



CHARTER SCHOOL

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Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and English Language Learner (ELL) Policy and Program

I. PURPOSE: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires school districts to provide equal educational opportunities to language-minority students. Accordingly, each district must identify which of its students have limited English proficiency and provide an effective program that affords meaningful access to the district's educational program. This Federal requirement has been codified in Section 4.26 of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education regulations (22 PA Code Sec. 4.26): "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 Sec. 4.12 (relating to academic standards). Programs under this section shall include appropriate bilingual-bicultural or English as a second language (ESL) instruction."

As used here, the term "program" refers to: (1) planned instruction by a qualified ESL/Bilingual teacher, (2) adaptations/modifications in the delivery of content instruction by all teachers used on the student's language proficiency level and the Pennsylvania Language Proficiency standards (PA ELPS) for ELLs as well as the Pennsylvania academic standards.

II. SCOPE OF PROGRAMMING: ESL programs are mandated. Schools may choose to implement an ESL program based upon a variety of models to address their specific needs. Regardless of the manner in which a School chooses to operate its ESL program, the School remains responsible to provide a core program to ensure that each limited English proficiency (LEP) student's English proficiency and academic needs are met.

III. IDENTIFICATION AND ELIGIBILITY OF STUDENTS: YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School follows the following process for the identification of English-language learners (ELLs):

1. Home Language Survey

All students entering YouthBuild Philadelphia are given a Home Language Survey. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS for the Home Language Survey. It is part of the enrollment process. The results of these surveys are maintained in the respective student's permanent record.

2. Demographic Identification of Students for Formal Assessment

Based on the Home Language Survey responses, the School identifies those students:

- whose native language is other than English and come from an environment where a language other than English is dominant, or
- who are Native Americans or Alaska Natives who are native residents of the outlying areas and come from an environment in which a language other than English has had a significant impact on those students' levels of English language proficiency.

YouthBuild Philadelphia maintains updated lists of demographically-identified ELL students.

Once students are identified demographically, the School uses the WIDA ACCESS PLACEMENT TEST (W- APT), which is aligned to the required annual State assessment, WIDA/ ACCESS for ELLs, to assess students for placement in language instructional programs for ELLs. Parental permission to assess is not required. Based on the responses to the Home Language Survey, students must be assessed for potential placement in an ESL program *unless they meet the criteria for exemption from assessment set forth below.*

For qualifying students, ESL instruction begins within 30 days of enrollment at the beginning of the school year.

3. Exemption from Assessment

It is recognized that there are students who are fluent in English but identify a home language other than English on their HLS. If a student who has attended school for several years without being identified as limited English proficient (LEP), or who has recently transferred from another district, that student may be able to succeed in a mainstream program without English-language instruction. An otherwise identified student, based on the HLS, may be exempted from the English-language proficiency assessment. *Students should meet the following criteria to be exempted from an English-language proficiency assessment:*

- Final grades of B or better in core subject areas (Mathematics, Language Arts, Science and Social Studies); and
- Scores on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) (YouthBuild's "district-wide assessment") that are comparable to the Basic performance level on the PSSA.

(Scores of Basic in Reading, Writing and Math on the PSSA are also exemption criteria, but YouthBuild Philadelphia does not participate in either the PSSAs or Keystone exams.)

Newly enrolling students completing the HLS with previous school records indicating that they meet the criteria above may also be exempt from assessment for placement in ESL programs. Student records for students from other states or school systems can be considered as part of the criteria. However, newly enrolling students without such records must be assessed for their English-language proficiency.

4. Assessment

For the purpose of initial placement of students who have not met the exemption criteria, the School uses the WIDA ACCESS PLACEMENT TEST (W- APT). YouthBuild Philadelphia staff take into consideration the State's English-language proficiency (ELP) levels described within the PA ELPS standards when placing students in an instructional program for ELLs. In addition, instructional placement of ELLs must be age and grade appropriate.

The annual English-language proficiency assessment, the WIDA/ ACCESS for ELLs, is administered to all identified ELL students. The WIDA/ ACCESS for ELLs is used to assess students for the development of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. The formal English language proficiency assessment results are used in combination with other assessment data to determine the best instructional placement for students.

English-language proficiency assessment results are placed in the ELL students' permanent records.

5. Parent rights

- Parent notification of student-assessment results and placement in an ESL program is required.
- A parent may not seek to have his or her child excused from YouthBuild Philadelphia's ESL program unless such instruction conflicts with the family's religious belief. (Section 4.4 (d)(3) of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education regulations (22 Pa. Code §4.4(d)(3)) requires school districts, including charter schools, to adopt policies that permit parents to have their children excused from specific instruction only upon receipt of a written request from the parents or guardians stating that the instruction "conflicts with their religious beliefs.")
- Non-English speaking parents must be provided communications in a language they understand to the extent practicable.
- YouthBuild Philadelphia will present the ESL Program Plan that defines the core program for all students to parents/students. Individualized plans are not required.
- The School will inform parents of the criteria to exit an ESL program.

IV. STUDENT AND PARENT ORIENTATION PROCEDURES: Students and their parents are afforded the opportunity to meet with the school staff so that staff, with the assistance of an interpreter, can explain:

- basic school information
- a description of the ESL education program
- the program goals and objectives for the students
- what content classes the student will attend
- assessment practices and procedures
- what special programs are available

- the expectations of the student, including expectations for participation and behavior, as well as homework and attendance policies
- the support services available to the students, and
- extracurricular activities.

V. PROGRAM GOALS AND MONITORING: At YouthBuild Philadelphia, the hallmark of a successful ESL program is student progress toward English-language proficiency and meaningful access to academic-content classes such that they can achieve the school's academic standards. Accordingly, the ESL program goals are to help ELL students achieve academic success and to complete the required coursework as set forth in the YouthBuild Philadelphia curriculum. The ESL program aims to strengthen language skills, specifically focusing on achieving fluency and acquiring language necessary to students' academic and professional growth.

The ESL Program offers:

- standards-based English instruction as a second language at the appropriate proficiency level,
- content-area instruction aligned with the corresponding standards and adapted to meet the needs of the students,
- in-class supports by an ESL-experienced teacher, who holds a Certificate in English Language Teaching for Adults (CELTA), and
- assessment processes that reflect the standards and instruction.

Moreover, the program is:

- based upon sound educational and language learning theory,
- implemented with sufficient resources and staffed by appropriately prepared personnel, and
- periodically re-evaluated.

YouthBuild Philadelphia monitors the progress of ELL students and uses multiple measures of language growth and academic achievement to evaluate their progress in attaining English proficiency and in meeting state academic and student achievement standards. The ELLs take the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) three times throughout the course of the school year. The TABE is the local, large-scale assessment taken by all YouthBuild Philadelphia students to measure their academic growth and achievement. The ELLs also take the annual WIDA ACCESS for ELLs test one time to ensure that their language skills, as well as their comprehension and mastery of material taught throughout the school year, improve. Additionally, ELL students are required to complete the eight academic demonstrations that are the backbone of YouthBuild's academic curriculum. ELL students receive both in-class support on the achievement of these eight academic demonstrations and the modification of assignments to meet the ELL students' specific needs.

Monitoring after exit from a language instructional program

Typically, monitoring is required for two years after a student exits an ESL/Bilingual program and appropriate records of student progress must be maintained. 20 U.S.C. § 6841(a)(4).

However, given the fact that YouthBuild Philadelphia is a 12th-Grade-only School, any monitoring of the progress of ELL students who have been exited from the School's ESL program is limited to those who have been exited from the program during that current (12th-Grade) school year.

VI. INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMMING: For qualifying students, ESL instruction begins within 30 days of enrollment at the beginning of the school year. YouthBuild Philadelphia implements a Structured English Immersion (SEI) program to address the specific needs of its ELL students. Given that all YouthBuild Philadelphia students are older adolescents/young adults (that is, between the ages of 18 and 21) and given that the School is a 12th-Grade-only program, an SEI program has been determined to be the most appropriate for that age group, within that limited time period. The SEI program primarily uses an inclusion model that teaches ELLs in the regular classroom with non-ELLs but also with the support of an ESL teacher both inside and outside of the classroom-setting. It involves teaching listening, speaking, reading and writing skills at appropriate developmental and proficiency levels with little or no use of the student's native language. This approach allows ELLs to learn social and academic language skills, as well as cultural aspects of the English language, necessary for the students to succeed not only in an academic environment, but in their postsecondary placements and to contribute to society.

The ELL students are scheduled in content-area classes with the understanding that they may not be able to comprehend all of the instruction. However, the ESL teacher works with content-area teachers to adapt and modify their courses of study to meet the specific needs of the ELL students. Content-area instruction is aligned with the corresponding academic standards.

Given the supports and modifications they receive, ELL students are graded just like their non-ELL peers. Their grades are reported on a standard YouthBuild Philadelphia report card, but the information on the report card is provided in the language that can be read and understood by the students' parents.

VII. EXITING THE PROGRAM: Placement in an ESL program is not a permanent placement or label. The goal is to exit the student as soon as he/she is able to meet the exit criteria. Students exit the program when they demonstrate skills in speaking, reading, writing or understanding the English language with enough competency such that they can learn successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English, as well as participate fully in our society.

State Required Exit Criteria for Pennsylvania's English Language Instructional Programs for ELLs.

The exit criteria represent valid and reliable evidence of a student's English language proficiency to exit from an English language instructional program. These required exit criteria ensure consistent measures across LEAs for exiting ELLs from English language instructional programs. Assurance of implementation of the exit criteria will take place within the LEP System Review.

Program exit from the Pennsylvania English language instructional program for ELLs takes place annually between June and September. LEP status of students for the current school year must be determined by September 30 and reported in the PIMS October District and School Enrollment Collection. Students reported as current ELLs in the PIMS October District and School Enrollment Collection cannot exit the English language instructional program from October until June.

To meet the required state exit criteria for Pennsylvania’s English language instructional programs for ELLs, YouthBuild Philadelphia must ensure that students meet both required exit criteria listed below and meet one additional exit criteria listed below to exit from an English language instructional program:

Required Exit Criteria:

- Score of 5.0 on a Tier C ACCESS for ELLs assessment.

Cutoff score flexibility is available in the following Special Circumstances:

- Following the grade and score criteria in the table below, the W-APT may be administered between June and September to students who scored below the minimum cutoff for program exit on the January administration of the ACCESS in order to demonstrate sufficient progress to justify exit. (NOTE: The W-APT may only be administered to a student once in any school year.)

Grade Level	ACCESS Score	Required Scores*	W-APT
9-12	4.8-4.9	5.0 in each domain	

(NOTE: A student must score 5.0 in each domain (listening, speaking, reading and writing). A composite proficiency score will not be used.)

- A score of PROFICIENT on the PSSA English Language Arts or Literature Keystone assessments can be used along with the other required criteria outlined in this policy (Required Exit Criteria #2 and Additional Exit Criteria #1 or #2) to justify exit for students who achieve a composite proficiency score of 4.5 to 4.9 on the January administration of the ACCESS. In this case, W-APT scores are not necessary to demonstrate progress from the time of ACCESS administration to the end of the school year.

(The State also requires a score of BASIC on the annual PSSA Mathematics or Algebra I Keystone AND PSSA English Language Arts or Literature Keystone, but YouthBuild Philadelphia does not participate in either the PSSAs or Keystone exams.)

Additional Exit Criteria:

1. Final grades of the equivalent of C (Satisfactory) or better in core subject areas (Mathematics, Language Arts, Science and Social Studies).
2. Scores on the TABE (the local assessment) that are comparable to the BASIC performance level on the PSSA Mathematics or Algebra I Keystone AND PSSA English Language Arts or Literature Keystone assessments.

VIII. EVALUATION PROCEDURES: Annually, the ESL program is evaluated to ascertain that it is meeting its goals for the students. Data that will be considered include:

- Report card grades and other indicators of achievement
- Attendance
- Rate of participation in extracurricular activities
- Graduation rate
- Discipline rate.

IX. ACCESS TO SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND ACTIVITIES: All ELL students in the ESL program are guaranteed access to the full school curriculum (both required and elective courses) including vocation/career education and technology. ELL students also have full access to all extracurricular activities and are encouraged to participate in these activities.

X. STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES: ELL students have full access to, and are encouraged to take advantage of, all school services, including—

- Counseling
If an ELL student is in need of counseling, every effort will be made to secure a counselor who is fluent in the student's native language.
- Special Education
ELL students may be eligible for Special-Education services once it is determined that a qualifying disability exists and that this disability is not due to a lack of instruction or proficiency in the English language. All ELLs eligible for Special-Education services will continue to receive ESL instruction at the appropriate proficiency and developmental level.

XI. STAFFING: Because it enrolls a new cohort of students at one point of entry each school year, YouthBuild Philadelphia cannot project from year to year if any ELLs will be enrolled in any school year. When there are ELL students enrolled, the School contracts with ESL-certified teachers, including those who hold a Certificate in English Language Teaching for Adults (CELTA). Those teachers are required to demonstrate academic language proficiency both in English and in the ELLs native language.

XII. STAFF TRAINING AND PREPARATION: When it has ELLs enrolled, YouthBuild Philadelphia offers staff development related to ESL for all School personnel as part of its Professional Development Act 48 Plan. The School provides its staff with an orientation to, and factual cultural information on, the various cultures represented by the ELL students so as both to avoid serious cultural clashes and to enhance the ELL students' school experiences and the likelihood for success. Content-area teachers will receive appropriate support in modifying instruction for ELLs.

XIII. MIGRANT EDUCATION: Students identified as migrant and who are determined to be ELLs are provided with a language instructional program as outlined in this document.

XIV. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

▪ Communication with students' homes

All information disseminated to the students and their parents is provided in the language or mode preferred by the parents.

▪ Complaint resolution process

If an ELL student or his/her family has a complaint that cannot be resolved with the staff and administrators of YouthBuild Philadelphia, that student or family may request a hearing with YouthBuild Philadelphia's Board of Trustees.

XV. POST-SECONDARY MONITORING: Because it is a 12th-Grade-only program, YouthBuild Philadelphia only has ELLs for one year. Still, the School makes every effort to monitor the post-secondary progress of its ELL graduates.

XVI. BUDGET: Because it enrolls a new cohort of students at one point of entry each school year, YouthBuild Philadelphia cannot project from year to year if any ELLs will be enrolled in any school year. Nevertheless, the School has a line item in the general ESL program budget in the event that any ELL is enrolled. That line item includes provision for resources/materials, staffing for the language instructional program, and professional development for all school personnel. (Federal funds can be used to supplement local funding for language instructional programs, but not to supplant state/local funds.)

XVII. INTERPRETERS: YouthBuild Philadelphia has a procedure for accessing interpreters and/or translators who can be called upon when needed.