English Language Learners in Ohio
Ohio Department of Education, Officer of Curriculum and Assessment, Lau Resource Center

Characteristics of English Language Learners

- English Language Learners (ELL) or Limited English Proficient (LEP) students refer to:
  1. students whose home or native language is not English, and
  2. who need extra language support to achieve the level of English proficiency required to participate effectively in mainstream classroom settings

- Ohio’s ELL students represent over 100 different home/native languages
  The top five language groups of Ohio’s ELL students are:
  - Spanish
  - Somali
  - Arabic
  - German (many Amish children speak a variation of German called Pennsylvanian Dutch)
  - Chinese

- Ohio’s ELL students may be:
  - Immigrants
    - Families may come to re-unite with other family members
    - Families may come to seek better economic opportunities
  - Refugees
    - Seeking refuge from political repression or persecution in their home countries
    - Refugees’ countries of origin include Somalia, Burma, Vietnam, Russia, Uzbekistan, Cuba, Burundi, Ethiopia, Ukraine, Eritrea, Liberia, Iran and Sudan
  - Born in the U.S. (for example, Puerto Ricans, Mexican-Americans, Amish)

- Ohio’s ELL students may have:
  - Prior formal educational experiences
    - Well-developed academic concepts
    - Literacy skills in their native languages
  - Little or no prior formal educational experiences
    - Limited development of academic concepts
    - Little or no literacy skills in their native language
    - Little or no understanding of U.S. school culture

Legal obligations of all school districts serving ELLs
(based on Civil Rights Act of 1964 and U. S. Supreme Court Decision Lau vs. Nichols 1974)

- Identify and assess all students whose home/native language is not English
- Provide services for students identified as LEP/ELL; services must be theoretically sound and based on good practice
- Provide qualified staff and resources to implement district’s program for ELLs
- Monitor and evaluate program on an ongoing basis – modify program if necessary
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Title III of No Child Left Behind – English Language Acquisition

❖ Funding

Funds are available to districts under Title III of No Child Left Behind to **supplement and enhance** basic core language support services and professional development. In FY2012, 311 districts (including community schools) applied for and received funding under Title III (191 of the grantees are members of consortia). The amount of allocation is based on number of LEP student identified in EMIS, at $196 per student. In addition, 43 districts received funds targeted specifically for immigrant students at the rate of $87 per student.

❖ Requirements of Title III-funded districts and community schools.

➢ Districts that receive funding under Title III of No Child Left Behind are required to report the following on an annual basis:
  - Number of ELLs who make progress in attaining English proficiency (based on students’ scores on the Ohio Test of English Language Acquisition (OTELA))
  - Number of ELLs who attain proficiency in English (based on OTELA scores)
  - Number of ELLs who scored proficient or above on state’s reading and mathematics assessments

➢ Title III funded districts receive from ODE a yearly Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAO) report indicating whether or not they met the state’s targets for the three measures mentioned above:
  - Progress in achieving English proficiency – AMAO #1
  - Attainment of English proficiency – AMAO #2
  - Adequate Yearly Progress on state content assessments – AMAO #3

➢ The following are consequences for districts that miss one or more AMAO targets:
  - Title III-funded districts that miss one or more AMAO targets are required to inform parents of this fact.
  - Title III-funded districts that miss one or more AMAO targets two years in a row are required to submit an LEP Improvement Plan on the CCIP.
  - Districts that miss one or more AMAO four years in a row are required to review and modify their service plan for ELLs.
Factors that may impact ELLs’ acquisition of English and academic progress

- ELLs need **time** and **support** in order to attain the level of English proficiency needed to achieve Ohio’s academic standards and to become college and career ready. The amount of time they need depends on a variety of factors, including the students’ educational background, their current level of English proficiency, their age, and their level of educational support.

- **How long?** A longitudinal study conducted by Wayne Thomas and Virginia Collier (School Effectiveness for Language Minority Students, 1997), shows how long it takes typical students of different backgrounds to achieve on grade level in their native language to reach the 50th Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) in English:
  - Typical bilingually schooled students – 4-7 years;
  - Typical “advantaged” immigrants with 2-5 years of on-grade-level home country schooling in their native language – 5-7 years;
  - Typical immigrants (including refugees) without academic experiences in their home country and schooled all in English in the U.S. – 7-10 years.

- **Academic background.** Of all the student background variables, the most powerful predictor of academic success in a second language (L2) is formal schooling in the student’s first/native language (L1). This is true whether L1 schooling is received only in home country or in both home country and the U.S. (Thomas and Collier, 1997, p. 39)

- **Student’s first/native language.** Researchers (Thomas and Collier, 1997) have found that the particular first or native language that a student speaks is not a powerful variable in long-term academic achievement. In other words, Spanish speakers in general make the same rate of progress in English language acquisition as do speakers of Arabic or Mandarin Chinese or Amharic or Korean or Russian or Vietnamese.

- **Student’s level of English proficiency.** ELLs with higher levels of English proficiency tend to perform better on statewide academic assessments.

- **ELLs’ background and experiences as learning resources.** Although ELLs have language and cultural barriers that need to be addressed in school, they also bring unique strengths and experiences to the classroom. They have knowledge of another language besides English, as well as a special cultural heritage. These strengths need to be recognized as learning resources to be nurtured and shared in their educational settings.
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Resources on ODE website for school districts serving ELLs
(Type in name of a resource listed below in “Search” box on ODE website)

❖ Identification and assessment of ELLs
  • Guidelines for the Identification and Assessment of Limited English Proficient Students/English Language Learners
  • Ohio Test of English Language Acquisition (OTELA)
  • Ohio Statewide Assessment Program Rules Book - pages 26-37 address ELL assessment issues
  • Practice Tests and Special Versions for State Assessments (ODE website)

❖ Instruction of ELLs
  • Ohio English Language Proficiency Standards
  • Principles of Second Language Development in Teaching LEP Students
  • What Research Tells us about the Education of LEP Students
  • Guidelines for Developing Programs to Meet the Needs of Limited English Proficient Students
  • Characteristics of Programs Serving LEP Students in Ohio
  • Revised Academic Content Standards and Model Curriculum Development (this page on the ODE website includes information relating to strategies for diverse learners)

❖ Title III of No Child Left Behind – English Language Acquisition
  • Ohio’s Revised Title III Accountability Plan for Limited English Proficient Students
  • Lists of districts eligible for Title III LEP and Immigrant allocations: CCIP website page – Document Library +Consolidated Funding Application +Title III, Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students + Allocations
  • Information about an individual district’s Title III program: CCIP website page – Search, Organizations; type in name or IRN of district - Funding Applications - Consolidated – Title III LEP and Immigrant
  • Information about an individual district’s LEP Improvement Plan: CCIP website page – Search, Organizations; type in name or IRN of district - Planning, Planning Tool - District/Agency – LEP Improvement Component

❖ General information and guidelines
  • About the Lau Resource Center
  • Information and Guidelines from the Lau Resource Center
  • Guidelines for Addressing the Needs of Preschool English Language Learners
  • Guidelines for Enrolling Students in Public Schools
  • Funding Uses and Notifying LEP Parents

❖ Lau Resource Center contact information – Telephone: (614) 466-4109
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