

POLICY

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Related Entries: IOD-RA
Responsible Office: Deputy Superintendent of Schools
Curriculum and Instructional Programs

Education of English Language Learners

A. PURPOSE

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

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

B. ISSUE

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. English language learners have become an increasingly diverse group of students, representing many countries and languages, coming from all socioeconomic levels, and having varied educational and experiential backgrounds. There must be special instructional and support programs to meet the challenges faced by English language learners, including services such as counseling, parent outreach, and bilingual assessments that will help eliminate barriers that might prevent students from participating fully in educational programs. Instruction should enable students to learn English as quickly as possible while at the same time ensuring that they do not fall behind their grade-level peers in content areas.

C. POSITION

1. It is the intent of the Montgomery County Board of Education to:
 - a) Hold English language learners to the same high expectations of learning established for all students;

- b) Assure that English language learners develop full proficiencies in academic and interpersonal English in the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, consistent with expectations for all students;
- c) Assure that English language learners reach challenging content and performance standards in all content areas, including reading and language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, career and technology education, the fine arts, health, and physical education, consistent with those for all students;
- d) Provide appropriate instruction to English language learners regardless of their previous education, cognitive abilities, or special needs and that reflects their English language proficiency levels;
- e) Evaluate English language learners with appropriate and valid assessments that are aligned with federal, state, and local standards and that take into account the English language proficiency levels and cultural backgrounds of the students; and
- f) Recognize that the academic success of English language learners is a responsibility shared by the students, all educators, the family, and the community.

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

- a) Each school, in collaboration with the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs and the Office of School Performance, will provide an ESOL program to respond to the range of needs of eligible English language learners. ESOL is a specialized English language development instructional program for eligible English language learners who need to develop proficiency in the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing academic and interpersonal standard American English.
- b) The ESOL curriculum:
 - (1) Is research based;
 - (2) Is based on age-appropriate levels of English language proficiency;

- (3) Is aligned with the English language proficiency standards in the Maryland State Department of Education English language proficiency state curriculum;
 - (4) Is aligned with the reading and writing purposes of the MCPS English/Reading/Language Arts curriculum;
 - (5) Is reflective of the many cultural and linguistic backgrounds represented by English language learners; and
 - (6) Is taught using the content, strategies, and thinking processes that students encounter as they pursue an education in MCPS.
- c) Related ESOL Services
- (1) Schools will employ appropriate, relevant, and culturally sensitive approaches to ensure that parents of English language learners are informed about and become involved in their children's education.
 - (2) MCPS will provide ESOL counseling to assist ESOL program participants in their new school and community environment.
 - (3) MCPS will provide assessments that minimize cultural and linguistic biases for English language learners who are suspected of having a disability.
- d) Staff development in the instructional needs of English language learners is an integral component of a quality ESOL program. Staff development opportunities will be made available to all staff.

3. Identification and Completion

- a) An English language proficiency assessment will be administered by qualified and trained assessors to all students whose home language is not standard American English at the time they initially enroll in MCPS to identify English language learners eligible for the ESOL program and determine their level of English proficiency.
- b) Students participating in the ESOL program will be considered English proficient and designated as Reclassified English language learners upon meeting the criteria established by Maryland State Guidelines.

- c) Performance of students who have exited from the ESOL program will be monitored by the English language learner team in each school and appropriate accommodations will be provided for a period of two years.
- d) Identification and program completion procedures will be evaluated periodically and revised as necessary.

D. DESIRED OUTCOMES

- 1. Services of the ESOL program will be offered to all eligible English language learners and will be designed to accommodate diversity in student backgrounds and levels of English language proficiency.
- 2. The expectation for success for students participating in the ESOL program will be consistent with expectations for all students in MCPS.

E. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The superintendent of schools will:

- 1. Issue administrative procedures for the development, maintenance, and evaluation of appropriate programs for English language learners in MCPS;
- 2. Allocate staff and material resources annually, based on documented needs and within existing budgetary constraints;
- 3. Apply for appropriate federal financial assistance, where available, to implement this policy; and
- 4. Work collaboratively with other county agencies and community organizations to access resources and help meet the needs of English language learners and their families.

F. REVIEW AND REPORTING

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

3. This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the Board of Education policy review process.

Policy History: Resolution No. 77-80, January 21, 1980, amended by Resolution No. 333-86, June 12, 1986; amended by Resolution No. 599-99, October 14, 1999; updated office titles June 1, 2000; amended by Resolution No. 450-11, September 13, 2011.