literacy: 50% Reading score and 50% Writing score
- Comprehension: 70% Reading score and 30% Listening score

The overall score is determined by combining 35% of the Reading score, 35% of the Writing score, 15% of the Listening score and 15% of the Speaking score. This overall score is then interpreted into a proficiency level.

Alignment to the WIDA Standards:

Students, who fall into any of the first four of the proficiency levels listed above receive additional support in either *Listening, Speaking, Reading* or *Writing*(*the four Language Domains from the WIDA Standards*), which is determined by the level of proficiency in each of these areas (as identified by the ACCESS assessment and addressed in the WIDA English language Proficiency Standards *CAN DO Descriptors for the Levels of English Language Proficiency listed above*). To develop a student's *oral language* ability (the *Listening and Speaking Domains*), s/he is provided opportunities to enhance his/her listening skills by scaffolding learning with visuals, as much as possible. Students are asked to use pictures, words, phrases and follow oral directions. To develop their speaking skills, ELLs are spoken to, while looking directly at them. Students are also asked to repeat English sentences that have relevance in their daily lives. They are given opportunities to name and describe objects, people and pictures and eventually restate facts or statements. As they advance in the English language, students are given choices of specific sentences to be used to reply to specific questions and to describe processes and procedures. Eventually, students are guided to respond in English to random questions and to give oral reports. All of this is done with a great deal of scaffolding.

For *Reading* (*another WIDA Language Domain*), students are guided through Small Group Reading Instruction, using the Reading Street anthology and small group readers. These readings include teaching phonemic awareness (where applicable), phonics, word study, vocabulary, comprehension and fluency. ELLs are first asked to match icons and symbols to words, phrases or environmental print. Eventually, students are guided to sequence pictures and events and identify the main idea and to find details to support that main idea. The levels of texts are presented to students based on their instructional reading level, which is determined through the administration of various assessments (Reading Street weekly, benchmark, and unit tests, RS fresh reads for fluency, MAP, Fountas and Pinnel benchmark assessments, etc.). Teachers may select from the below, on level, and above level readers. Teachers also have the option of using the English Language Development (ELD), English Language Learner (ELL), or Concept Literacy readers. During small group instruction, the students are provided with targeted and scaffolded instruction based on their individual needs.

Writing Instruction (*The final WIDA Language Domain*) is provided through one-on-one conferences using the six-traits writing process as a foundation. ELLs are encouraged to expand their writing using English vocabulary by writing about their own life and using visuals to assist in this endeavor. At the very beginning of this process, students are encouraged to draw in response to oral directions, and then to make lists, and eventually producing expository or

narrative text. When composing, students are encouraged to first think about their Ideas (Trait 1), then they are taught to develop their skills in Organization, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, Conventions and finally, Voice. The district's writing workshop model has morphed into more guided and response-to-text writing as is demanded by the Common Core State Standards and the NJCCCS.

The review process for exiting the program contains multiples measures. Our students in kindergarten through 5th (6th) grade are exited from our ESL program if they score ≥ 4.5 on the Accessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State (ACCESS) for ELLS™ assessment. A score of 4.5 is half-way between the Expanding and Bridging proficiency levels. Kindergarten students may exit with a score of 3.0 (developing) if multiple criteria support the decisions. These parameters follow and fall within the New Jersey Department of Education guidelines.

Additional data that is considered for students exiting the ESL program include:

- DIEBELS (ISF, LSF, PSF, NWF)
- Instructional Reading Levels
- Classroom Assessment Data (Reading Street & Writing)
- Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)
- NJ ASK (PARCC)

The English language learners are monitored and supported throughout their time within the Harrison Township School District. Students that have recently exited a language assistance program are placed accordingly. Some of the students will require the continued support of an ELA Interventionist and/or instructional aide. They may also formally qualify for the ESD or ESY programs offered by the district. ELL (present and exited) students are carefully placed in homerooms with teachers that have had or will have some additional training in working with this population. In addition, the district administration analyzes and evaluates student data during the course of the school year. All students (GE, SE (IEP-504), ELL, OT/PT, I&RS) are reviewed by the Response to Intervention (RtI) committee two to three times a year. By using a broad and fine net, many if not all of our students are supported academically and social/emotionally during their tenure in Harrison Township.