



IOWA CITY
COMMUNITY
SCHOOL DISTRICT
Child-Centered : Future-Focused

Self Study of English Language Learner ELL Instructional Program

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If you believe you have (or your child has) been discriminated against or treated unjustly at school, please contact the District Equity Director, at 1725 N. Dodge St., Iowa City, IA 52245, 319-688-1000.

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ICCSD English Language Learner Program Mission, Belief Statements and Goals

As a result of the curriculum review process, the self-study committee reviewed the mission statement, belief statements, and goals for the ELL program and adopted the following.

MISSION STATEMENT

To produce language learners who are socially and academically prepared to be successful in the ICCSD and a global society.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

We believe

- Language acquisition is developmental and acquired in stages
- Rate of acquisition is unique to individuals and is influenced by multiple factors
- First language literacy development can facilitate second language literacy development
- ELLs need to develop both BICS (social) and CALP (academic) language
- Vocabulary development and the teaching of strategies for learning new vocabulary are critical components of literacy instruction
- Use of the first language in the home facilitates second language acquisition
- Cultural and linguistic diversity enriches the lives of the entire school community

PROGRAM GOALS

The following linguistic, social and academic goals are set and directly connect with the district Lau Plan

- Support the acquisition of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and the development of CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency).
- Help students become proficient in the four language domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- Provide research-based strategies and instructional practices that are designed to meet the unique needs of ELLs
- Educate ELs to meet the same challenging academic content and achievement that all children are expected to meet.
- Assist successful participation in classroom learning situations and other school activities while maintaining a positive attitude toward self, school, and community.
- Promote understanding, respect, and appreciation for the cultural and linguistic diversity of our student population.
- Collaborate with the school community to increase the sensitivity of staff to the unique educational needs of ELL students and their families.
- Facilitate opportunities for parents of ELL students to develop home-school partnerships and encourage involvement in their child's education

ICCSA English Language Learner Program Strengths and Limitations

The following information was generated from review and analysis of data gathered from surveys as well as academic achievement data, namely historical Iowa Assessment data. Those responding to surveys included elementary and secondary teachers, students, administrators and parents. Strength statements represented responses with a high percent responding agree or strongly agree; limitation statements represent responses with over 20% of the population disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

ASSUMED STRENGTHS

Teachers, staff, administrator qualities

- Dedicated and caring staff put students first.
- Staff are highly knowledgeable and qualified.
- ELL staff collaborate and communicate about ELL students' progress.

Students

- There is diversity among ELL students.

Programming

- Students receive support as long as needed.
- Increased programming across the district has supported ELL students.
- Stability of the program exists in many areas of operation.
- There is consistency in entrance/exit criteria.
- Availability of resources are of assistance to students and staff.
- Student progress reports and other data charts provide informative data.

Curriculum

- Alignment of content with other general education content/standards is increasing.
- HMH *Journeys* is aligned at the elementary level; this supports student learning.
- Quality materials are available to support student achievement.

District Supports

- English Language Intake Center assists with district-wide coordination.
- Interpreters and translators are provided through the Equity Office.

Professional Development

- There are opportunities for ELL teachers to receive PD to strengthen instruction.
- ELL PLC time supports collaboration with other ELL teachers.

ASSUMED LIMITATION

Teachers, staff, administrator qualities

There is limited diversity in the ELL staff.

Programming

ELL programming does not exist in all school sites.

Up-to-date programming (literacy as well as mathematics), for newcomers particularly refugee students, does not exist.

For students with limited or interrupted education, there are minimal supports.

Exit test (which is state mandated) is difficult.

Identification as currently defined sometimes results in some students not receiving services.

Guidance on programming and serving dual needs of ELL and SpEd is limited and not clear.

Curriculum

There are limited materials in the following areas:

- For students who cannot access HMH Journeys at grade level.
- For tiered instruction
- For K-2 beginners
- With subject matter relevant to students
- With low-level, high interest reading for secondary students

Alignment and bridging of instruction among classrooms and teachers is limited

District Supports

Student and family supports are limited on a district-wide basis.

Professional Development

Classroom teachers have limited PD experiences for supporting ELLs. Topics of importance include:

- Strategies and curricular activities for beginners
- SIOP training
- Differentiation in the classroom
- Support for new teachers

ICCS D English Language Learner Program Improvement Plan

Program Identification, Assessment, Placement, and Exit Criteria

| <i>Limitation</i> | <i>RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTION STEPS</i> | <i>CONTACT PERSON(S)</i> | <i>TIMELINE</i> |
|---|---|--|---|
| Many staff members are unsure of identification, placement, assessment, and exit procedures of ELLs | Provide explanation of identification, placement, assessment, and exit criteria to all administrators and staff. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a flowchart of steps from identification to exit • Create flowchart/traceability matrix of ELIAC procedures • Review identification of potential ELLs from Home Language Survey with building secretaries • Post flowcharts on district website | ELL Coordinator ELL Staff ELIAC Assessor | October 2015 |
| Some ELL staff are unsure if ELIAC is the most effective model for identification, placement, assessment | Determine if the ELIAC (centralized intake) is the most effective model for the district based on increased and continuing ELL enrollment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss advantages and disadvantages of a central location for screening students • Discuss the challenges that have occurred due to changes in demographics and enrollment • Determine who, what, where, and when of screening students – (at the ESC or in buildings) • Determine procedures for entering Actions Taken, information into PowerSchool, blue folders, permission forms, description of program • Create a model to pilot with changes as determined by the group | ELL Coordinator ELL Staff ELIAC Assessor | October 2015 |
| Many staff members are unsure of the procedures for identifying disability from difference, interventions for ELL, and Special Education referral | Work with district administration and IDOE to identify interventions appropriate for ELLs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review previous IDM flowchart and identify if any parts are still relevant and viable • Research and identify appropriate MTSS interventions for ELLs • Develop and establish flowchart to assist buildings with implementation • Provide appropriate PD for implementation for general education and ELL teachers | Directors of Schools, ELL Coordinator, GWAEA ELL Consultant, State ELL MTSS Committee | June 2015 – 2017 (as information becomes available from IDOE) |

Academic Achievement

| <i>Limitation</i> | <i>RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTION STEPS</i> | <i>CONTACT PERSON(S)</i> | <i>TIMELINE</i> |
|---|--|---|--|
| Secondary ELL students have limited knowledge/skills for content class and assignment completion is difficult | Provide additional academic support for secondary ELLs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate a list of concerns and challenges • Brainstorm solutions; (para-educator support during study hall, after school Homework Club, etc.) • Brainstorm solutions for content teacher accountability in supporting student learning • Consider possible partnerships with U of Iowa for help • Consider ELL coaching position or ideas for more PD on designing accessible lessons • Identify source of funding to pay for additional para-educator or after school teacher support (for example) • Implement solutions • Evaluate effectiveness | ELL Coordinator, Building Administrators, Secondary ELL Staff | Spring 2015 – Fall 2015; revisit as needed |

Curriculum [content and process standards, benchmarks, objectives]

| <i>Limitation</i> | <i>RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTION STEPS</i> | <i>CONTACT PERSON(S)</i> | <i>TIMELINE</i> |
|---|---|--|---|
| Some elementary ELL staff have expressed concern that K-2 current instructional resources may not be appropriate for beginning students | Review current curriculum for beginning K-2 and identify areas of limitation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify IA Core standards for K-2 • Align TESOL K-2 standards • Examine HMH content and materials • Examine newcomer ELL materials already used in the ICCSD for K-2 • Determine which materials are appropriate and where supplemental or alternative materials are needed • Develop K-2 program for beginners • Consider any additional PD and training that may be needed with new materials | Directors of Schools, ELL Coordinator, ELL Staff | Summer 2015 – Spring 2016; district inservice dates |

Instructional Practices

| <i>Limitation</i> | <i>RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTION STEPS</i> | <i>CONTACT PERSON(S)</i> | <i>TIMELINE</i> |
|--|---|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| General education classroom teachers have limited knowledge of “best practices” for ELL students | Provide professional development for general education classroom teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to Professional Development Component of Report | Refer to PD component | Refer to PD component |

Assessment

| <i>Limitation</i> | <i>RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTION STEPS</i> | <i>CONTACT PERSON(S)</i> | <i>TIMELINE</i> |
|---|--|--|--------------------------------|
| Many staff members expressed uncertainty with assessment and assessment accommodations for ELLs | <p>Explore options for providing assessment information to staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss use of Differentiation chart and PD within ELL buildings by ELL teachers • Identify or develop an accommodations document with recommendations for students according to proficiency levels and individual needs • Develop common PD module to be presented in ELL buildings by ELL teachers • Refer to Assessment Accommodations for Classroom teachers for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students by Socorro Herrera to develop module • Continue to provide additional Guidelines to Accommodations training from GWAEA ELL Consultant | ELL Coordinator, ELL Staff, GWAEA ELL Consultant | Fall 2015 Ongoing as needed |

Instructional Materials

| <i>Limitation</i> | <i>RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTION STEPS</i> | <i>CONTACT PERSON(S)</i> | <i>TIMELINE</i> |
|---|---|---|--|
| Limited accessible reading materials exist for students reading well below grade level 3-6 | <p>Identify alternative/additional reading materials for 3-6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize 3-6 HMH Journeys grade level readers and identify core themes • Examine Reading A-Z and instructional texts from various publishers in lower reading levels • Identify texts with parallel themes/vocabulary/skills • Align to HMH Journeys and/or other content areas • Identify funding and purchase materials | Directors of Schools, ELL Coordinator, Elementary ELL Staff | Fall 2015; district inservice dates |
| Limited accessible reading materials exist for students reading well below grade level 7-12 | <p>Identify alternative/additional reading materials for 7-12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize current curriculum (Keystone and North Star) to identify where additional reading is needed • Identify specific levels (lexile and proficiency) needed for each ELL or content class • Research and examine texts from various publishers • Identify funding and purchase materials | Directors of Schools, ELL Coordinator, Secondary ELL Staff | Summer 2015; Fall 2015; district inservice dates |

Professional Development

| <i>Limitation</i> | <i>RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTION STEPS</i> | <i>CONTACT PERSON(S)</i> | <i>TIMELINE</i> |
|---|--|---|--|
| General education teachers lack knowledge regarding language acquisition and instruction for ELLs | Provide professional development for general education teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify focus areas for professional development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Second language acquisition ▪ Cultural competency (for staff and students-both ELL and non-ELL) ▪ SIOP – expansion districtwide; consider mandatory for all new hires ▪ Develop long-range (3-5 year) plan for teachers ▪ Consider options with video/online training modules as well as face-to-face ▪ Provide digital and hard copy references for “best practices” for WLLs ▪ Identify funding sources for professional development ▪ Communicate plan to teachers and administrators and begin to schedule training sessions | Sub-committee, ELL Coordinator, Directors of Schools, ELL Staff, GWAEA ELL Consultant | June 2015 (plan) Implementation: 2015-2019 |
| <i>Limitation</i> | <i>RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTION STEPS</i> | <i>CONTACT PERSON(S)</i> | <i>TIMELINE</i> |
| ELL staff have expressed concerns with supporting ELLs with special needs | Provide professional development for ELL teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify specific areas of concern ▪ Develop long-range (1-3 year) plan for teachers ▪ Identify individuals to provide specific training on ELLs and Special Education ▪ Collaborate with Special Education staff ▪ Identify funding sources for professional development ▪ Communicate plan to teachers and administrators and begin to schedule training sessions | ELL Coordinator Directors of Schools, ELL Staff, GWAEA ELL Consultant Special Ed Coordinator (to consult) | June 2015 (plan) Implementation: 2015-2018 |

Parent Communication, Outreach, and Equitable Access

| <i>Limitation</i> | <i>RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTION STEPS</i> | <i>CONTACT PERSON(S)</i> | <i>TIMELINE</i> |
|--|--|--|--|
| Parents of elementary students would like to receive more timely communication about English language progress from ELL teachers | Provide periodic (monthly initially then every other month) updates on progress <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Generate list of options for providing updates (newsletter, simple progress report - both academic and cultural, etc.) ▪ Consider development of web links for communication: for parents, student, general education teachers ▪ Identify resources for parents to support their children at home (aligned to newcomer skill development) ▪ Discuss a timeline for communication ▪ Identify if common forms can be translated ▪ Identify other possible options for communication | ELL Coordinator, Elementary ELL staff, ELL Parents | Spring 2015- – Spring 2016; district inservice dates |

| <i>Limitation</i> | <i>RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTION STEPS</i> | <i>CONTACT PERSON(S)</i> | <i>TIMELINE</i> |
|---|--|---|--------------------------|
| Not all teachers understand how to schedule an interpreter or have documents translated | Develop a document with guidelines and procedures for securing interpreters and requesting translations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide access to procedures on district website • Provide training for building secretaries | ELL Coordinator, Equity Secretary, ELL Staff | Fall 2015 |
| <i>Limitation</i> | <i>RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTION STEPS</i> | <i>CONTACT PERSON(S)</i> | <i>TIMELINE</i> |
| Inequitable access to bilingual resources, communication, and family resource services for non-English speaking parents | Determine if access and outreach can become more equitable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate a list of concerns and challenges • Identify which buildings have family resources • Determine outreach needed to increase parent participation in district initiatives • Brainstorm ideas for providing access for all parents (ex: communicate with community agencies) • Research how other districts are providing access • Identify ways to increase L1 communication (district telephone announcements in L1, for example) • Identify source of funding for bilingual liaison or other resources if needed | ELL Coordinator, Directors of Schools, Family Resource Specialists, ELL Staff | Fall 2015 to Spring 2017 |