



ABBY KELLEY FOSTER CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

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English Learner Program

Introduction and Overview

Program Goals and Philosophy

The aim of the English Learner Program at the Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School is to provide linguistically and culturally diverse students with instruction that will assist them in English language development and in mastering academic subject matter content. We are committed to offering a program which will meet the needs of our English Learners (ELs) both academically and as lifelong citizens of the community. The following are our program goals:

- To ensure that students whose native language is not English are provided with sufficient direct English language instruction to allow them to develop speaking, listening, reading and writing skills.
- To provide learners with access to comprehensible instruction in all content areas so that they will be able to reach their full academic potential.
- To monitor the progress of learners using formal and informal assessment tools to ensure that learners are progressing.
- To ensure that all English Learners are provided with equal access to school programs and services including, but not limited to, art, music, physical education, advanced placement programs, extra-curricular activities, Special Education and Title I services and MCAS/PARCC preparation and support.
- To encourage the families of our English Learners to participate in the education of their child.

Identification of English Learners

Home Language Survey

Schools have a responsibility under federal law to serve students who have limited English proficiency and need English language support in order to successfully master academic content. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VI, Language Minority Compliance Procedures, requires school districts/charter schools to identify limited English proficient students. Abby Kelley Foster Public Charter School uses the Home Language Survey (HLS) to identify limited English proficient students. The purpose of this survey is to determine if a student has a first language other than English or if a language other than English is spoken in the student's home.

The HLS is administered as part of the enrollment procedure. Parents/guardians who enroll a child at AKFCS are guided through the Home Language Survey process by a member of the ESL staff. Surveys are available in English and in all the major languages spoken in the district (Spanish, Portuguese, French, Vietnamese, Albanian, Twi and Swahili). All students will have a completed HLS in their cumulative and EL files.

If the survey shows **no** language other than English upon review, the student is not a language minority student. The completed HLS is filed in the student's cumulative file. If any responses to the questions on the HLS

indicate that a language or languages other than English are spoken in the home, a member of the ESL staff will ask the parents/guardians follow up questions to determine the dominant home language.

Determining the Dominant Home Language

A member of the ESL staff will clarify the home language of the student with follow up questions. Some sample probing questions are:

1. When the child was young and language was developing, what language(s) was/were spoken to the child?
2. How is the language other than English used in the home (who uses language most, reading and writing skills, etc)?
3. Are there other student issues? (e.g., significant health issues, interrupted schooling, grade retentions, IEP, etc.)

- *Student's Dominant Language is English*

If the process shows the student's dominant language is English, then the student is not a language minority student. The completed HLS is filed in the student's cumulative file.

- *Student's Dominant Language is a Language Other Than English*

If it is revealed that the dominant home language is a language other than English on the HLS, the student is scheduled for administration of the *WIDA Access Placement Test (W-APT)*™, a screening tool used to determine if a student should be classified as an English Learner. The student's home language is entered in Rediker using the language codes provided by MA DESE and the HLS is filed in the student's cumulative and EL files.

- *HLS Completed in Another School/District*

If an HLS was completed in another school prior to enrolling at AKFCS, then the ESL staff should compare the responses on the two forms for consistency. If inconsistencies are found, the staff will interview parents/guardians to determine the home language and eligibility of the student for EL services. If it is determined that the student is a language minority student, and if no W-APT or other EL assessment was done at the previous school/district, then the student is scheduled for W-APT administration

Initial Assessment

The W-APT is administered by a member of the ESL staff.

This assessment measures oral language proficiency and pre-literacy skills as well as listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Results will determine the proficiency level of the student and guide the ESL coordinator in creating a plan that would best suit each learner. Upon determination of the recommended program for the student, the parent/guardian must be notified.

Testing and parental notification must be completed within:

- 30 days (preferably sooner) for a child who enters school at the beginning of the academic school year
- 2 weeks for a child who enters school after the first 30 days of the school year.

The results of the assessment procedures will be included in the students file at school. Other relevant information about the student (progress reports, later test scores, etc.) will also be included in the student’s file as it is gathered.

Considerations for W-APT Administration

- ***IEP Exists***

If the student is identified as a language minority student and the student has an existing Individualized Education Plan (IEP), then the SPED Team, **including an ESL staff member**, reviews the IEP. The W-APT is administered with any testing accommodations documented in the student’s current IEP.

W-APT results are reported to the SPED Team. If the student is **NOT** found to be eligible for EL services, then the Special Education Team indicates this under the in the IEP. If the student **IS** identified as an EL, the Special Education Team determines language needs as related to the IEP. An ESL staff member will collaborate with the grade level Special Education teacher to support the student.

Once identified as an EL, the student is required by state and federal law to be annually assessed on the state mandated English language proficiency test until the student meets the exit criteria. The assessment currently used and administered annually is the *ACCESS for ELs* (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Learners).

- ***No IEP or Other Issues Documented***

If the student is identified as a language minority, s/he is administered the W-APT.

Assessment domains and scores used to identify EL students differ according to grade. AKFCS uses the following criteria:

| Grade | Domains Assessed | W-APT Score Identifies Student as LEP | W-APT Score Indicating Student is NOT LEP |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Kindergarten 1 st Semester | Speaking & Listening | Less than 29 | 29 or Higher |
| Kindergarten 2 nd Semester | Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening | Listening & Speaking Less than 29 Reading less than 14 <i>or</i> Writing less than 17 | Listening & Speaking 29 or higher <i>and</i> Reading 14 or higher <i>and</i> Writing 17 or higher |
| Grade 1 1 st Semester | Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening | Listening & Speaking Less than 29 Reading less than 14 <i>or</i> Writing less than 17 | Listening & Speaking 29 or higher <i>and</i> Reading 14 or higher <i>and</i> Writing 17 or higher |
| Grade 1 2 nd Semester | Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening | Composite less than 5.0 <i>or</i> Any domain less than 4.0 | Composite 5.0 or higher <i>and</i> No domain less than 4.0 |
| Grade 2 and up | Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening | Composite less than 5.0 <i>or</i> Any domain less than 4.0 | Composite 5.0 or higher <i>and</i> No domain less than 4.0 |

It should be noted that most students enroll at AKFCS in Kindergarten (K). Because language development is a central component of the K curriculum, W-APT scores may not accurately identify a potential EL. We provide language support for K students who score less than 25 on the speaking and listening domains in the fall. However, we compile a “watch list” of students that scored between 25 and 29 and reassess them at the end of the kindergarten school year.

Additionally, the ESL teacher(s) working with the kindergarten team will monitor progress of the students on the “watch” list. The K ESL teacher(s) attends team meetings and data meetings.

Any teacher may refer a student for initial testing at any time during the academic year if it is believed that the student is not progressing because of difficulties with the language. Teachers should have evidence that there is a language other than English spoken in the home before referring a student for testing.

Parent/Guardian Notification

Parents/guardians must be notified in writing of the initial test results and recommended program placement within 30 days of the beginning of the year or within two weeks for students who have enrolled in the school after the first 30 days of the academic school year. The notification letter will include the following information in a language that the parent/guardian can understand:

- Notification that the child has been identified as a potential EL
- The results of the initial language proficiency test
- Description of recommended program including how many hours of direct English Language Development (ELD) instruction the learner will receive.
- Information regarding “opting out” policy and the waiver policy.

Once parents have been presented with this information, they have a few options:

Consent to the recommended program

The parent/guardian does **not** have to provide written consent.

“Opt out” of the recommended program

This means that the parent/guardian has decided that that the recommended program is not the best option for the child and they do not want the child to receive ESL support. If this happens, the parent/guardian must meet with the ESL Department Head before making the final decision to “opt out”. If the parent/guardian does decide to “opt out”, they must sign a form stating that they do not want their child to receive ESL support. Any questions that the parent/guardian has regarding the recommended program of instruction (SEI) must be addressed in a language the parent can understand.

However, federal law has established that English learners must be provided with English language and academic support so that they may be able to access academic content. If a parent/guardian has exercised the option of declining ESL support services, the grade level teachers and the ESL teacher should meet and create an **Individual Student Plan** to outline a plan to be implemented for the student. This could include how the student will be supported through instructional modification or classroom support.

In addition, AKFCS students who have opted out will still be reported as LEP to the state for SIMS data collection. Student progress will continue to be monitored using assessment tools including ACCESS for ELs. Parents will continue to be kept informed of the child's progress.

Request a waiver

Parents/guardians also have the right to request a waiver if they feel that another educational program, namely Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE), would best suit the needs of their child. In order to apply for a waiver, the parent or guardian must visit the school and provide written consent to the application.

Waivers may be granted for children **10 and older** if it is the "informed belief" of teachers and school administrators that another program option would better suit the learner.

Waivers for children **under 10** may be granted if **all** the following conditions apply:

- The student has been placed in an EL classroom for a period of 30 days before the parent/guardian requested a waiver.
- There is documentation from school officials stating that the student has "special, individual physical or psychological needs" besides not being able to speak or understand English which warrant an alternative program.
- The waiver is signed by both the school superintendant and the school principal.

It should be noted that if 20 or more students of a particular language group at a given grade level receive a waiver for another program option, the district is required to offer the type of program requested.

In addition, parents/guardians must be notified (in writing) of their options for each subsequent academic year their child qualifies for EL services.

Program Placement and Structure

- Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) is the program model offered at AKFCS. Students receive instruction in both English Language Development (ELD) and Sheltered Content.
- The number of hours of ELD instruction for each student is informed by the student's ACCESS for ELs results and the *Transitional Guidance on Identification, Assessment, Placement, and Reclassification of English Learners (August 2016)*. If ACCESS scores are not available for a student, an ESL teacher will administer the W-APT and use those scores to identify service hours.
 - Level 1 Students will receive 2h 15 m of direct ESL instruction.
 - Level 2 Students will receive 90 minutes of direct ESL instruction.
 - Level 3 students will receive 45 minutes of direct ESL instruction.
 - Level 4 students will receive 45 minutes of direct ESL instruction.
 - Level 5 students will receive 45 minutes of direct ESL instruction.
- All EL students receive direct ELD in a pull out setting (provided by an ESL teacher) as well as sheltered content in their classrooms (provided by grade level SEI teachers).

- ESL teachers work closely with SEI classroom teachers to collaborate on planning and fostering similar learning goals in both settings.
- ELD instruction focuses specifically on the development of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills for English learners. Lesson plans include one of the five WIDA ELD standards (Social and Instructional language, the language of Language Arts, the language of Math, the language of Science and the language of Social Studies)

Monitoring and Assessing ELs

All EL students are assessed in content areas and in ELD throughout the school year using a variety of formative and summative assessments. Students are also administered *ACCESS for ELs* (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Learners). This is an English language proficiency assessment given to students who have been identified as English Learners (ELs). It is given annually to monitor students' progress in acquiring academic English.

EL students also participate in the state mandated Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment Exams (MCAS) However, if it is child's first school year in the United States, the student does not have to participate in the English Language Arts exam.

These assessments help inform instruction and ensure that ELs are making progress. This information will also be used to inform the program plan for each EL. Accordingly, the number of ELD hours a student receives may be increased or decreased. Formal and informal state and school assessments also serve to identify students have achieved a level of language proficiency that will allow the student to meet grade level standards without additional support.

SEI teachers work closely with the ESL teachers to ensure that ELs are receiving an education "equitable" to their native-English speaking peers.

Parents/guardians of English Learners will receive progress reports throughout the year written in a language they can understand informing them of their child's progress and performance in the English language program.

Reclassification-Exiting Students from EL program

Criteria

English Learners will be reclassified as Former English Learners (FELs) once they have reached a proficiency level that will allow them to access academic content in English without any additional support. The decision to transition a student to a mainstream program is based on a number of criteria including:

- Overall proficiency score of 5.0 on the ACCESS for ELs assessment. Student must score a 4.0 or above in both the reading and writing components.
- State Mandated Testing- Students must score proficient on the ELA portion of MCAS or PARCC
- Teacher feedback and recommendation.
- Performance as indicated on WIDA Can Do Descriptors for the student's specific grade level cluster.
- Academic performance as measured by grade level diagnostic assessments, BAS and other formal and informal assessments.

Procedures

Either an SEI classroom teacher or an ESL teacher may initiate the reclassification or exit from an ESL program process.

Parent/guardian requests for exit from the EL program can supersede some of the above criteria, but in order to do this, parents must sign an Opt-Out form requesting that their child be withdrawn from the program. Parents or guardians considering this option must first meet with the classroom teacher and ESL teacher(s) to discuss the possible educational consequences of this decision.

The Reclassification team which includes the ESL Department Head, ESL teachers, grade level SEI teacher, the School Principal and/or Assistant Principal, Title I team member (if applicable), Special Education teacher (if applicable), and Guidance Counselor (if applicable), will review the progress of students who are being considered for reclassification at the end of each school year, once ACCESS for ELs results are released. Parents will also be invited to attend their child's reclassification meeting to offer feedback or will be informed in writing of the determination if they are not in attendance.

Monitoring

If a student is reclassified, they will no longer receive ELD instruction from an ESL teacher. They will however continue to be placed in an SEI classroom, at least initially, so that they may be supported appropriately in the classroom. An ESL staff member will monitor the student's progress for a period of four years after the student has been exited from the ELL program. Parents will be notified when the student's monitoring process begins as well as when it ends after four years. If a FEL student is not making adequate progress, the student can be rescreened and reclassified as EL. In the event that a FEL student is reclassified as EL, the student will begin receiving ELD again.

The monitoring process will include the following:

- Two observations a year from an ESL teacher.
- Two student interviews a year, administered by an ESL teacher.
- Meetings between SEI and ESL teacher, where supporting FEL students will be discussed as needed.
- SEI teachers will complete a Monitoring Form after each benchmark period (3-4 times a year)
- ESL teachers will keep an assessment tracker to monitor progress of student data and academic performance.
- Analysis of student work using the Can Do descriptors for the student's grade level cluster.
- Parent Communication as needed.

Rescreening Procedures

During the monitoring process, SEI teachers will fill out a Monitoring Form, three times a year after benchmark periods. SEI teachers can indicate that they would like to have their FEL student rescreened for EL services if they believe that the child's lack of progress is due to limited English proficiency. In the event that an SEI teacher indicates that they would like a student rescreened, the teacher will fill out a Referral for Rescreening Form. This will provide ESL teachers with important information and samples to aid in the rescreening process. An ESL staff member will administer the W-APT to the student. Criteria for rescreening is similar to the FEL reclassification criteria- students will need to demonstrate specific abilities as stated on the rescreen criteria forms (depending on their grade level cluster). If a student is not making adequate progress as listed in the rescreening criteria form, the student will be reclassified as EL and will receive EL support services again.

