



NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF **PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

Considerations and Ideas for Staffing Program Models

English Language Learners in North Dakota
Office of Indian/Multicultural Education
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Key Considerations

No matter how many ELLs your school has enrolled, the school must reflect on the needs of the ELL students. Following are some key questions and considerations:

What is the English language proficiency level of the ELL students? Students at the beginning levels of English language proficiency need more English language development service time than students at the higher levels. Keep in mind, that mid-level ELLs have language instructional needs that are often overlooked, since these students often have higher oral language proficiency. All ELLs need daily English language development services in order to continue progression in their understanding of academic English.

In which grade levels are the students age-appropriately enrolled? ELLs are required to be enrolled in the age-appropriate grade level. Parents of students with an assumed birthdate (often January 1) can be interviewed to determine if there is another birthdate that is more accurate. Parents must sign an affidavit with the new birthdate or provide documentation that shows the more accurate date. ELLs close in grade level and have a similar level of English language proficiency may be able to receive their English language development services within the same group. ELL students in dissimilar grade levels or who are at different levels of English language proficiency will likely need to be placed in separate groups for English language development services.

What kinds of educational experiences have the students had prior to entering this school? An ELL student who has had interruptions in their education will likely need assistance filling in content knowledge gaps in addition to English language development services. These students may progress at a different rate than other ELLs. The English language development services for students with interrupted schooling may best be served by addressing the content and language needs. The ELL teacher can provide the language development services and assist with the academic language of the content areas. However, a highly qualified content teacher must take the lead on the grade-level content instruction as the instructor of record.

What is known about the academic level of the students in their first language? ELL students who have a strong academic background do not need to relearn concepts, rather they will need to learn the English words for the concepts they have already mastered. Their knowledge base will serve them well as they receive English language development services. The speed at which a student is able to transfer their knowledge into English may be correlated with how closely the native language resembles the English language.

How much English language development service time is needed? The amount of English language development service time can be calculated by reviewing the [programming guidance document](#). ELL students may also qualify for other programming such as intervention time, Title I reading/math, remedial reading/math support, special education services, and gifted and talented services. ELL students cannot be excused from these services solely on the basis of academic language development needs. However, the other services for which a student qualifies must be considered when developing the Individualized Language Plan in order ensure every student has access to general education curriculum each day.

Example Programs (based on size of ELL population)

Small program – less than 10 ELLs

With only a few ELL students, the school administration (and the local school board) would not likely support the hiring of a full time equivalent staff member to serve the ELLs. Therefore, the school must consider the available staff. ELL services are core instruction for ELLs and the ELL program must be funded by state and local funds.

Thus, a corresponding percentage of the staff member's time must be paid out of general funds. Do some staff members have a more flexible schedule than others? If a classroom teacher is the only option, can before or after school time be used as paid prep time in order to serve the ELLs during the regular school day? Are there other highly qualified teachers who can relieve the teacher of some of the classroom teacher duties (for example, teach the daily lesson for math to free up his/her time to teach language development)? Is there a licensed teacher working as a paraprofessional or substitute teacher who is interested in obtaining the ELL endorsement? What funds are available to help pay for ELL endorsement coursework? Exploring the answers to these questions will help a school to determine the best way to provide direct language development services to their ELL students.

Carrington Public School District enrolls one to three elementary-aged ELLs each year. The ELL students in Carrington have various language backgrounds and have scored at a level 3 or 4 on a test of English language proficiency. The Title I teacher is the staff member with the flexibility and literacy background to support at-risk students; consequently, the Title I teacher began coursework for the ELL endorsement. A small percentage of the Title I/ELL teacher's salary is paid out of the general fund, commensurate with the percentage of time spent on ELL instruction. Language development services are delivered to all three of the students who qualify for the ELL program. Two of the ELL students also qualify for targeted Title I services and work with small grade-level groups on literacy interventions with the same Title I teacher. In Carrington, the Title I teacher uses a combination of push-in and pull-out to deliver language development programming for each student, based on the language needs of the student.

Wyndmere Public School enrolls four to fourteen ELLs each year. Most of the students are in the elementary grades, report Spanish on their home language survey, and score at a level 4 of English language proficiency. The first grade teacher is the only staff member with an ELL endorsement in the school district. ELL services are delivered by the first grade/ELL teacher in a small group setting, after school, Monday-Thursday each week. The ELL students live close to the school and are able to walk home at the end of their school day. The school district pays the first grade teacher an hourly wage out of the general fund for the extended instructional day.

Middle-sized program – less than 40 ELLs

The statewide ELL Program Advisory Committee reviewed caseload criteria and determined a realistic caseload for an ELL teacher would be no more than 40 ELLs. This would include any students who have been exited within the past two years. The best way to determine the total number of ELL teachers needed is to review the needs of the students. Once the proficiency levels and grade levels are known, a program model can be chosen. Most often, language development services occur in a separate room, by pulling out the students from their mainstream programming. If this is the case in your school, determine the number of groups and the amount of time needed for each group. If the students will be served with another program model type, determine how often the ELL teacher is needed to serve the students within that model. If the number of groups and amount of time exceeds the time that one teacher is able to serve the students, another staff member is needed.

Milnor Public School District operates a school on the Sundale Hutterite colony. Hutterites are people who belong to a religious group that practices a common ownership of goods, absolute opposition to war, and often reside on communal farms called colonies. Hutterite colony families use a dialect of German called Hutterish in the home and use High German in their daily religious traditions. Students attend German school with the colony's religious leader before and after "English" school. All students begin kindergarten with very limited exposure to English; most students being at an English proficiency Level of 1 or 2.

This year, twelve of the thirty-eight students in the colony school qualify for the ELL program, with the majority of the ELLs in grades kindergarten and first grade. The first grade teacher at the elementary school in town has her ELL endorsement and oversees the ELL program. Two of the three colony teachers are also working on their ELL endorsement. Most of the colony students exit the program by reaching the English language proficiency goal by third grade. Therefore, the primary colony teacher uses language development strategies throughout the day with the primary students, sheltering the content by providing language scaffolds within each lesson. Eventually, the first grade teacher in town will be used as a resource and the colony staff will have the tools they need to be able to teach both language and content to their students. The students all share a common home language; therefore, they can use their native language to support each other in order to clarify concepts. Interpreters are not needed because the parents learned English in school and are comfortable communicating with school staff in English.

Large program – 40 or more ELLs

As the program grows beyond one school site and one ELL teacher, the district must consider the point at which they need coordination of their program to ensure consistent, quality language development programming between each program site. Some districts assign this as part of a principal's portfolio. Other programs promote an ELL teacher to spend some of each day on program coordination. With the large number of ELLs, specialized programs to meet the unique needs of special populations can be explored. For example, secondary programs may want to encourage their secondary content teachers to pursue their ELL endorsement in order to give language development support during content instruction. Schools with a high number of students from one language group may want to explore options for dual language or bilingual immersion programs. Schools in communities with large refugee resettlement programs may recognize a need for newcomer programming.

Williston Public School District has approximately 105 ELLs enrolled in grades K-12. ELLs are served by a full-time ELL coordinator, three ELL teachers, and an ELL tutor. The ELL staff at the elementary level primarily use a pull-out model to provide English language development services. At the secondary level, ELL students are supported in a language development elective course that is taught by an ELL teacher. Students receive elective credit for such course. An ESL tutor hour is also offered to the secondary students where they are able to work on homework with an ELL instructor. Also, ELL instructors work after school four days a week, tutoring ELLs in content area classes. The ELLs in Williston are very diverse. ELLs can be found at all grade levels and all levels of English language proficiency. Although more than sixty percent of the students report Spanish on their home language survey, a total of twenty languages are used by ELLs in Williston.

While some students were born in the United States, many students have very recently arrived in the United States. Williston uses a telephonic interpreter service to communicate with parents when local interpreters from certain language groups cannot be found. Recently the school district has experienced tremendous growth and new students enroll almost daily throughout the year. In order to have someone with the flexibility to screen potential ELLs and manage the program, they created a full-time ELL coordinator position. The coordinator has also been trained as an instructional coach in order to help the general education instructor's work with ELLs in their classrooms.

Fargo Public Schools educates approximately 750-800 ELLs with 27 ELL teachers, 7 paraprofessionals, two licensed social workers, an administrative assistant, and an ELL coordinator. At the elementary level, ELL highly qualified teachers and paras work with ELL students using pull-out and push-in (co-teaching) language development programs. At the secondary level, teachers who are highly-qualified in ELL and content teach students in

Sheltered English classes. The sheltered program model incorporates language development strategies with core subject areas, so students do not fall behind academically while they are learning English. Four bilingual paras work extensively with Newcomers, but also with other ELLs and their families. Families and students are supported by two ELL social workers. In addition to school success and language development, the social workers' goals are to assist families with navigating systems, participating in school and community programs, and assimilating to life in America. The program director is an active participant in school, community, and state committees. The director also coordinates the ELL program, students, and staff in all of Fargo's school buildings.

West Fargo Public Schools delivers language development to approximately 600 ELL students. At the elementary level, the pull-out model is used to deliver language development services. At the secondary level, sheltered instruction is used. West Fargo employs 36 ELL staff, five paraprofessionals, a program coordinator, an ELL social worker, and a parent outreach liaison. Due to the large number of refugee students who enroll in the district almost immediately upon entering the United States, West Fargo established a Welcome Center. The Welcome Center is staffed by eight ELL teachers and one paraprofessional who work with students who have been in the country for less than one year and are at the very beginning stages of English language proficiency. Teachers focus on beginning English skills along with acculturation to American schools. Students have opportunities to participate in physical education, music, and art at the Welcome Center. At the high school level, students are placed in one of two groups. One group is focused on beginning language and literacy skills in order to transition to the high school setting where they will be supported by ELL staff in sheltered content courses. The other group is focused on learning the academic English necessary for the workplace in our newly developed Career and Life Skills program. The bilingual paraprofessionals assist with interpreting and parent communication. The social worker and parent outreach liaison help families to communicate with the school and acclimate to their new community. The ELL coordinator facilitates a leadership team that reviews data and carries out the ELL program among the various school buildings, and coordinates ELL program data management, enrolls new families, manages the budgets, investigates curriculum materials, and oversees the identification and assessment process.

Conclusion

ELL programs are not optional; they are required by state and federal law and supported by case law. An ELL student's access to appropriate education is protected by the Department of Justice and the Office for Civil Rights. ELL programs must be designed specifically for the type of ELL students enrolled in a district. School districts must use the resources they have to provide a language development program that assists ELLs in overcoming linguistic barriers to full participation in the grade level curriculum. Once an ELL student enrolls in school and the language development program is in place, the school district is responsible to evaluate the ELL program to ensure the district has committed the appropriate staff and materials needed to carry out a successful English language development program.

Contact Information

For clarification or more information about the ELL program in North Dakota please refer to one of the following contacts:

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