

Lisbon School Department LAU PLAN

Lisbon School District English Language Learners Program

The Lisbon School Department does not discriminate against limited English proficient students. In accordance with the Equal Education Opportunities Act (1974), the School Department makes an effort to do whatever is educationally appropriate to address the English and educational needs of the limited English proficient student so that s/he can participate with her/his English background peers in the educational program of Lisbon schools. Qualifying students will be identified and placed in programs and services in accordance with statutory guidelines. The Lisbon School Department strives to provide a linguistically and culturally rich teaching and learning environment. It is the policy of the Lisbon School Department to comply with all Federal and State laws prohibiting discrimination against students on the basis of all civil rights categories.

Part I: STUDENT ASSESSMENT

A. Identification of Language Minority Students

The Maine Department of Education conducts an annual home language survey to determine the number of language minority children who are enrolled in Maine schools. Schools collect the completed surveys from the parents/guardians of new kindergarten students and newly-transferring students. In order to provide ESL services in a timely manner, potential LEP students should be tested and placed within one month.

Lisbon School District may use the following instruments to identify limited English proficient (LEP) students:

- Home Language Surveys
- Review of all relevant educational documents and student records
- WIDA ACCESS Placement Test
- LAS Links Language Assessment System
- Teacher observations
- Recommendations from guidance counselors
- Teacher developed assessments

B. Assessment for English Language Proficiency

Once a child has been identified as being from a non-English language background or having spent considerable amount of time in a non-English speaking country (and that stay has affected the child's ability to comprehend and express in English), the next step is to assess the child's English language proficiency.

Lisbon School Department may use the following instruments to identify the English language proficiency of LEP students:

- Review of all relevant educational documents and student records
- LAS Links Language Assessment System
- WIDA ACCESS Placement Test
- ACCESS for ELLs English Language Proficiency Test
- DRA reading assessment
- Teacher observations and recommendations
- Teacher developed assessments

C. **Assessment of First Language Proficiency**

If possible, an assessment of the child's proficiency in his/her first language is advisable since this can give the Language Assessment Committee (LAC) more enhanced data about the child's learning, comprehension, and retention of information. The data will also be valuable for future reference in the unlikely event the LEP child is referred for a special education evaluation; if this were to occur, a disability in English would have to be reflected in the first language as well.

Two resources would be necessary for a formal first language assessment to take place:

1. A first language assessment tool; and
2. A test administrator who is fluent in the child's first language and understands the child's culture.

D. **Language Assessment Committee**

The Language Assessment Committee (LAC) is a group of school staff and parents of students that meets to discuss and develop an appropriate and effective structured language support program for limited English proficient children. It is recommended that the LAC meet on a regular basis, to review the student's progress, the effectiveness of the program, and to re-direct certain instructional activities, if necessary. It is the responsibility of the ELL Consultant to be the LAC convener.

A **Lisbon Language Assessment Committee (LLAC)** is established at each school to coordinate and oversee the educational program of limited English proficient students enrolled in the Lisbon School Department. Each LLAC is composed of the Building Administrator (or, his/her designee), the School Guidance Counselor, classroom teacher(s), parent/guardian, an ESL teacher, other ELL consultants who may be involved with the committee on an "as needed" basis, and the Curriculum Director. These members will be ongoing. All members of a school team as well as additional teachers of students are invited to attend the meetings.

The **LLAC responsibilities** will include the following:

- To review the Home Language Surveys to identify potential LEP students who have not already been identified through Special Education screening, Parent/Teacher referral, or LLAC surveys.

- To require the administration of multi-criteria evaluations to potential LEP students annually.
- To make determinations from multi-criteria evaluations about placement, programming services, time of delivery of services, and types of programs for LEP students.
- To meet annually, or more frequently if needed, to monitor the LEP student's language and academic progress.
- To meet with the entire school staff to provide information about LEP students and the ESL Program.
- To make recommendations for placement and program type for summer and for the next school year.
- To recommend modification of ELL support services or reclassification of a students from limited English proficiency (LEP) to full English proficiency (FEP).
- To recommend and discuss direction and instructional objectives for the ESL teacher.
- To continue annual monitoring for two years after an LEP student's reclassification to full English proficiency.
- To notify parent/guardian (in a language they comprehend) in writing, or if necessary in person, of all decisions regarding their LEP child and their right to appeal.
- To recommend revisions to the Lisbon School Department's *Lau Plan* for action by the Superintendent and School Committee.

PART II: STUDENT PLACEMENT (ENTRY AND EXIT)

A. Factors that Affect Program Design

There are many factors that must be considered when determining the most appropriate and effective structured language support program. Some of those factors are:

- Age of the child
- English language proficiency level
- Native language proficiency level
- Amount of interrupted schooling in the child's background
- The amount of native language literacy skills the child possesses
- Amount of trauma (if any) in the child's background, especially from refugees
- Amount of literacy readiness/exposure in child's background

B. Classification of Student's English Fluency Level

The English language proficiency level of language minority students can be translated to classification categories. These categories are:

Level 1 - Entering: Knows and uses social language and visually supported information in reading, mathematics, science and social studies.

Level 2 - Beginning: Knows and uses social English and some general language of reading, mathematics, science and social studies.

Level 3 - Developing: Knows and uses social English and some general and specific language of reading, mathematics, science and social studies.

Level 4 - Expanding: Knows and uses social English and some academic English, including some technical language in the subject areas.

Level 5 - Bridging: Knows and uses social and academic English and understands and uses technical language in the subject areas at grade level with minimal support.

Level 6 - Attained: Functions in English at grade level; may no longer need bilingual or English language support. Monitoring Year 1

Level 7 - Attained: Functions in English at grade level; may no longer need bilingual or English language support. Monitoring Year 2

Level 8 - Former LEP

C. Grade-level Placement

Before making a permanent grade-level placement decision for a language minority student, the LAC will need to have pertinent background information about the child. The information would include:

- The child's chronological age
- The child's educational background
- The child's English language proficiency level

With this information, which should have been collected as expeditiously as possible, the LAC can decide at what grade level the student should be placed. Under no circumstances should a student be placed in a grade level that is more than one year below his/her chronological age. Although it may seem logical to place a language minority child at a grade level that matches the kind of English skills he/she appears to need to acquire, it would be a great disservice to the child both socially and cognitively to do so. The school is obligated to provide a structured language support program that meets the ESL as well as content area and equal access needs of the student.

D. Exit and Reclassification Criteria

If a structured language support program is effective and appropriate, the LEP student will eventually be: (a) reclassified at a higher level of proficiency, or (b) exited from the structured language support program entirely. Any member of the Language Assessment Committee or the child him/herself may recommend reclassification or exit.

If and when the child is found to be eligible for reclassification or exit, the LAC will need to monitor the child's academic performance and psycho-social well-being after the placement is made. In the case of a student who is reclassified, the decreased ESL instructional time should be monitored in terms of: continued academic success; adjustment to a longer time period in the mainstream classroom; and, instructional needs being met in the structured language support program. In the case of exit from the program, the full mainstreaming should be monitored for academic success; adjustment to the full-time mainstream classroom; and, any emerging language skills needs that may surface once mainstreaming has occurred.

After a child has been exited from a structured language support program, that child's language performance and growth must be monitored for two years (if the child is still in school). This could be done in the regularly scheduled LAC meetings. During those two years of monitoring, if the child experiences a pattern of difficulty with language or content skills, the LAC can re-enter the child into the structured language program.

In the event that a parent/guardian refuses ELL services for a student, a signed letter of refusal is to be placed in the student's file. These ELL services will be offered yearly, and a letter of refusal must be signed annually. The parent may withdraw refusal of services at any time.

PART III: PROGRAM INSTRUCTION

A. Teacher Skills and Credentials

Just as with any other teaching specialization, ESL teachers require special pedagogies to provide the best services for their students. The State Board of Education in 1988 adopted an ESL endorsement for teachers. If a district has children enrolled who are language minority-limited English proficient, the structured language support services can be provided in two personnel configurations:

1. An ESL-endorsed teacher provides direct ESL instruction
2. A paraprofessional or non-ESL endorsed teacher provides direct ESL instruction and is supervised and guided by an ESL-endorsed teacher

The presence of an ESL-endorsed professional is imperative for an effective and appropriate program to be implemented. The recommended configuration is the former; recommended by Office for Civil Rights and the Maine Department of Education.

B. Service Delivery Models

There are several types of structured language support programs the Lisbon School Department believes can be beneficial to limited English proficient students. This system's ability to provide some of these programs depends on both availability of native-language speaking personnel and availability of native language instructional materials for sheltered content. The keys to an effective and appropriate program choice will include careful consideration of the child's needs,

full research into the resources available (personnel, materials), and full understanding of the possible program configurations.

Some of the likely structured language support programs to be used in Lisbon schools will include:

English as a Second Language: A structured language learning program or curriculum designed to teach English to students whose native language is not English. In low-incidence situations, this instruction may occur through “pull-out” from regular English literacy instruction, and students are supported in mainstream subject areas for most of the school day. Services are provided by or supervised by a State certified teacher endorsed in ESL.

Sheltered English: An approach that utilizes the simplification of the English language to teach ESL and subject area content simultaneously (sometimes called “content ESL”). Although the actual content is the same as that taught to non-LEP students, key concepts and vocabulary are targeted to fit the ESL student’s English language proficiency level.

Structured Immersion: Instruction for LEP student is conducted in English in a setting wherein the teacher understands the student’s non-English home language. The student uses the non-English native language with the teacher who usually responds in English.

A structured language support program encompassing the above models will be provided in a time allocation that will most benefit the ELL learner. The consideration of many factors must take place when a program is being developed. However, the ultimate goal is to provide effective and appropriate services to the student so that s/he may benefit fully from and succeed in an education conducted in English.

The determination of a time allotment for structured language support programs will be made by the Language Assessment Committee with assessment information available. The policy of the Language Assessment Committee will be to determine the most appropriate instructional program to achieve fluency in English for each student.

C. BICS, CALP, Age and Rate for Language Acquisition

The two levels for second language acquisition are: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). These two components encompass many skills, abilities, and cognitive demands. If second language learners are to be fully fluent in English, they must attain proficiency in both these components. Within each component level, there are continua of cognitively demanding and less cognitively undemanding tasks and context embedded – context reduced tasks that a language learner would need to be able to perform to be proficient at that level. ESL instructors can tailor-make instructional activities to assist students in working on the skills in each level.

Research has been conducted on the rate at which second language learners acquire the two BICS and CALP. Many variables contribute to the rapidity with which a learner would acquire

these levels; those variables include age of child; previous schooling in first language (interrupted schooling); mastery of literacy skills in the first language; maintenance of the first language in the home; length of residence in the U.S.; family value of education; amount and quality of bilingual instruction in previous schooling; amount and quality of ESL instruction in previous schooling. Under the optimal conditions, it can take up to two years for a student to acquire BICS and from five to seven years or more to acquire the CALP under the very best support system. Consensus appears to be that the ideal age for a child to begin learning a second language is between the ages of 8 and 11.

Parents and guardians need to be apprised of this information so that they can have realistic expectations of the instructional programs and of their children. It will also help them to advocate more effectively for their children in the school setting.

Mainstream teachers and administrators also need to be apprised of this information so that they, too, can help provide an appropriate and effective structured language support program with realistic expectations for language minority-limited English proficient children. The assessment of the English language proficiency of language minority children and their language instructional program, must take into account the two levels of language proficiency. It is not enough for a child to have acquired the BICS component; that child will have difficulty with the cognitive-academic demands of the school, which may result in failure.

PART IV: PROGRAM EVALUATION AND RECORDKEEPING

In order to ensure the most effective and appropriate structured language support programming for limited English proficient children, a model for overall program evaluation must be developed and utilized. An annual program evaluation will illustrate the following: attainment of program outcomes; attainment of learner outcomes; school climate and support for the program and children; the quality of instructional materials; the maintenance of information about students; the effectiveness of staff development activities; the amount and effectiveness of mainstream – ESL collaboration; the effectiveness of school and program communication with parents; and the implementation of the district’s LAU Plan itself approved by its school committee.

In all the procedures involving the identification, assessment, provision of services, and exit from services for LEP children, thorough record keeping must be implemented and maintained.

It is the responsibility of the ELL Consultant/ESL teacher to maintain accurate files for each LEP student. Items included in student files (but not limited to) would consist of:

- Copy of the Home Language Survey
- Other teacher-generated surveys
- Test scores and actual tests, if available
- Recommendations for individual learning plan
- Documentation of parent/guardian contact or parent/guardian meetings
- Documentation/minutes of LLAC meetings

- Recommendations for reclassification or exit from the ESL program
- Copy of report cards
- Any other pertinent information

Part V: STATUTE

Legal Obligation of Schools toward Language Minority Students

1. Civil Rights Act of 1964

Title VI: “No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal Financial Assistance.”

2. Office for Civil Rights Memorandum (1970):

“(1) Where inability to speak and understand the English language excludes national origin minority group children from effective participation in the educational program offered by a school district, the district must take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency in order to open its instructional program to these students.

(2) School districts must not assign national origin minority group students to classes for the mentally retarded on the basis of criteria which essentially measure or evaluate English language skills; nor may school districts deny national origin minority group children access to college preparatory courses on a basis directly related to the failure of the school system to inculcate English language skills.

(3) Any ability grouping or tracking system employed by the school system to deal with the special language skill needs of national origin minority group children must be designed to meet such language skill needs as soon as possible and must not operate as an educational dead end or permanent track.

(4) School districts have the responsibility to adequately notify national origin minority group parents of school activities which are called to the attention of other parents. Such notice in order to be adequate may have to be provided in a language other than English.”

3. Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974

“No state shall deny equal educational opportunity to an individual on account of his or her race, color, sex, or national origin, by –

- (f) the failure of an educational agency to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by its students in its instructional programs.”

4. **The Lau Remedies (1975)**

They specified approved approaches, methods, and procedures for:

...”identifying and evaluating national origin minority students’ English language skills;

...determining appropriate instructional treatments;

...deciding when LEP children were ready for mainstream classrooms;

...determining the professional standards to be met by teachers of language minority children.”

Sources

Strategies for Accommodating Limited English Proficient Students
(Prepared by Barney Berube, Ph.D. MDOE, IASA Title VII Office, 23 State House Station,
Augusta, Maine 04333-0023 1998)

Lisbon School Department former LAU Plan (Formerly Adopted April 14, 2003)

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