

MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
Rockville, Maryland

September 13, 2011

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Patricia O'Neill, Chair, Board of Education Policy Committee

Subject: Final Action, Policy IOD, *Education of English Language Learners*

On March 8, 2011, the Montgomery County Board of Education tentatively adopted the updated Policy IOD, *Education of English Language Learners*. The tentatively adopted policy was distributed for public comment. Six comments were received from the public. Members of the Board of Education Policy Committee further discussed Policy IOD, *Education of English Language Learners*, on May 17, 2011, and reviewed the public comments. In response to public comments, a qualifying phrase was added to the policy to state that students should receive appropriate instruction regardless of disability. Additional language was added to emphasize that the expectations for students in the English for Speakers of Other Languages program "will be consistent with expectations for all students in Montgomery County Public Schools."

The Policy Committee recommended changes to the tentatively adopted policy that are reflected in the committee recommended draft as Attachment A. The public comments are summarized in Attachment B. The original public comments are included as Attachment C, and the draft for public comment is included as Attachment D.

The following resolution is provided for your consideration:

WHEREAS, Policy IOD, *Education of English Language Learners*, reaffirms the education of English language learners as a high priority for Montgomery County Public Schools and also ensures compliance with federal and state mandates regarding the education of English language learners; and

WHEREAS, The draft of Policy IOD, *Education of English Language Learners*, was tentatively adopted by the Montgomery County Board of Education on March 8, 2011, and was sent out for public comment; and

WHEREAS, The Montgomery County Board of Education has received comments and the Board of Education Policy Committee's recommendations; now therefore be it

Resolved, That the Montgomery County Board of Education adopt Policy IOD, *Education of English Language Learners*, as updated in the attached committee recommended draft.

Present at the Board table for the discussion are Ms. Sylvia K. Morrison, director, Department of Instructional Programs; Dr. Karen C. Woodson, director, Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs; and Mrs. Stephanie P. Williams, director, Department of Policy, Records and Reporting.

PO:hp

Attachments

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED DRAFT
IOD

1 Related Entries: IOD-RA
2 Responsible Office: Deputy Superintendent of Schools
3 Curriculum and Instructional Programs
4
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6 Education of English Language Learners
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8

9 A. PURPOSE
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11 To reaffirm the education of English language learners as a
12 high priority for Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS).
13

14 To ensure compliance with federal and state mandates
15 regarding the education of English language learners.
16

17 B. ISSUE
18

19 Success for every student is based on the premise that
20 quality education is a fundamental right of every child.
21 Language should not be a barrier that impedes English
22 language learners in their effort to secure equal
23 educational opportunities in MCPS. English language
24 learners have become an increasingly diverse group of
25 students, representing many countries and languages, coming
26 from all socioeconomic levels, and having varied
27 educational and experiential backgrounds. There must be

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED DRAFT
IOD

28 special instructional and support programs to meet the
29 challenges faced by English language learners, including
30 services such as counseling, parent outreach, and bilingual
31 assessments that will help eliminate barriers that might
32 prevent students from participating fully in educational
33 programs. Instruction should enable students to learn
34 English as quickly as possible while at the same time
35 ensuring that they do not fall behind their grade-level
36 peers in content areas.

37

38 C. POSITION

39

40 1. It is the intent of the Montgomery County Board of
41 Education to:

42

43 a) Hold English language learners to the same high
44 expectations of learning established for all
45 students;

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47 b) Assure that English language learners develop
48 full proficiencies in academic and interpersonal
49 English in the domains of listening, speaking,
50 reading, and writing, consistent with
51 expectations for all students;

52

53 c) Assure that English language learners reach
54 challenging content and performance standards in

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED DRAFT
IOD

55 all content areas, including reading and language
56 arts, mathematics, social studies, science,
57 career and technology education, the fine arts,
58 health, and physical education, consistent with
59 those for all students;

60
61 d) Provide appropriate instruction to English
62 language learners regardless of their previous
63 education, cognitive abilities, or special needs
64 and that reflects their English language
65 proficiency levels;

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67 e) Evaluate English language learners with
68 appropriate and valid assessments that are
69 aligned with federal, state, and local standards
70 and that take into account the English language
71 proficiency levels and cultural backgrounds of
72 the students; and

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74 f) Recognize that the academic success of English
75 language learners is a responsibility shared by
76 the students, all educators, the family, and the
77 community.

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81 2. The English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

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IOD

82 Program

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84 a) Each school, in collaboration with the Office of
85 Curriculum and Instructional Programs and the
86 Office of School Performance, will provide an
87 ESOL program to respond to the range of needs of
88 eligible English language learners. ESOL is a
89 specialized English language development
90 instructional program for eligible English
91 language learners who need to develop proficiency
92 in the four language skills of listening,
93 speaking, reading, and writing academic and
94 interpersonal standard American English.

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96 b) The ESOL curriculum:

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98 (1) Is research based;

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101 (2) Is based on age-appropriate levels of
102 English language proficiency;

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104 (3) Is aligned with the English language
105 proficiency standards in the Maryland State
106 Department of Education English language
107 proficiency state curriculum;

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IOD

109 (4) Is aligned with the reading and writing
110 purposes of the MCPS
111 English/Reading/Language Arts curriculum;
112

113 (5) Is reflective of the many cultural and
114 linguistic backgrounds represented by
115 English language learners; and
116

117 (6) Is taught using the content, strategies, and
118 thinking processes that students encounter
119 as they pursue an education in MCPS.
120

121 c) Related ESOL Services
122

123 (1) Schools will employ appropriate, relevant,
124 and culturally sensitive approaches to
125 ensure that parents of English language
126 learners are informed about and become
127 involved in their children's education.
128

129 (2) MCPS will provide ESOL counseling to assist
130 ESOL program participants in their new school
131 and community environment.
132

133 (3) MCPS will provide assessments that minimize
134 cultural and linguistic biases for English
135 language learners who are suspected of having a

136 disability.

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140 d) Staff development in the instructional needs of
141 English language learners is an integral
142 component of a quality ESOL program. Staff
143 development opportunities will be made available
144 to all staff.

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146 3. Identification and Completion

147

148 a) An English language proficiency assessment will
149 be administered by qualified and trained
150 assessors to all students whose home language is
151 not standard American English at the time they
152 initially enroll in MCPS to identify English
153 language learners eligible for the ESOL program
154 and determine their level of English proficiency.

155

156 b) Students participating in the ESOL program will
157 be considered English proficient and designated
158 as "Re-classified English language learners upon
159 meeting the criteria established by Maryland
160 State Guidelines.

161

162 c) Performance of students who have exited from the

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED DRAFT
IOD

163 ESOL program r will be monitored by the English
164 language learner team in each school and
165 appropriate accommodations will be provided for a
166 period of two years.

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168 d) Identification and program completion procedures
169 will be evaluated periodically and revised as
170 necessary.

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172 D. DESIRED OUTCOMES

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174 1. Services of the ESOL program will be offered to all
175 eligible English language learners and will be
176 designed to accommodate diversity in student
177 backgrounds and levels of English language
178 proficiency.

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180 2. The expectation for success for students
181 participating in the ESOL program will be consistent
182 with expectations for all students in MCPS.

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184 E. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

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186 The superintendent of schools will:
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COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED DRAFT
IOD

- 188 1. Issue administrative procedures for the development,
189 maintenance, and evaluation of appropriate programs
190 for English language learners in MCPS;
191
- 192 2. Allocate staff and material resources annually, based
193 on documented needs and within existing budgetary
194 constraints;
195
- 196 3. Apply for appropriate federal financial assistance,
197 where available, to implement this policy; and
198
- 199 4. Work collaboratively with other county agencies and
200 community organizations to access resources and help
201 meet the needs of English language learners and their
202 families.
203

204 F. REVIEW AND REPORTING
205
206

- 207 1. Each year, the academic progress of ESOL program
208 participants will be reported to the Montgomery County
209 Board of Education through the annual report.
210
- 211 2. MCPS will fulfill all federal and state reporting
212 requirements for current and past ESOL program
213 participants.
214

ATTACHMENT A

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED DRAFT
IOD**

215 3. This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis in
216 accordance with the Board of Education policy review
217 process.

218

219

220 Policy History: Resolution No. 77-80, January 21, 1980, amended
221 by Resolution No. 333-86, June 12, 1986; amended by Resolution
222 No. 599-99, October 14, 1999; updated office titles June 1,
223 2000; amended.

Summary of Responses to
Policy IOD, *Education of English Language Learners*

Public Response Number	Commentator	Issue/Concern Line #'s refer to the Draft for Public Comment	Staff Response Line #'s refer to the Committee Recommended Draft
1	Allen Heald	This program should be eliminated altogether. There won't be an appropriate number of teachers to teach it because of all of the budget cuts.	<i>Lau v. Nichols</i> is a civil rights case that went to the Supreme Court in 1974. The decision that followed requires school districts to provide services needed for students to learn English.
2	Flora E. Dirlik	The education process needs to be made equal. The minority students are now in the majority. Education dollars need to be used equitably.	[See response to #1]
3	Martin J. Mulhern, teacher	Lines 160–163, Language needs to be added to ensure that the instructional needs of disabled English language learners are addressed in the least restrictive environment, the ESOL classroom.	The consult model is the method for providing ESOL services to students receiving ESOL and special education services in the least restrictive environment. Through collaboration between ESOL and special education teachers, adjustments can be made to the student's instructional program to account for language acquisition needs with the student's educational environment.
4	Debra Farkas, parent	The policy needs to include a framework on how the policy will be achieved.	Regulations will be developed to implement the policy.
5	Anonymous	Editorial changes requested.	Staff disagrees with edits requesting changes in terminology from "English language learners" to "ESL students." The language used throughout the policy

Public Response Number	Commentator	Issue/Concern Line #'s refer to the Draft for Public Comment	Staff Response Line #'s refer to the Committee Recommended Draft
			<p>for “English language learners” aligns with terminology and definitions used in the MCPS annual report.</p> <p>The draft has been changed to reflect the edit requested at line 209.</p> <p>Staff disagrees with edits requested at line 247. There are no “local reporting requirements,” only state and federal, as noted.</p>
6	Fab Moran, parent	Concerned with language on line 177 that a student may be inappropriately identified for ESOL services when the student is proficient in English, but English and another language are spoken in the home.	The presence of a language or languages in the home other than or in addition to American English triggers the administration of the state-mandated English language proficiency test, in compliance with COMAR. The results of the test determine eligibility for ESOL, but school ELL teams have the flexibility to recommend against placing a student in ESOL, even when the student is determined eligible according to the state test, if they believe ESOL would not be beneficial to the student. The ability to speak multiple languages is highly valued in MCPS as an asset for students.

PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR
POLICY IOD, *EDUCATION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS*

Potosky, Harriet E.

From: Allen Heald [yalesville_rd@hotmail.com]
Sent: Friday, March 11, 2011 9:26 AM
To: BOE

With all the budget cuts why not eliminate this program altogether. What good is it to have students learn English without an appropriate number of teachers to teach the academics? Just A thought!

①

Potosky, Harriet E.

From: floradirlik@verizon.net
Sent: Thursday, March 10, 2011 3:05 PM
To: BOE
Subject: English language

DEar Mr. or Ms Boe,

I just want to state that I feel that we have to make the education process equal in all cases.

My children, who are caucasian are now in the minority in the schools which they attend. I find it very hard to swallow that many education dollars are spent on so called "minority " students, often forgetting that education should be viewed as equal and we should not always assume that students are minority when certain ethnicities outnumber the caucasians, which years ago may have been viewed as the majority students in a school.

Please do not forget that the so called minority students are now a majority of the student population, most specifically in the downcounty consortia of Montgomery County.

We need to have fair and equal education, and if that means some money goes to adding educators to help the average student do well in classes with a smaller class size, it would be a better use of our education money.

If you would like to discuss this issue further with me, please call me at 240 447 2573.

Thank you,

Flora e. Dirlik

2

Potosky, Harriet E.

From: Mulhern, Martin J.
Sent: Thursday, March 10, 2011 4:05 PM
To: BOE
Subject: ESOL Policy Comments

Although the draft policy provides for assessment of English language learners who are suspected of having a disability, it fall short in the provisioning of instruction for English Language learners once that a disability has been identified. Our school based programs are school based program are not trained nor staffed with highly qualified dully certified teachers in Special Education and ESLO. Consequently student with disabilities are not being provided appropriate instruction in the least restrictive environment as required by state and federal law. In practice, if services are being provided they are outside the general education environment in small Resource classes/ groups without the enrichment of the ESOL classroom environment. The re-visioning of this policy provided an opportunity to correct this glaring mistake by adding language ensuring that the instructional needs of Disabled English language learners are addressed in the least restrictive environment, the ESOL classroom.

Thank you for your attention to this matter

Martin J Mulhern

Special Education
Resource Teacher
Seneca Valley HS

147 6. c) **Related** ESOL Services
148

DRAFT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

IOD

6 of 9

159

160 b) (3) MCPS will provide assessments that minimize
161 cultural and linguistic biases for English
162 language learners who are suspected of having
163 a disability.

March 14, 2011

Dear Board of Education Members,

I am a parent at Takoma Park Elementary School with one child in first grade and another in Kindergarten. I have just read the ESOL policy draft and would like to voice my opinion. It is obvious that many knowledgeable people put their time and energy in on the draft, and I know many schools, many administrators, and many teachers will use it. At this point I think the policy very clearly states all that *will be done*; however, I think the document will be far more useful if it were to include a framework on *how* the policy will be achieved. It is important that schools have the freedom to implement a directive in a way that suits their communities, although without any guidelines or general structure schools use valuable time reinventing the wheel.

There are many ESL educational methods and philosophies that the district could flesh out in the policy, emphasizing when they are best used for which populations. The board may instead chose one general method but with enough room to allow for autonomy at the community level. I am unaware of so much in the schools and district, perhaps there is an additional document already covering my concerns. I read and reacted to a paper that essentially informed me 'there are some laws we need to follow, we will, and we will make sure English language learners learn both English and content area' - but said with nicer words and in many different ways. It is not substantially sufficient.

Thank You for taking into account my input, please contact me if I can clarify anything.

Debra Farkas
TPES parent of
Naomi and Jonah Mcdonald

1 Related Entries: IOD-RA
2 Responsible Office: Deputy Superintendent of Schools
3 Curriculum and Instruction—and Programs
4 Development

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Education of English Language Learners

10 A. PURPOSE

11 *eligible* *(ESL)*
12 To reaffirm the education of English language learners as a
13 high priority for **Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)**

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To ensure compliance with federal and state mandates regarding
the education of English language learners

18 B. ISSUE

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Success for ~~Every~~ student is based on the premise that
quality education is a fundamental right of every child.
Language should not be a barrier that impedes English language
learners in their effort to secure equal educational
opportunities in ~~MCPS~~ ~~the Montgomery County Public Schools~~.

Eligible ESL students
25 ~~English language learners~~ have become an increasingly diverse
26 group of students, representing many countries and languages,
27 coming from all socioeconomic levels, and having varied
28 educational and experiential backgrounds. There must be
29 special instructional and support programs to meet the
30 challenges faced by ~~these students~~ *eligible ESL students* ~~English language learners~~.

31 including services such as counseling, parent outreach, and
32 bilingual assessments ~~that will help~~ ^{which may} eliminate barriers that
33 ~~often might~~ ^{eligible ESL} prevent students from participating fully in educational
34 programs. Instruction should enable students to learn English
35 as quickly as possible, while at the same time ensuring that
36 they do not fall behind their grade-level peers in content
37 areas.

38

39 C. POSITION

40

41 1. It is the intent of the **Montgomery County** Board of
42 Education ~~of the Montgomery County Public Schools~~ to:

43

44 a) Hold ^{eligible} ~~English language learners~~ ^{ESL students} to the same high
45 expectations of learning established for all
46 students;

47

48 b) Assure that ^{eligible} ~~English language learners~~ ^{ESL students} develop full
49 proficiencies in **academic and interpersonal** English
50 in the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and
51 writing, consistent with expectations for all
52 students;

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54 c) Assure that ^{eligible} ~~English language learners~~ ^{ESL students} reach
55 challenging content and performance standards in
56 all content areas, including reading and language
57 arts, mathematics, social studies, science, **career**
58 **and technology** education, the fine arts, health,
59 and physical education, consistent with those for
60 all students;

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- d) Provide instruction to ^{eligible ESL students} ~~English language learners~~ that builds on their previous education, ~~and~~ cognitive abilities, ^{reflecting} ~~and that reflects~~ their English language proficiency levels;
- e) Evaluate ^{eligible ESL students} ~~English language learners~~ with appropriate and valid assessments that are aligned with federal, state, and local standards and that take into account the ~~language acquisition stages~~ **English language proficiency levels** and cultural backgrounds of the students; and
- ~~2.f)~~ Recognize that the academic success of ^{eligible ESL students} ~~English language learners~~ is a ^{shared} ~~responsibility shared by~~ the students, all educators, the family, and the community.

~~2. Definitions~~

- ~~a) English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is a specialized English language instructional program for non-native speakers of English that emphasizes the four language skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing.~~
- ~~b) English Language Learners (ELL) is the term preferred by professionals in the field of second language teaching to describe students whose native language is not English and who have sufficient~~

91 ~~difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or~~
92 ~~understanding the English language and whose~~
93 ~~difficulties may deny such individuals the~~
94 ~~opportunity to learn successfully in classrooms~~
95 ~~where the language of instruction is English.~~

96 _____
97 ~~c) Transition students are those who have been exited~~
98 ~~from the ESOL program for less than one year.~~

99
100 ~~d) Limited English Proficient (LEP) is the official~~
101 ~~term found in federal and state legislation to~~
102 ~~describe English language learners.~~

103
104 32. Curriculum ~~The English for Speakers of Other Languages~~
105 (ESOL) Program

106
107 a) Each school, in collaboration with the Office of
108 ~~Instruction and Program Development Curriculum and~~
109 ~~Instructional Programs~~ and the Office of School
110 Performance, ^(OSP) will provide an ESOL ~~appropriate,~~
111 ~~clearly defined and articulated~~ program to respond
112 to the range of needs of eligible English language
113 ^{ESL Students} learners. ESOL is a specialized English language
114 development instructional program for eligible
115 ^{ESL Students} ~~English language learners~~ who need to develop
116 proficiency in the four language skills of
117 listening, speaking, reading, and writing academic
118 and interpersonal standard American English.

- 120 b) The ESOL curriculum:
121
122 a) (1) Is research based;
123
124 ~~b) Incorporates the principles and guidelines set~~
125 ~~forth in the ESL Standards for Students PreK-12~~
126
127 e) (2) Is based on age-appropriate levels of English
128 language proficiency;
129
130 (3) Is aligned with the English language
131 proficiency standards in the Maryland State
132 Department of Education ^(MSDE) English language
133 proficiency state curriculum;
134
135 d) (4) Is aligned with the reading and writing
136 purposes of the MCPS English/Reading/Language
137 Arts curriculum;
138
139 e) (5) Is reflective of the many cultural and
140 linguistic backgrounds represented by
141 ^{ESL students} ~~ELL English language learners~~ students; and
142
143 f) (6) Is taught using the content, strategies, and
144 thinking processes that students encounter as
145 they pursue an education in MCPS.
146
147 ~~c)~~ c) Related ESOL Services
148

149 (1) Schools will employ appropriate, relevant, and
150 culturally sensitive approaches to ensure that
151 parents of ~~English language learners~~ ^{ESL Students} are
152 informed about, and become involved in, their
153 children's education.

154 *and ESOL parent support*
155 a) (2) MCPS will provide ESOL counseling [^] to assist
156 ~~English language learners~~ **ESOL program**
157 **participants** in their new school and community
158 environment.

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160 b) (3) MCPS will provide assessments that minimize
161 cultural and linguistic biases for ~~English~~ ^{ESL students}
162 ~~language learners~~ who are suspected of having
163 a disability, *through due process*.

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165 4. ~~Program~~

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167 b)d) Staff development in the instructional needs of
168 ~~English language learners~~ ^{ESL Student} is an integral component
169 of a quality ESOL program. Staff development
170 opportunities will be ~~offered~~ **made available** to all
171 staff.

172
173 53. Identification and Completion

174
175 a) An English language proficiency assessment will be
176 administered by qualified and trained assessors to
177 all students whose ~~native or primary~~ **home** language

178 is not standard American English. ~~At the time they~~
179 ~~initially enroll in MCPS, to identify English~~
180 ~~language learners eligible for the ESOL program and~~

MCPS will identify ESL students
language learners eligible for the ESOL program and
181 determine their level of English proficiency, ~~at~~
182 ~~the time of enrollment through the MCPS~~
~~Intl Student office.~~

183 b) ~~English language learners~~ ^{ESL} students participating in
184 the ESOL program will be considered English
185 proficient and designated as, "transition" ~~re-~~
186 classified English language learners students upon
187 meeting the criteria established by Maryland State ^{?MSDE?}
188 Guidelines.

189
190 c) Performance of students who have ^{been} exited from the
191 ESOL program ~~transition students~~ will be monitored
192 by ESOL staff ~~the English language learner team~~ ^{ESL teacher and EMT team(?)} in
193 each school and appropriate accommodations will be
194 provided for a period of ~~one~~ two years.

195
196 d) Identification and program completion procedures
197 will be evaluated periodically and revised as
198 necessary, ^{by the Office of Curriculum &}
199 ^{Instruction (or @ school level?)}

200 D. DESIRED OUTCOMES

201
202 1. Services of the ESOL program will be offered to all
203 eligible ~~English language learners~~ ^{ESL students} and will be designed
204 to accommodate diversity in student backgrounds and
205 levels of English language proficiency.
206

207 2. The expectation for success for students receiving
208 participating in the ESOL program ~~services of the ESOL~~
209 ~~program will be the same as for all students in MCPS.~~

210 *Consistent with expectations for all*
211 *Students,*

211 E. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

212

213 The superintendent of schools will:

214

215 1. Issue administrative procedures for the development,
216 maintenance, and evaluation of appropriate programs for
217 ~~English language learners~~ *the ESL students* in MCPS ~~Montgomery County~~
218 ~~Public Schools;~~

219

220 2. Allocate staff and material resources annually, based on
221 documented needs and within existing budgetary
222 constraints;

223

224 3. Apply for appropriate federal financial assistance, where
225 available, to implement this policy; and

226

227 4. Work collaboratively with other county agencies and
228 community organizations to access resources and help meet
229 the needs of ~~English language learners~~ *ESL students* and their
230 families.

231

232 F. REVIEW AND REPORTING

233

234 ~~1. Annually report to the Board of Education the number of~~
235 ~~English language learners being served, by program and by~~

236 ~~native language spoken, within the total Montgomery~~
237 ~~County Public Schools.~~

238

239 21. Each year, the academic progress of ESOL program
240 participants will be reported to the Montgomery County
241 Board of Education, through the annual report. ~~Annually~~
242 ~~report to the Board of Education the results of English~~
243 ~~language learners' academic progress with the same~~
244 ~~measures used by all students, including comparisons with~~
245 ~~other Montgomery County students.~~

246

247 2. MCPS will fulfill all federal, ~~and~~ ^{and local} state, reporting
248 requirements for current and ^{previous} ~~past~~ ESOL program
249 ~~participants.~~ ^{Students}

250

251 3. This policy will be reviewed, ~~on an ongoing, basis~~ in
252 accordance with the Board of Education policy review
253 process.

254

255

256 Policy History: Resolution No. 77-80, January 21, 1980, amended by
257 Resolution No. 333-86, June 12, 1986; amended by Resolution No.
258 599-99, October 14, 1999; updated office titles June 1, 2000;
259 amended.

Potosky, Harriet E.

From: Sequeira, Martha on behalf of BOE
Sent: Tuesday, April 05, 2011 9:51 AM
To: Potosky, Harriet E.
Subject: FW: Comment on policy on the education of English Language Learners

FYI

Martha C. Sequeira
Administrative Secretary
Office of The Board of Education
301-279-3617
Fax: 301-279-3860

From: Fab Moran [mailto:fabumd02@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, April 04, 2011 10:42 PM
To: BOE
Subject: Comment on policy on the education of English Language Learners

I am writing to voice my comments regarding the policy draft titled *Education of English Learners*. By way of introduction, I am a parent who had a child in the MCPS ESOL program for 2 years and was transitioned out earlier this year. My child started ESOL in Kindergarten and was transitioned out at the beginning of 2nd grade.

The verbiage I would like to comment on is found on line 177. This is under the section titled "Identification and Completion." It states that "...an English language proficiency assessment will be administered... to all students whose home language is not standard American English at the time they initially enroll in MCPS..."

In the current draft of the policy, the statements around line 177 seem to avoid making a distinction in cases where children may have deliberately been brought up in a multilingual home, a situation that has become more common as parents encourage their children to learn other languages. The thinking goes that having multiple language abilities enhances one's vocabulary astuteness and overall understanding of language. In fact, for many PhD programs, knowledge of a second language is mandatory.

In our case, my son has proficiency in two languages with English being the more dominant. Yet upon entering Kindergarten, he was identified as needing to be enrolled in the program despite scoring high on the ESOL assessment. It was stated that it was set policy and that he would eventually be transition out once his English language proficiency was established. By the end of Kindergarten, my son was reading above grade level. He also read above his grade level in first grade. And yet, he was continued on the ESOL program in first grade as well. By full admission, I am not a pedagogical expert, but it would seem that there was a disconnect between ESOL enrollment and his above grade level reading proficiency.

In second grade, he was again placed in ESOL. By this time, I did not see how this could be possible. And so we chose to formally request to transition him out from the ESOL program. He is finishing up his second grade and has maintained his reading proficiency at or above grade level.

We are grateful for the quality of the MCPS system in general and appreciate the high quality of its instructors.

And we are aware that the best intentions are always in mind. However, we had to disagree with the decision to maintain ESOL enrollment for our son for another year. It seemed apparent to us that it was not necessary. And now in hindsight, we suspect that it may never have been required at all. It seemed that the main determinant for identifying our son as an ESOL candidate was the fact that he was bilingual.

The case for a multilingual upbringing has recently been addressed in literature from the sciences (psychology, neuroscience, psychiatry, etc). Such studies have stated that acquiring multiple languages at an early age may be beneficial to early learning and brain development. And in some cases, studies have shown benefits in brain activity well beyond the early years (see 2004 article by Bialystok et al., Bilingualism, aging, and cognitive control: Evidence from the Simon task. *Psychology and Aging*, 19, No. 2, 290-303).

If this sounds like a complaint, in part it is and apologies for that. However, I wanted to provide my insight into a portion of the policy that I can relate to. I propose revising the language on line 177 and 178 such that it allows for children who are proficient in more than one language, one of them being English, to “test-out” of the ESOL program. In our case, *one* of the languages spoken at home was indeed standard American English. We realize that each student assessment is a unique case and may differ from our situation. We feel, however, that some consideration should be given to early multilingual proficiency and the possibility that ESOL enrollment may not be needed.

Best Regards,

Fab Moran

1 Related Entries: IOD-RA
2 Responsible Office: Deputy Superintendent of Schools
3 Curriculum and Instructional—and Programs
4 Development

5
6
7 Education of English Language Learners
8
9

10 A. PURPOSE

11
12 To reaffirm the education of English language learners as a
13 high priority for **Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)**
14

15 To ensure compliance with federal and state mandates
16 regarding the education of English language learners
17

18 B. ISSUE

19
20 Success for ~~Every~~ ~~S~~student is based on the premise that
21 quality education is a fundamental right of every child.
22 Language should not be a barrier that impedes English
23 language learners in their effort to secure equal
24 educational opportunities in ~~MCPS~~~~the~~~~Montgomery~~~~County~~
25 ~~Public~~~~Schools~~. English language learners have become an
26 increasingly diverse group of students, representing many
27 countries and languages, coming from all socioeconomic

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28 levels, and having varied educational and experiential
29 backgrounds. There must be special instructional and
30 support programs to meet the challenges faced by these
31 ~~students~~**English language learners**, including services such
32 as counseling, parent outreach, and bilingual assessments
33 that will help eliminate barriers that might prevent
34 students from participating fully in educational programs.
35 Instruction should enable students to learn English as
36 quickly as possible while at the same time ensuring that
37 they do not fall behind their grade-level peers in content
38 areas.

39

40 C. POSITION

41

42 1. It is the intent of the **Montgomery County** Board of
43 Education ~~of the Montgomery County Public Schools~~ to:

44

45 a) Hold English language learners to the same high
46 expectations of learning established for all
47 students;

48

49 b) Assure that English language learners develop
50 full proficiencies in **academic and interpersonal**
51 English in the domains of listening, speaking,
52 reading, and writing, consistent with
53 expectations for all students;

54

DRAFT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT
IOD

- 55 c) Assure that English language learners reach
56 challenging content and performance standards in
57 all content areas, including reading and language
58 arts, mathematics, social studies, science,
59 **career and technology education**, the fine arts,
60 health, and physical education, consistent with
61 those for all students;
- 62
- 63 d) Provide instruction to English language learners
64 that builds on their previous education and
65 cognitive abilities and that reflects their
66 English language proficiency levels;
- 67
- 68 e) Evaluate English language learners with
69 appropriate and valid assessments that are
70 aligned with **federal**, state, and local standards
71 and that take into account the language
72 ~~acquisition stages~~**English language proficiency**
73 **levels** and cultural backgrounds of the students;
74 **and**
- 75
- 76 2-f) Recognize that the academic success of English
77 language learners is a responsibility shared by
78 the students, all educators, the family, and the
79 community.
- 80

81 ~~2.~~ Definitions

82

83

~~a) English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is a specialized English language instructional program for non native speakers of English that emphasizes the four language skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing.~~

84

85

86

87

88

89

~~b) English Language Learners (ELL) is the term preferred by professionals in the field of second language teaching to describe students whose native language is not English and who have sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language and whose difficulties may deny such individuals the opportunity to learn successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English.~~

90

91

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99

~~c) Transition students are those who have been exited from the ESOL program for less than one year.~~

100

101

102

~~d) Limited English Proficient (LEP) is the official term found in federal and state legislation to describe English language learners.~~

103

104

105

106

32. Curriculum **The English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Program**

107

108

109 a) Each school, in collaboration with the Office of
110 ~~Instruction and Program Development~~ **Curriculum and**
111 **Instructional Programs** and the Office of School
112 Performance, will provide an **ESOL** ~~appropriate,~~
113 ~~clearly defined and articulated~~ program to
114 respond to the range of needs of **eligible** English
115 language learners. **ESOL is a specialized English**
116 **language development instructional program for**
117 **eligible English language learners who need to**
118 **develop proficiency in the four language skills**
119 **of listening, speaking, reading, and writing**
120 **academic and interpersonal standard American**
121 **English.**

122

123 b) The ESOL curriculum:

124

125 a) (1) Is research based;

126

127 ~~b) Incorporates the principles and guidelines set~~
128 ~~forth in the *ESL Standards for Students PreK-12*~~

129

130 e) (2) Is based on age-appropriate levels of
131 English language proficiency;

132

133 (3) Is aligned with the English language
134 proficiency standards in the Maryland State
135 Department of Education English language

136 proficiency state curriculum;

137

138 d) (4) Is aligned with the reading and writing
139 purposes of the MCPS
140 English/Reading/Language Arts curriculum;

141

142 e) (5) Is reflective of the many cultural and
143 linguistic backgrounds represented by
144 ~~ELL~~English language learners students; and

145

146 f) (6) Is taught using the content, strategies, and
147 thinking processes that students encounter
148 as they pursue an education in MCPS.

149

150 ~~g)~~ c) **Related** ESOL Services

151

152 (1) Schools will employ appropriate, relevant,
153 and culturally sensitive approaches to
154 ensure that parents of English language
155 learners are informed about and become
156 involved in their children's education.

157

158 a) (2) MCPS will provide ESOL counseling to assist
159 ~~English language learners~~ESOL program
160 participants in their new school and
161 community environment.

162

163 b) (3) MCPS will provide assessments that minimize
164 cultural and linguistic biases for English
165 language learners who are suspected of
166 having a disability.

167

168 4. ~~Program~~

169

170 b)d) Staff development **in the instructional needs of**
171 **English language learners** is an integral
172 component of a quality **ESOL** program. Staff
173 development opportunities will be ~~offered~~**made**
174 **available** to all staff.

175

176 53. Identification and Completion

177

178 a) An English language proficiency assessment will
179 be administered by qualified and trained
180 assessors to all students whose ~~native~~~~or~~
181 ~~primary~~**home** language is not **standard American**
182 English at the time they initially enroll in MCPS
183 to identify English language learners **eligible**
184 **for the ESOL program** and determine their level of
185 English proficiency.

186

187 b) ~~English language learners~~**Students participating**
188 **in the ESOL program** will be considered English
189 proficient and designated as ~~"transition"~~**Re-**

190 **classified English language learners** ~~students~~
191 upon meeting the criteria established by Maryland
192 State Guidelines.

193
194 c) Performance of **students who have exited from the**
195 **ESOL program** ~~transition—studentsr~~ will be
196 monitored by ~~ESOL—staff~~**the English language**
197 **learner team in each school** and appropriate
198 accommodations will be provided for a period of
199 ~~en~~**two years.**

200
201 d) Identification and program completion procedures
202 will be evaluated periodically and revised as
203 necessary.

204

205 D. DESIRED OUTCOMES

206

207 1. Services of the ESOL program will be offered to all
208 **eligible** English language learners and will be
209 designed to accommodate diversity in student
210 backgrounds and levels of English language
211 proficiency.

212

213 2. The expectation for success for students ~~receiving~~
214 **participating in the ESOL program** ~~services of the ESOL~~
215 ~~program~~ will be the same as for all students in MCPS.

216

217 E. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

218

219 The superintendent of schools will:

220

221 1. Issue administrative procedures for the development,
222 maintenance, and evaluation of appropriate programs
223 for English language learners in ~~MCPS—Montgomery~~
224 ~~County Public Schools;~~

225

226 2. Allocate staff and material resources annually, based
227 on documented needs and within existing budgetary
228 constraints;

229

230 3. Apply for appropriate federal financial assistance,
231 where available, to implement this policy; and

232

233 4. Work collaboratively with other county agencies and
234 community organizations to access resources and help
235 meet the needs of English language learners and their
236 families.

237

238 F. REVIEW AND REPORTING

239

240 ~~1. Annually report to the Board of Education the number~~
241 ~~of English language learners being served, by program~~
242 ~~and by native language spoken, within the total~~
243 ~~Montgomery County Public Schools.~~

244

245 21. Each year, the academic progress of ESOL program
246 participants will be reported to the Montgomery County
247 Board of Education through the annual report.

248 ~~Annually report to the Board of Education the results~~
249 ~~of English language learners' academic progress with~~
250 ~~the same measures used by all students, including~~
251 ~~comparisons with other Montgomery County students.~~

252

253 2. MCPS will fulfill all federal and state reporting
254 requirements for current and past ESOL program
255 participants.

256

257 3. This policy will be reviewed ~~on an ongoing basis in~~
258 accordance with the Board of Education policy review
259 process.

260

261

262 *Policy History:* Resolution No. 77-80, January 21, 1980, amended
263 by Resolution No. 333-86, June 12, 1986; amended by Resolution
264 No. 599-99, October 14, 1999; updated office titles June 1,
265 2000; **amended.**