

RSU 16 (Mechanic Falls, Minot, Poland)

Policy Code: IHBEAA

Adopted: March 2015

Revised: November 2017 (Signature page)

RSU 16 LAU Plan

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1. Mission Statement

It is the policy of Regional School Unit (RSU) 16 to provide equitable access for limited English proficiency students. According to the Equal Education Opportunities Act (1974), this district must make an effort to provide educationally appropriate programming to address the English and educational needs of every limited English proficient student so that he/she can compete with his/her native English-speaking peers. Qualifying students will be identified and placed in programs and services in accordance with statutory guidelines. It is the policy of RSU 16 to comply with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination against students on the basis of all civil rights categories.

(see legal provisions in Maine: <http://www.state.me.us/education/esl/LegalProvisionsfortheEducationofEnglishLanguageLearners.html>).

2. Explanation of Language Assessment Committee

RSU 16 has established a Language Assessment Committee (LAC) that may consist of an administrator, classroom teacher, and ELL teacher. Appropriate support staff, such as guidance counselor or Title 1 teacher may be included when they are involved in the student's program. Some members may be temporary, rotating, or ongoing.

The responsibilities of the LAC include:

- a. Identify LEP students using the WIDA ACCESS assessment tool.
- b. Develop an appropriate and effective language support program that provides LEP students the opportunity to achieve the Common Core Standards and Grade Level Expectations.
- c. Monitor the student's progress on an on-going basis.
- d. Notify parent or guardian of all ELL decisions (in a language they comprehend) and their right to appeal their child's participation in ELL services.
- e. Determine when the LEP student meets the exit or reclassification standards.
- f. Monitor students for two years after exit from ELL unless student withdraws from district schools or graduates.
- g. Members of the committee will meet regularly to monitor the language and academic needs of ELLs.
- h. Recommend revisions to the LAU Plan as needed.

3. Identification of English Language Learners

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All newly enrolled students (including transfers) will be initially screened for subsequent assessment through the Home Language Survey during the enrollment process. Assessments for entry into a language support program should be based on several criteria including an assessment of the language background of the ELL using the W-APT, sources such as student writing samples, oral interviews, and other assessment data solicited from teachers and colleagues. Students identified as LEP will be administered the ACCESS for ELLs annually.

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. That information will include, as a minimum:

- the child's chronological age
- the child's educational background
- the child's English language proficiency level
- the child's academic performance (in both English and native language)

Under no circumstances will 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 needs to acquire, it would be a great disservice to the child both socially and cognitively to do so. The district is obligated to provide a language support program that meets the English language as well as content area needs of the student consistent with state and federal statute and case law precedent. It is not appropriate to retain an ELL solely for the reason of limited English proficiency. It is understood by this district that a child with LEP will not be on grade level academically until he/she has had the opportunity to acquire the English skill and content necessary for success. The district accepts the research findings (Thomas & Collier, 1997, Cummins, 1981) that the acquisition of English for cognitive/academic proficiency can take from five to seven years under optimal circumstances of academic and English Language Proficiency support.

4. Programs

Each student will be enrolled in the mainstream program to the extent possible and integrated into regular activities. The classroom teacher will share the responsibility of programming with a qualified ELL teacher. Modification to the regular curriculum will be supported by appropriate instructional materials. The ELL program will be supported by a line item budget for program needs and ancillary services (e.g. interpreter services, speech pathology, computer literacy, special needs, gifted/talented) as appropriate. An ELL program will be provided at a specified school at each level in order to maximize language support services to support access to the Common Core standards.

Some of the programs that might be used in RSU 16 include:

English Language Learner Program: An approach that utilizes comprehensible English language to teach English language and subject area content simultaneously. Although the actual content is the same as that taught to non-ELL students, scaffolding is in place to support the learning of key concepts and vocabulary at the student's English language proficiency level. Mainstream and ELL teachers collaborate closely.

Sheltered instruction: An instructional approach that engages ELLs above the beginning level through a variety of teaching strategies, designed for teachers of academic content, that lower the linguistic demand of the lesson without compromising the integrity or rigor of the subject matter.

Teachers differentiate the language demands of the lesson in many ways, such as using clear simple language and modifying speech rate, using context clues, relating instruction to student experience, adapting the language of texts or tasks, and using

demonstrations, visuals, graphic organizers, or cooperative work to make academic instruction more accessible to students at different English proficiency levels. Academic and parallel language goals are identified for each individual ELL by the teacher.

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5. ELL Teacher Responsibilities

- a. Hold State of Maine Certification with ESL endorsement.
- b. Administer multi-criteria evaluations used to determine eligibility including annual state mandated testing
- c. Communicate with parents regarding progress of students in a language they understand when possible.
- d. Recommend reclassification or exiting of student based on multiple criteria including WIDA assessments.
- e. Provide meaningful cultural and language information to student, teachers, and classmates.
- f. Ensure that high school students receive appropriate career and educational information.
- g. Monitor students who have exited the ELL program for a period of two years unless student withdraws from district schools or graduates.
- h. Maintain a language development file on each student served by the ELL program to be added to the cumulative file of the student when ELL services are terminated for that student.

6. Reclassification or Exit Criteria

A multi-criteria assessment will be made when determining if a LEP student will be classified as a Fluent English Proficient (FEP) student. This will consist of the following:

- a. Teacher evaluation of general language proficiency by observing the student's oral performance in both formal and informal settings.
- b. The ELL teacher will evaluate the progress of the student in reference to the four language domains at least annually using WIDA ACCESS assessment.
- c. Language data from formal and informal assessments will be analyzed to ascertain how the student is functioning in the four skill areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing compared to their native English speaking peers.
- d. ELL teacher will follow up on the placement's impact within two weeks of the transfer and continue monitoring for two years after exit from ELL programming or upon student's withdrawal from district schools or graduation. Monitoring will consist of checking progress reports and/or consulting with a student's core teacher at least six times a year. It may become necessary for an English Language Learner to return to an ELL intervention, following established program guidelines.

7. Special Needs Placement

Determining special needs placement for students who are receiving ELL services is a complex process. There may be a number of individual or combined factors determining why language and cultural minority students are achieving little academic progress over time; the normal process of second language acquisition, the acculturation process, different learning styles, motivation to learn, or the student's lack of prior schooling are a number of potential factors. Screening and diagnosing at-risk students receiving ELL services include a pre-referral discussion (including cultural and language factors) to determine whether temporary learning and behavior characteristics exist or whether referral to special education is warranted. The ELL specialist must be involved throughout the process.

8. Program Evaluation

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 consistent with state and federal statutes. There will be a review of the district ELL programming annually.

9. Appendices

A. Terms

ACCESS for ELLs - Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State for English Language Learners: used as an annual assessment for K-12 LEP students.

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CAN Dos - WIDA Can Do descriptors: used to describe what learners can do at benchmarks 1 to 12 in the skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.

ELL - English Language Learner: used to describe a student at Level 5 or lower on the ACCESS for ELLs.

ESL - English as a Second Language: term traditionally used to describe students who come from a non-English language background to learn English in a school setting.

FEP - Fluent English Proficient: used to describe students who are capable of functioning in an English-only educational environment in the domains of reading, writing, listening, and speaking in social and academic language.

ILAP - Individual Language Acquisition Plan

LAC - Language Acquisition Committee: committee with responsibilities that include identifying and ensuring that the educational needs of Non-English Proficient (NEP) and Limited English Proficient (LEP) students are met.

LAU Plan - written plan developed by school district to describe the appropriate educational practices for Limited English Proficient (LEP) students as a result of the Supreme Court case of LAU v. Nichols (1974).

LEP - Limited English Proficient: used to describe students who have a primary language other than English who are unable to participate effectively in school when English is the language of instruction.

NEP - Non-English Proficient: used to describe a student who has not had exposure to English.

RSU 16 - Regional School Unit 16

W-APT - WIDA Assessment and Placement Test: used to screen newly enrolled students who have not taken the ACCESS for ELLs to determine eligibility for ELL services.

WIDA - World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment: a federally funded assessment and member-state supported consortium including Maine, Vermont, and New Hampshire. This consortium has created English language proficiency standards aligned with the Common Core.

B. RSU 16 Home Language Survey (see attached)

C. ACCESS for ELLs Proficiency Level Performance Definitions (see attached)

SIGNATURE BLOCK:

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