

PENNSYLVANIA DISTANCE LEARNING CHARTER SCHOOL

Book: Policy Manual

Section: Programs

Title: English as a Second Language Policy

Reference: 2009 24 P.S. 13-1301-13-1306

Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IV

22 PA Code 4.26, 22 PA Code 4.4(d)(3)

Titles I and III

20 U.S.C. 6311 (b)(7); 20 U.S.C 6841 (a)(4)

20 U.S.C. 6826 (b)(3)(C), (d)(2)

Lau v. Nichols, 414; U.S. 563 and Castaneda v. Pickard, 648 F.2d 989

34 CFR 300.160

Every Student Succeeds Act (“ESSA”)

BEC Educating ELs Revised July 1, 2017

Reclassification, Monitoring, and Redesignation of ELs Revised 6/2021

Adopted: October 24, 2005

Revised: March 3, 2014; March 12, 2018; September 20, 2021

PURPOSE: To meet the Board’s philosophy of providing a high quality education to all students, Pennsylvania Distance Learning Charter School (PDLCS) has put in place an appropriately planned instructional program for students who indicate on the Home Language Survey a language other than English. The purpose of the English as a Second Language program is to increase the English language proficiency of eligible students so that they will achieve academic success and be college and/or career ready.

SCOPE: This policy applies to students and staff of PDLCS.

POLICY AUTHORITY: Policy draft is reviewed by the CEO of PDLCS; then (1) sent to the Board of

Trustees, and (2) presented at the next formal, public Board Meeting for review, public comments and approval.

DEFINITIONS:

ESL: English as a Second Language – Refers to the program in which English language learners are instructed in the use of the English language.

EL: English Language Learner – Refers to the student who has been assessed and found to be in need of ESL instruction.

ELD: English Language Development – Provided by ESL teachers and non-ESL teachers throughout daily instruction. In the ESL classroom it is driven by language using general education content to deliver language instruction by contextualizing it. In a classroom with a non-ESL teacher ELD is the deliberate planning and incorporation of language instruction which will allow students to access the course standards.

FEL: Former EL – Student that has been exited from the ESL program

LEP: Limited English Proficiency – Refers to a person who is unable to communicate effectively in English.

LFS: Limited Formal School – Refers to students who have had little, if any, formal schooling prior to arrival in the U.S. It may also refer to students who have had major interruptions in their education process.

LIEP: Language Instruction Education Program – Used as evidence to show that each EL has been provided appropriate language instruction. Developed in conjunction with the EL instructors, content area instructors, administration, and if needed special education instructors.

WIDA: World Class Instructional Design & Assessment – Refers to the non-profit consortium developed in 2003 in response to the educational policy of No Child Left Behind. The goal of the consortium is to develop high quality standards and assessments for ELs along with providing educators of ELs with professional learning. Pennsylvania is one of 42 states and territories in the WIDA Consortium.

ELP Standards: English Language Proficiency Standards – Refers to standards based on performance indicators in five key areas; Social & Instructional Language, Language of Language Arts, Language of Science, Language of Mathematics and Language of Social Studies.

WIDA Screener: WIDA Access Placement Test – Refers to the English language proficiency assessment that is used to screen students that may be English language learners. It is used to test students in grades K-12 and is not only to identify English Language Learners but is also used for placement in English as a Second Language classes.

ACCESS for ELLs: Accessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English

Language Learners – Refers to the language proficiency test given to students once a year in grades K-12 to monitor a student’s progress in attaining academic English success.

DETAILED POLICY STATEMENT:

STATEMENT OF PROGRAM GOALS: PDLCS has three primary goals for the ESL Program.

- To provide for our students appropriate curriculum and support developed using research-based educational theory which leads to English language proficiency for college and career readiness.
- To have sufficient resources and instruction by highly qualified teachers who have the opportunity to participate in professional development in the instruction of English Language Learners and cultural awareness and sensitivity.
- To periodically evaluate program effectiveness.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT: Students and their parents/guardians will complete the PDLCS enrollment application. All enrollment procedures outlined for public school enrollment in Pennsylvania should be followed when enrolling a child with Limited English Proficiency.

STUDENT SCREENING: All school districts and charter schools are required to identify students whose dominant language is not English. In Pennsylvania, schools are required to administer the Home Language Survey to all students (those presently enrolled and those who may enroll). The Home Language Survey must contain at a minimum the following three questions.

- What is the first language your child learned to speak?
- Does the child speak a language other than English? If yes, specify the language. (Do not include languages taught in school.)
- What language(s) is/are spoken at home?

If a language other than English is documented on the survey, then the ESL Coordinator will be notified. The ESL Coordinator will then review student records and complete a family interview. At the conclusion of the interview the ESL Coordinator will determine one of the following;

The student is not in need of ESL services: In this case, it has been determined the student does not need services because:

- The student was exited from the ESL Program at their previous school.
- A review of the student academic records shows there is sufficient English proficiency that indicates that the student would not need specialized supports or accommodations in the classroom.
- The student was tested using the WIDA SCREENER for 1-12, KW-APT, or K Screener and did not qualify for services.

The student is in need of ESL services: In this instance, there is evidence the student needs services because:

- The student was assessed using the WIDA SCREENER for 1-12, KW-APT, or K Screener and the student scores reflect the need for services.
- The student's most recent ACCESS 2.0 test scores and/or academic records show the need for services.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT: ESL and State Assessments

Once a student has been identified as a potential EL based on the Home Language Survey and has not been previously assessed for services or there is no evidence of previous services provided, PDLCS will administer the K MODEL or WIDA SCREENER.

- The K SCREENER/WIDA SCREENER is aligned to the required Pennsylvania State ELP assessment and must be used to identify and place a student into the PDCLS ESL Program.
- Once the K SCREENER /WIDA SCREENER results are received, additional criteria such as the family interview and academic records will be reviewed in conjunction with the results.
- Parent permission to assess for placement is not required.
- Students enrolled in the PDLCS ESL Program must also participate in the annual state ACCESS for ELs testing. Annual assessment of progress is required by federal law.
- Assessment will also occur in the ESL classroom which can include but is not limited to: unit assessment, quizzes, formal and information observations and practice activities.

For students enrolled in the PDLCS ESL Program, the following guidelines for taking the Pennsylvania state assessments of the PSSA and the Keystone Exam are outlined below. Please note that PDE will provide, on a yearly basis, an update on applicable exemptions and accommodations for PSSA and Keystone testing.

- ELs who are enrolled in a U.S. school and considered to be in the first 12 months in a U.S. school are not required to take the PSSA ELA test or the Literature Keystone exam.
- Should ELs in their first 12 months in a U.S. school choose to participate in the ELA PSSA or Literature Keystone exam, their performance will not be included but their participation will be counted for federal accountability purposes. Should they choose not to participate, their lack of participation will not count against the school.
- All ELs are required to participate in the Mathematics PSSA (grades 3-8) and the Science PSSA (grades 4 & 8) along with the Algebra 1 Keystone and Biology Keystone exams with accommodations as appropriate.

PARENT NOTIFICATION OF PLACEMENT AND OPTION TO OPT OUT

Upon classifying a student as qualifying or not qualifying for ESL Services, PDLCS will notify in writing the parent/guardian in their preferred language. This must occur within 30 days of the beginning of the school year or 14 calendar days within the student's start at the district.

Upon classification of qualifying for ESL Services a parent's/guardian's right to opt out of services must be presented to them in their preferred language. The decision to "opt out" of ELD programs must be an informed and voluntary decision to opt the child out of specialized instruction or services only provided for ELs. To do this PDLCS must:

- Provide a description of the ELD program recommended for their child and the advantages of the program
- Inform the parent/guardian of the right to decline in part or in whole ELD programs and services.
- Provide the parent/guardian with the ELD Program Waiver Form
- Continue to annually test opt-out EL students using the WIDA ACCESS of ELS 2.0 test
- Provide ELD instruction within the general education setting and report to parents/guardians if a student is struggling and present them with the ELD Inclusion form to opt back into the school's ELD program

ESL PROGRAM INSTRUCTION:

The PDLCS ESL Program currently follows the ESL Pull-Out format:

- Students have ESL class with other students where there is no support for their native language, students may have the same native language or not.
- All instruction in the ESL classroom and in the content areas is in English.
- Students meet with the ESL Instructor outside of the content area classroom to receive instruction focused on grammar, vocabulary, and communication. No content area instruction is taught in the ESL classroom.

This model will be reviewed on a yearly basis to determine if changes need to be made due to change in student population or student needs. The PDLCS ESL Program follows the basic criteria:

- All content area teachers and ESL Instructors must hold certifications and endorsements required by PDE.
- Instruction does not take place during other content area classes which are required under Pennsylvania law.
- Language instruction is in line with the student's proficiency level and the adaptations to instruction/assessment are also in line with the student's proficiency level.
- ESL classes are part of the daily schedule and thoughtfully planned.
- ESL classes are aligned with the Pennsylvania's Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening Standards and the PA ELP Standards for ELs.

Additional criteria that are part of the PDLCS ESL Program are as follows:

- ESL Program is based on sound educational theory from experts in the field. The PDLCS ESL Program is designed from the PDE approved program models and is adjusted based on the student needs. PDE has outlined six possible program models:
 - Mixed Class Bilingual, EL Bilingual, EL-Specific Transitional Instruction, Mixed Classes

with Native Language Support, EL Specific English Only Instruction, and Mixed Classes with English Only Support

- Resources, highly qualified personnel, and instructional materials are readily available so that instruction is effective.
- The program is evaluated and adjusted regularly to ensure student progress and student needs are met.

ACADEMIC CONTENT AREA INSTRUCTION OF ELS: Instruction of ELs in academic content areas at PDLCS will follow these guidelines outlined below:

- Once a student is identified as needing ESL services, the ESL Coordinator will meet with the student's academic team to discuss:
 - Student's present English proficiency levels.
 - Accommodations needed in academic content area classes identified by the ESL Instructor.
 - Applicable student information needed to guide student success.
- EL students are graded using the same grading system as all other students.
- Academic content area teachers, ESL Instructor, and ESL Coordinator will discuss student progress on a regular basis. This will include but is not limited to quarterly observation reports completed by both the Academic content area teachers and the ESL Instructor.
- The PA ELP Standards are used as an overlay to the academic standards content standards and are incorporated by academic content area teachers of EL students.
- ELD instruction may not replace any other core content in a student's academic program unless for a limited time- to not exceed one school year- and PDLCS will have a plan for recovering any academic gaps that may result.
- A student cannot be retained in a grade level based only on language proficiency.

RECLASSIFICATION, MONITORING, AND RE-DESIGNATION OF ELS

Reclassification: Occurs when an EL demonstrates the ability to access challenging academic content and interact with teachers and peers in an academic and social setting. In conjunction with the student's ACCESS for ELs scores and the Language Use Inventories, completed by the ESL teacher and one core content area teacher before the release of the ACCESS scores, PDLCS will use the results to determine if the student should be classified as a former EL.

Monitoring: PDLCS will actively monitor former ELs (FELs) academic progress for two years. This will include tracking student progress in all core academic content areas and gathering teacher feedback on a quarterly basis. This will ensure that if the student is found to be struggling due to language barriers, it is recognized in a timely manner. PDLCS will continue to report FELs to the state in PIMS for an additional two years. Years three and four do not require active monitoring. At the end of the fourth year of reclassification, students are coded as Former ELs.

Re-designating: If it is found during the active monitoring period that a student is struggling academically due to language barriers then PDLCS will re-designate the FEL as an active EL and re-enroll the student in

the LIEP. Once re-enrolled the student must meet the state required criteria to be reclassified as FELs. When this occurs, the monitoring process starts again at year one.

ELS WITH DISABILITIES: Some EL students may be eligible for Special Education. The IEP team must consider all of the students' needs related to the Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). All procedures for screening, evaluation, IEP and services and/or instruction must be in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and PA Chapter 14 Regulations. At PDLCS the following guidelines will be followed for EL students with disabilities:

- The IEP team will include input from the ESL Instructor on the student's language needs.
- The IEP team must check Limited English proficient under special considerations within the IEP.
- The English Language accommodations are not included in the IEP but shared with the IEP team.
- According to Titles I and III, students must participate in the annual assessment for ELs, either the ACCESS for ELs 2.0 or the Alternate ACCESS for ELs.

SUPPORT AND SUPPLEMENTAL PROGRAMS: ELs are able to participate in all federal and state programs which they are identified as qualifying for within the school.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS: To ensure that all parents receive communication in their preferred language, PDLCS uses the following services:

- Transact: Provider of documents regarding general education and ESSA requirements in multiple languages
- TalkingPoints - a two-way multilingual text messaging platform
- LanguageLine: Provides interpreting and translation services in multiple languages. These services will be evaluated on a yearly basis for effectiveness and may be replaced with other services as needed. Communication with parents/guardians is made using the above modes for the following purposes:
 - Student enrollment in the ESL Program
 - Student assessment notifications
 - Student progress in courses

TITLE III: ESSA provides funds for LEAs to supplement existing ESL Programs. PDLCS is a member of the Title III Consortium and AIU3 applies for Title III funds on behalf of the consortium. Title III funds can be used for but are not limited to:

- After-school programs
- Summer programs
- Training for staff

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: PDLCS will provide staff with professional development opportunities under Act 48 on a yearly basis when EL students are enrolled.

REPORTING PROCEDURES: The ESL Coordinator will work with the Records and School Reporting

Coordinator to complete the recording requirements for the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS).