

**I-LEAD Charter School
401 Penn St, Reading, PA**

ESL Program Description & Philosophy

I-LEAD Charter School seeks to create an accommodating and challenging environment for those learners that are defined as Limited English Proficient students protected by 22 PA. Code §4.26, which states the following:

“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 § 4.12 (relating to academic standards). Programs under this section shall include appropriate bilingual-bicultural or English as a second language (ESL) instruction.”

To this end we have designed a holistic ESL program which provides the best opportunity for those of other cultures and languages who desire to further their education in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania at our Local Education Agency (LEA).

ENROLLMENT

Each learner that enrolls in I-LEAD Charter School is asked to fill out a home language survey. This survey is used to determine if ESL services are necessary to help our learners transition to American culture and language. It also serves to inform us if there is a need for translation and interpretation services for the home. The survey asks what the learner’s first language and second language are, and what language is spoken at home. If the first language or the home language are not English, we proceed to review the learner’s academic records to determine if their English language proficiency needs to be assessed with the WIDA Access Proficiency Test (W-APT) within 14 days of their arrival at I-LEAD, or 30 days from the beginning of the school year. This test is also used to determine the level of services that will be provided the learner, if this is deemed necessary.

ASSESSMENT

Our first line of assessment is, as noted above, the W-APT. This test requires about 80 minutes total and assesses the learner in the disciplines of writing, reading, speaking, and listening in English. It is a standardized test controlled by the WIDA Consortium, an internationally recognized language assessment organization based in the University of Wisconsin. Each section of the test takes about 20 minutes, and they are never given all at once. This test is administered if the learner transfers to us without current ESL assessment records or immigrates directly from a foreign country and is an English Language Learner (ELL). It is administered within thirty (30) days of the beginning of the school year, or fourteen (14) days from the learner’s date of enrollment.

The second level of English language proficiency assessment is the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs Summative Assessment. This test is administered once a year in February. This assessment is much more involved than the W-APT, and is administered via computer. The reading, writing, and listening segments take about 40 minutes each, though there is no time limit. The speaking segment takes about 20 minutes. Because this assessment is much more extensive, it gives us a much clearer picture of our learners' English language proficiency. With this information we are able to design and assign different ESL services according to a learner's individual needs.

In addition to the individualized service plan, we also maintain vigilance over the different academic assessments administered to the general population of the school, such as the learner's core class grades, Keystone/PSSA exams and Classroom Diagnostic Tools (CDT) scores.

Keystone Exams

As a high school, we have transitioned fully to the Keystone Exams for our 9-12 graders. This series of modules assesses the knowledge and thinking skills of learners in the subjects of Biology, Algebra, and Literature. Learners who have been enrolled in a school in the United States less than a year are not required to take the literature modules of this assessment. In their second year of school in the United States, ESL learners are required to take the literature exam in English only, but will have an interpreter available to explain the test directions. Translations of the Biology and Algebra modules are available in many languages for those whom the ESL department determines are in need of translation. Word-for-word dictionaries are supplied for more advanced ELLs.

EDUCATION

Our philosophy of ESL education is guided by the research-based policies and legislation of both the federal and state departments of education, which dictate that the best practice for the English language learner (ELL) is a program based on total immersion and inclusion emphasizing both social and academic communication skills and supported by the following services.

Transitional Bilingual Instruction

Though our program's goal is to move ELLs quickly to complete immersion in English, we do allow some time for transition and adaptation to American culture and speech. For this reason, our first year ESL class provides some instruction in Spanish and English. Many on our school staff are fully bilingual in Spanish and able to attend to the new students, most (99.4%) of whom speak Spanish as a first language. In addition, these learners are provided with a bilingual homeroom, so that learners are kept aware of critical announcements, procedures, and paperwork in both languages.

Sheltered English Instruction

Our ESL program is designed to meet the PA Department of Education’s time recommendations for ELL services. Those assessed by the W-APT as being at the entering or beginning level are given two hours of ESL instruction every day. Those in the developing and expanding range of proficiency receive one hour a day in direct ESL instruction. Then those who qualify as bridging level are enrolled in a partial credit class that will meet between 2-3 times per week for 47 minutes for sheltered English instruction in a small group setting.

Curriculum in all subjects is guided by the Pennsylvania English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS). Facilitators are trained in the application of standard classroom accommodations for ELLs, and have access to ESL staff to insure that proper standards are upheld. Our teachers are PA-certified ESL Program Specialists. Additionally, instructive Professional Development is conducted by the ESL Director for all learning facilitators, outlining accommodations and guidelines. [See section to follow.]

Pullout Services

All ELLs are also supported with pullout services. This means that their grades are monitored. Those that are struggling in their Core Classes are pulled aside to receive assistance with their classwork, knowing that language could be the reason they are struggling.

Pushin Services

On occasion our staff also provides pushin services. When there is cause, we will assist the teaching staff in Core Classes to insure that appropriate assistance is offered to ELLs in the classroom environment.

PLACEMENT

Learners are placed initially in classes according to their assessed proficiency level. The assessment used is either the WIDA ACCESS Test or the WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT). Pennsylvania schools are required to inform parents or guardians of learners of their WIDA assessment scores annually, and this information should be available in the learner’s transfer documents. If the learner has recently immigrated, they will be assessed using the W-APT before placement. These two assessments use the same scale and therefore provide a very similar score to be used for placement. The following table explains how the scale and scores are used.

| I-LEAD CHARTER SCHOOL ELL PLACEMENT CHART | | |
|--|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| WIDA Composite Score | Class(es) | Time |
| 1.0-1.9 | ESL 1, ESL Lab, ESL Homeroom | 2 hrs. sheltered instruction per day |

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|---------|---------------------------------|--|
| 2.0-2.9 | ESL 2 | 1.5 hrs. sheltered instruction per day |
| 3.0-3.9 | ESL 3 | 1 hr. sheltered instruction per day |
| 4.0-4.9 | ESL 4 - Small Group Instruction | 2 hr. per week |
| 5.0-6.0 | Pull-out Services | 0.5 hr. per week |

Upon satisfactory completion of one ESL class, the learner will move up to the next level class. In some rare cases a learner may be asked to repeat the same level class, if they have not shown enough progress in their English proficiency to have success at the next level.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

It is our job to make sure that the teaching staff of I-LEAD Charter School are applying best practices to their lesson planning and teaching. To this end we provide professional development and assistance on many levels. Throughout the year our staff holds professional development sessions. Some of those sessions are dedicated to the presentation of our ESL philosophy and procedures. Others are dedicated to training of the teachers in classroom accommodations and support of ELLs.

In class, our staff are expected to accommodate those who are learning English as a second language, and adjust those accommodations to the level of proficiency in which the learner is found. The first and most important step in this process is the pairing of adequately bilingual students with ELLs in their classes. After we identify for teachers who in their classes are ELLs and communicate what level of proficiency they are on, teachers will identify in the class those who are bilingual and pair them with ELLs for the purpose of interpreting teaching and class materials. Secondly, teachers are expected to provide written translations of the materials delivered in class or provide a translation of the textbook. They are also required to translate tests especially for those ELLs who have been assessed to be at an entering or beginning level of proficiency. Those learners who are at a developing or expanding level may be given access to a word-for-word dictionary, even during tests.

EXITING

The final step in an ELL's progression is being exited from the program. To be exited from an ESL program in Pennsylvania, the learner must meet two of the following:

1. Score of BASIC on the annual Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) math or Algebra I Keystone AND PSSA reading or Literature Keystone.
2. Score of 5.0 on a Tier C ACCESS for ELLs assessment.
3. Final grades of C or better in core subject areas (Mathematics, Language Arts, Science and Social Studies).

Exiting can only be done from June 1 to September 30 each year. Upon exit, a learner will be monitored for a period of two years. They will not be required to take the annual WIDA ACCESS assessment unless their grades fall below 75% in their core subjects (math, science, English, & history) in more than one class. Support will be given to mitigate any drop in these grades.

PARENTAL INCLUSION, EDUCATION, & ACCOMMODATION

I-LEAD Charter School maintains a strong commitment to parental inclusion and accommodation in the educational process. From our start we have had a fully bilingual parent liaison office that works to communicate to all of our parents, and especially to parents of ELLs. All our registration documents are translated for parents of ELLs. Interpreters are provided for all meetings public and private. Calls and publicity for events are made in other languages, mainly Spanish.

The greatest effort to include parents is the monthly 'Parent Academy.' In the Parent Academy, parents are taught many different lessons that relate to a parent's responsibility to support their learner in their education. In addition, English classes have been offered to parents free of charge in our ESL classrooms during and after school.

Also, parents are informed annually in writing of their child's progress in fluency and program services. This information will contain the child's WIDA scoresheet, which details the ELL's proficiency in reading, writing, speaking and listening in English. Translations are included in the home language. Additionally, a detailed description of the learner's personal ESL services is offered.

RECORDS

Our team maintains records for each of our ELLs. This involves keeping a file that contains all the pertinent information regarding a learner's proficiency and programs. The file will include current and past WIDA/W-APT scoresheets. It will contain copies of letters that we have sent home detailing a learner's proficiency programs and progress. And it may also include grades and Keystone/PSSA testing information in the case that a learner is being considered for exit. We also update the learner's transcript files to include their current language proficiency scores.

CONCLUSION

It is our goal to provide the highest quality ESL education for English language learners in Pennsylvania. We will continue to evaluate and modify our programs to conform to the highest standards for education set forth by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. And we will continue to seek to staff and train our program with teachers that adhere to our discipline's research-based and best practices.

For any questions regarding I-LEAD Charter School's ESL programs, please contact:

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Last edit 6/2/16

Resources

[Pennsylvania Department of Education ESL website](#)

[Pennsylvania Department of Education ESL Portal](#)

[WIDA Consortium](#)