



**Implementation Evaluation of the
English for Speakers of Other Languages Program in Secondary
Schools**

Office of Shared Accountability

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Kecia L. Addison-Scott, Ph.D.



Montgomery County Public Schools

OFFICE OF SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Adrian B. Talley, Associate Superintendent

*850 Hungerford Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20850
301-279-3553*

Dr. Joshua P. Starr
Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Kimberly A. Statham
*Deputy Superintendent of
Teaching, Learning, and Programs*

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Executive Summary

An evaluation of the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) was requested by the Executive Leadership Team and the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs. This study is an extension of the elementary implementation ESOL evaluation that occurred during the 2009–2010 school year. The focus of this evaluation study was on the implementation of ESOL instruction at the secondary level during the 2010–2011 school year. The intent of the ESOL program at the secondary level is to provide secondary level ESOL students with opportunities to develop English language proficiency while gaining academic content knowledge and skills. The activities associated with the ESOL program are aligned with the following goals of the MCPS strategic plan—Goal 1: Ensure success for every student; Goal 2: Provide an effective instructional program; Goal 3: Strengthen productive partnerships for education; and Goal 4: Create a positive work environment in a self-renewing organization.

Initiated by MCPS in 1967, ESOL services were developed to meet the diverse educational and cultural needs of students whose primary language was not English. In the 2010–2011 school year, the program employed over 550 ESOL teachers who provided instruction to approximately 18,700 ESOL students in MCPS schools, with 3,643 being ESOL students in secondary schools.

The following questions guided the evaluation study:

1. How are secondary students in MCPS identified and assessed to determine eligibility for ESOL services?
2. With what fidelity are instructional practices implemented as intended for ESOL students, as measured by classroom observations?
3. What are the experiences of students receiving ESOL services?
4. To what extent is the ESOL program perceived to be effective (by ESOL teachers)?
 - a. What aspects of the implementation facilitate effective ESOL instruction and student learning as measured by teacher experiences?
 - b. Which aspects impede effective ESOL instruction and student learning as measured by teacher experiences?

The study gathered information from classroom observations, document review, experiences of ESOL teachers about the components implemented during the 2010–2011 school year, and the experiences of ESOL students in 2010–2011. To determine the sample of schools for classroom observations, secondary schools were first organized into categories based on the percentage of ESOL students. Next, schools were organized by school cluster to ensure that a representative proportion of schools in the district was covered. Following the preliminary list, refinements were made by Division of ESOL/Bilingual services staff to remove schools that did not have ESOL populations. Classroom observations were conducted at 22 secondary schools (11 middle schools and 11 high schools), with approximately three classroom observations occurring per school at the middle school level and five classroom observations per school at the high school level.

This report provides a description of demographic and linguistic characteristics of secondary ESOL students, procedures for identifying ESOL students, their placement, classroom instruction, and assessment. The report also provides information on aspects of the ESOL program that facilitated implementation and on challenges to implementation, and highlights areas for improvement.

A total of 93 ESOL teachers (35 middle school and 58 high school) responded to the survey (a response rate of 66%). Web-based surveys were sent to all ESOL teachers across all MCPS secondary schools. Paper and pencil student surveys were administered to ESOL students in the observed classrooms in the 22 schools targeted for observations. A total of 1,032 student surveys were completed.

Key Findings

1. How are secondary students in MCPS identified and assessed to determine eligibility for ESOL services?

In MCPS, a policy and regulation are available to provide guidance to schools and administrators on the appropriate steps to follow with regard to identifying and assessing English Language Learners (ELL) for receipt of ESOL services. ESOL teachers who responded to an electronic web-based survey reported with overwhelming agreement that procedures for assessment and placement of ELLs are implemented in their school. In addition, the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs developed action plans for the division strategic plan that include monitoring the activities regularly.

2. With what fidelity are instructional practices implemented as intended for ESOL students as measured by classroom observations?

Eighty-six classroom observations were conducted; these observations indicated consistent implementation of many of the ESOL program components and requirements. Based on the ESOL look-fors, these instructional practices should be observed in every classroom. All observed classrooms showed students responding appropriately to questions and prompts from teachers that emphasizes student's listening and speaking language skills. Attributes of a climate of respect for student questions and contributions were observed in almost all classes. Additionally, collaborative working relationships between teachers and students, the use of assessments to monitor student comprehension and guide instruction, the encouragement of active participation from all students, and opportunities for students to learn new vocabulary words were observed in the majority of classes. Opportunities for students to interpret meaning of vocabulary through exposure to text, students practicing reading silently, and student use of prewriting strategies to compose text for a variety of purposes were observed less frequently during classrooms observations.

3. What are the experiences of students receiving ESOL services?

Slightly more than 1,000 ESOL students completed a survey designed to gather feedback on their experiences in the ESOL program in their school. Many respondents reported feeling welcome in their school and expressed that speaking English is an essential component of school success. Almost all student respondents reported the practice of the four language skills that should be emphasized in ESOL classes—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—in both their ESOL classes and in their content area classes. Most student respondents expressed confidence in their development of the four language skills emphasized by the ESOL program, as well as in their performance in courses and on assessments based on their English language development. Furthermore, many students articulated a need to improve their speaking and writing skills during the 2011–2012 school year.

4. To what extent is the ESOL program perceived effective by ESOL teachers?

A total of 93 ESOL teachers across middle and high schools responded to an electronic survey about the implementation of ESOL services in schools. While ESOL teacher respondents indicated collaborating with other ESOL teachers, collaboration with non-ESOL teachers was not as prevalent. ESOL teacher respondents agreed there are rigorous core mainstream courses available to ESOL students in their school. Despite the fact that ESOL teacher respondents agreed that the instructional materials in their school are appropriate for ESOL instruction, they proposed ways of providing more efficient services to ESOL students that included revising the classes offered to ESOL students. ESOL teachers also articulated a need for more planning time and collaboration with other ESOL teachers and content area teachers.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following suggestions to support implementation of ESOL services at the secondary level should be considered. The recommendations have been grouped into the following categories:

- Professional Development for ESOL and Classroom Teachers to Support Teaching and Learning
- Curriculum Clarification and Instructional Practices to assist ESOL Students Learn English and Academic Content
- Teacher Collaboration to Promote Teaching and Learning

Professional Development for ESOL and Classroom Teachers to Support Teaching and Learning

- **Continue to provide guidance and professional development to content area teachers on effective strategies proven to work with ESOL students.** Seventy percent of ESOL teachers agreed with the statement that content area teachers do not have enough time to meet the needs of ESOL students. Providing professional development opportunities to these teachers would allow for a better understanding of how to work with ESOL students and support them via differentiated instruction.

- **Provide strategies to ESOL teachers on how to encourage collaborative relationships among students and structured opportunities for students to practice language in the classroom.** These were two areas that were not observed with great frequency although they are key areas in the ESOL look-fors. Approximately one half of the classrooms observed implemented these activities.
- **Investigate the extent to which the progress of English Language Learners is monitored in schools after exiting ESOL.** Data from the ESOL teacher survey revealed that slightly more than half reported monitoring of exited ELLs as being implemented most of the time in their school.
- **Provide strategies and guidance to ESOL teachers on methods to incorporate more opportunities to practice language using writing skills.** Findings from classroom observations revealed that this area was not observed in the majority of classes, specifically prewriting strategies.

Curriculum Clarification and Instructional Practices to assist ESOL Students Learn English and Academic Content

- **Clarify the existing alignment of the ESOL curriculum with content area courses.** Findings from the ESOL teacher survey revealed that half of ESOL teacher respondents (50%) reported “curriculum articulation is developed between ESOL and content area courses” as not implemented very often or not implemented in their school. Providing a better understanding of the alignment may positively impact ESOL students’ readiness for mainstream instruction as well as assessments.
- **Ensure there is consistency with the implementation of closure activities in ESOL classes.** Findings from observations revealed that only about one third of classes observed at both the middle and high school levels employed this practice.
- **Examine the courses (specifically reading and sheltered classes) offered for ESOL students to ensure adequate fit and course-taking patterns to meet needs of ESOL students.** Some ESOL teachers suggested the current structure of courses for ESOL students does not meet their academic and language development needs.
- **Provide explicit guidance to schools regarding to what extent the ESOL look-fors should be implemented for each ESOL instructional level.** While the look-fors were exhibited in each ESOL classroom, some were not observed as frequently due to the English language level of ESOL students. Providing guidance to ESOL teachers as to the percentage of the class that should include the various instructional practices would prove beneficial.

Teacher Collaboration to Promote Teaching and Learning

- **Establish structures for collaboration between ESOL teachers and classroom teachers that can support effective teaching and learning for ESOL students in content classes.** Results from the ESOL teacher survey revealed only 22% of respondents indicated collaborating with content area teachers most of the time.

Implementation Evaluation of the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Program in Secondary Schools

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Background

Comprised of students from over 160 nations, the number of students from non-English language backgrounds continues to grow in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) each year. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students in Grades 6–12 make up 21% of the overall ESOL enrollment. Although approximately 51% of all ESOL students in MCPS schools are born in the United States, most of those enrolled in secondary schools are not (7.3%). Additionally, these children have lived in non-English speaking environments and come to school with very limited English language skills. English is the home language for only 2.5% of secondary school ESOL students. In addition, many of them lack a basic oral language foundation in their own language that is a prerequisite to developing reading and writing skills in any language.

Implemented by MCPS in 1967, the ESOL program was designed to meet the diverse educational and cultural needs of students learning English as an additional language. Students enrolled in the ESOL program come from a variety of cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic, and academic backgrounds. The program provides intensive English language development instruction to support ESOL students in acquiring the English needed to succeed academically. The goal of the ESOL program is to help the English language learners (ELLs) enrolled in the ESOL program to learn enough English to function linguistically and culturally in MCPS and in the mainstream of American society. This is in alignment with the MCPS strategic plan, Goal 1: Ensure Success for Every Student; Goal 2: Provide an Effective Instructional Program; and Goal 4: Create a Positive Work Environment in a Self-Renewing Organization.

Table 1
Background Information on Secondary School ESOL Students in 2010–2011

Grade level		<i>n</i>	%
	Grade 6	576	15.8
	Grade 7	452	12.4
	Grade 8	429	11.9
	Subtotal Middle School	1,457	40.0
	Grade 9	740	20.3
	Grade 10	678	18.6
	Grade 11	500	13.7
	Grade 12	272	7.4
	Subtotal High School	2,190	60.0
First language	Not English	3,557	97.5
	English	90	2.5
Race/ethnicity	American Indian	1	0.0
	Asian American	653	17.9
	African American	696	19.1
	Hispanic	2,021	55.4
	White	276	7.6
Country of origin	Not United States	3,382	92.7
	United States	265	7.3
Immigrant status	No	1,574	43.2
	Yes	2,073	56.8
Gender	Male	1,951	53.5
	Female	1,696	46.5

Source: Office of Shared Accountability ESOL data file.

Definitions

An *English language learner* (ELL) is a student who uses a language in addition to or other than English. It is the term preferred by professionals in the field of second language teaching to describe students whose native language is not English and who have difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language and whose difficulties may deny such individuals the opportunity to learn successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English (MCPS, 2011).

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is a specialized English language instructional program for non-native speakers of English that emphasizes the following four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

A *limited English proficient* (LEP) student is a federal term used to define one whose primary (i.e., first acquired) language is other than English, or the language most often spoken by the student is other than English, or a language spoken in the student's home is other than English.

The *Language Assessment System Links* (LAS-Links) is a state-mandated assessment for English language proficiency that assesses English language ability and proficiency of English language learners from Grades K–12. The assessment is comprised of four tests—listening, speaking,

reading, and writing. While the speaking test is administered individually, the remaining assessments may be administered to a group. The results of each test are presented as a scale score and its corresponding English language proficiency levels. The proficiency levels are low beginner, high beginner, low intermediate, high intermediate, and advanced.

The *Multidisciplinary Education, Training, and Support (METs)* program is designed for ESOL students beginning in Grade 3 who have had limited or no previous schooling or have experienced significant schooling gaps due to interrupted or disrupted education.

Federal/State Regulations

Guidelines from Title III of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* and the Office of Civil Rights require that school districts identify all students with limited English proficiency. In the state of Maryland the LAS-Links is used for identification and progress monitoring. These students are entitled to special/additional language, academic, and cultural support services to develop language skills and help them succeed in school.

Secondary School ESOL Courses in MCPS

ESOL students receive instruction daily, with the amount of instruction provided varying based on ESOL level. ESOL instruction is based on English language proficiency as opposed to grade level. Beginning and low intermediate ESOL students receive two ESOL classes daily, while advanced students receive one ESOL class daily. The Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs provides the following guidelines for scheduling ESOL instruction for ESOL Levels 1–3 students in middle school:

- ESOL Level 1 students must receive two 45-minute classes per day, five days a week, or its equivalent amount of time per day.
- ESOL Level 2 students must receive one 45-minute class per day, five days a week or its equivalent amount of time per day.
- ESOL Level 3 students must receive one 45-minute class per day, five days a week or its equivalent amount of time per day.

At the high school level, beginning students (ESOL Level 1 and ESOL Level 2) receive two ESOL classes daily. Intermediate (Level 3 and Level 4) students and Advanced (Level 5) students receive one ESOL class daily.

MCPS Secondary ESOL Curriculum

Recently revised to align with the Maryland English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards, the MCPS secondary level ESOL curriculum is designed using the most current research for acquisition and learning of a second language. The ESOL curricula for both middle and high schools are designed to challenge the critical thinking and academic skills as students acquire the second language. The acquisition of listening, speaking, reading, and writing is the focus of the

curriculum at the secondary level. In addition to these four language skills, teachers are expected to provide students with independent reading guidance. Given that the curriculum is developed based on English language skill, ESOL classes are typically a combination of students from varying grade levels. An overview of the MCPS middle school and high school ESOL curricula is provided in Appendices C and D.

Review of Literature

In 2002, an evaluation of the MCPS ESOL program was conducted by The George Washington University Center for Equity and Excellence in Education. Interviews, focus groups, classroom observations, and document review were employed to examine the program. Several strengths of the program were found, which included ESOL teachers certified in ESOL, high quality of classroom instruction, positive views of ESOL teachers by ESOL students, and high quality of services provided by elementary schools that serve high numbers of ESOL students (Orr, Sacks, Rivera, & Bushey, 2001). Areas for improvement cited in the report included: availability of performance data for ESOL students, availability of professional development offerings, consistency of program implementation at the elementary and middle school levels, and student-teacher ratios for ESOL staff that take into account the English proficiency level of the student.

Addison-Scott (2010) examined the implementation of ESOL services at the elementary level. That report presented formative information on the implementation of ESOL services in providing ESOL students with opportunities to develop English language proficiency while gaining academic content knowledge and skills. A description of demographic and linguistic characteristics of elementary ESOL students, procedures for identifying ESOL students, their placement, classroom instruction, and assessment were provided. The data collection strategies employed for this study included classroom observations, web-based surveys, and document review. Classes in 19 elementary schools were observed, with approximately five classroom observations occurring per school. Web-based surveys were sent to all elementary school teachers (ESOL and non-ESOL teachers), with a total of 155 ESOL teachers across 95 elementary schools and 493 elementary non-ESOL classroom teachers from 73 elementary schools responded to the survey. Based on the findings, 16 recommendations were developed and grouped into the following categories:

- ESOL and Classroom Teacher Collaboration to Support Scheduling, Planning, and Instruction
- Professional Development for ESOL and Classroom Teachers to help ESOL Students Learn English and Academic Content
- Bilingual Support Services for ESOL Students

Scope of the Evaluation

The focus of this program evaluation was the implementation of ESOL instruction at the secondary level. This study gathered information from classroom observations, document review, experiences of ESOL teachers about the components implemented during the 2010–2011 school year, and the experiences of ESOL students in 2010–2011. Specifically, the purpose of the current study was to determine—

- the extent to which the secondary-level ESOL program was implemented in MCPS,
- ESOL teacher experiences with implementation of ESOL,
- ESOL student experiences with instruction for ESOL students, and
- revisions that should be made to currently implemented components, or considered when implementing new components.

Evaluation Questions

The purpose of this evaluation is to examine the consistency and quality of the implementation of ESOL instruction in MCPS. More specifically, the results of the evaluation contribute to understanding how MCPS has met the needs of an increasingly diverse ELL population. The following questions were investigated:

1. How are secondary students in MCPS identified and assessed to determine eligibility for ESOL services?
2. With what fidelity are instructional practices implemented as intended for ESOL students as measured by classroom observations?
3. What are the experiences of students receiving ESOL services?
4. To what extent is the ESOL program perceived to be effective?
 - a. What aspects of the implementation facilitate effective ESOL instruction and student learning as measured by teacher experiences?
 - b. Which aspects impede effective ESOL instruction and student learning as measured by ESOL teacher experiences?

Methodology

The evaluation during the 2010–2011 school year focused on gathering data from middle and high schools. In an effort to answer each of the evaluation questions, a mixed method approach was employed that involved data collection from several sources. These data included classroom observations, an ESOL teacher survey, an ESOL student survey, and document review. Documents that were reviewed included program documentation (e.g., instructional pathways documents, master plan documents), and ESOL curricula.

A multi-method evaluation design was used to collect and analyze the evaluation data gathered during the school year. The purposes for employing mixed methods were development and triangulation—several sources of data that confirm or complement each other (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2003). Specifically, triangulation of research methods included classroom observations, document review, and teacher surveys. Document review was used to provide relevant background and contextual information. Classroom observations were conducted to gain insight into the fidelity of implementation of ESOL instruction in secondary school classes. Web-based teacher surveys were employed to gather stakeholder perspectives and experiences on the implementation of ESOL at the school level. Additionally, student surveys were administered to understand students' experiences with ESOL instruction at their schools.

School Selection for Classroom Observations

During the 2010–2011 school year, classroom observations of a sample of secondary schools were conducted. A systematic process to collect post-observation interview information and conduct observations was employed. To determine the sample, schools were organized into three categories based on the percentage of ESOL students (i.e., 0–20%, 21–40%, and 41% or higher). The second criterion was school cluster to ensure a representative proportion of schools in the district was covered. A sample of schools roughly proportional to the ESOL percentage category within each school cluster was selected randomly for classroom observations. Some schools selected did not have an ESOL population and were substituted with a school recommended by the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs. Classes in 22 secondary schools, that included 11 middle schools and 11 high schools, were observed. On average, three observations per school were completed at middle schools; one per ESOL level. At the high schools, approximately five observations per school (one per ESOL level) were completed.

Summary of Data Sources and Analyses

*Classroom Observations.*¹ The Office of Shared Accountability (OSA) researchers conducted 86 observations across 11 middle and 11 high schools. Classroom observations were executed between late October and December 2010. Twenty-two secondary schools were randomly selected for observations. The observation instrument was adapted from an instrument used by the MCPS Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs and modified to meet the needs of this evaluation. The observation protocol was developed using relevant literature as well as ESOL look-fors espoused by MCPS and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) English Language Proficiency Curriculum Standards. The observation instrument for both middle and high schools contained the same observation indicators. The observation instrument for high schools is presented in Appendix A.

In total, OSA researchers conducted observations of 86 ESOL classrooms across both middle and high schools. The goal was to observe each ESOL instructional level in each of the selected schools at least once. This goal was achieved with the exception of one school, which had a long-term substitute teacher for one level. The median class size for the observed ESOL classes at the middle school level ranged from 9 students for ESOL Level 2 to 10 students for ESOL Level 3. At the high school level, the median class size for the observed ESOL classes ranged from 7 students for ESOL Level 1 to 14 for ESOL Level 4.

Survey of ESOL Students. Paper and pencil surveys were administered to middle and high school ESOL students who were taught by observed teachers. The intent of the surveys was to gather feedback from students on their experiences with ESOL instruction at their schools. To calculate the response rate for ESOL students, the number of ESOL classes to be surveyed was used as the denominator ($N = 86$). The response rate was 94% for both middle and high schools. A total of 1,032 surveys were completed.

Developed using the literature, as well as feedback from the MCPS Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs, the ESOL student survey was sent by the MCPS interoffice mail service to the ESOL contact person in each of the 22 schools. Only the ESOL classes with teachers who participated in classroom observations were asked to administer the student survey. Students who were not enrolled during Semester A did not take the ESOL survey. The student survey was translated into the following five languages: Chinese, French, Korean, Spanish, and Vietnamese. These languages were chosen as they are the top five languages spoken by students in MCPS. Students in ESOL Levels 1 and 2 completed the survey in their home language, while students in ESOL Levels 3 through 5 completed the survey in English. If the language translation was not available for the student, the student did not take the survey. ESOL teachers were asked to indicate how many surveys were needed in each of the translated languages.

Survey of ESOL Teachers. Electronic web-based surveys were administered to secondary ESOL teachers. The intent of the surveys was to gather feedback from teachers on how ESOL services were implemented in their schools. A list of secondary level ESOL teachers in MCPS was

¹The author would like to thank Dr. Elizabeth Cooper-Martin, Ms. Rachel Hickson, Ms. Trish McGaughey, Dr. Helen Wang, and Ms. Natalie Wolanin for assisting with classroom observations for this evaluation.

obtained from The Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs to determine who should receive the survey link. A total of 140 ESOL teachers received the link (54 at the middle school level and 86 at the high school level). The overall response rate for ESOL teachers was 66%. The response rate was 65% for middle schools and 67% for high schools.

The surveys were developed with input and guidance from the MCPS Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs. The questions on the survey focused on implementation of ESOL in schools. A list of secondary ESOL teacher names was obtained from the MCPS Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs and a link to the survey was sent directly to each teacher at all MCPS middle and high schools. The e-mails were sent at the beginning of May, with a deadline two weeks from the date sent. Reminder e-mails were sent three times and the final surveys were received in mid-June 2011. To calculate the response rate for ESOL teachers, the number of teachers the link was sent to was used as the denominator.

Data analysis procedures included—

- descriptive statistics and content analysis of observation of ESOL instruction data and frequency of observations,
- descriptive analysis of survey data to determine frequencies of responses, and
- qualitative document review of information.

Results

The results section of the report is organized by evaluation question. The first section details the assessment and identification process for students to receive ESOL services as well as how the types of services provided is determined (evaluation questions 1 and 2). The subsequent section provides information on fidelity of implementation of ESOL services to students based on findings from classroom observations. Following this discussion, information on parent communication and involvement as captured from ESOL teachers is provided. The next section details experiences by students receiving ESOL services, followed by the final section that details experiences by ESOL teachers.

Evaluation Question 1: How are secondary students in MCPS identified and assessed to determine eligibility for ESOL services?

Identification and Assessment

To obtain information on how secondary students in MCPS are assessed and determined eligible for ESOL services, documents from The Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs ESOL Testing and Accountability Handbook were reviewed. MCPS Policy IOD, *Education of English Language Learners*, reaffirms the education of English language learners as a priority. In addition the policy ensures compliance with federal and state mandates regarding the education of English language learners. Policy IOD details the process for identification and states that all students whose native primary language is not English at the time they enroll in MCPS will be administered an English language proficiency assessment by a qualified and trained assessor.

Before students can be placed in an ESOL program, they must be referred for testing. Prior to enrollment, students whose native language is not American English can be referred to the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs by the Residency and International Admissions, an administrator, a classroom teacher, a counselor, parent/guardian(s), an ESOL teacher, or by the student himself/herself. Schools conduct most of the testing. The criteria for identification and placement of ESOL students are located in Appendix B. A battery of entrance tests designed to assess the student's English proficiency is administered. If the student is deemed eligible for ESOL services, appropriate placement is arranged by ESOL staff. In secondary schools, appropriate programs for ESOL students are worked out jointly by the counselor and ESOL teacher.

Evaluation Question 2: With what fidelity are instructional practices implemented as intended for ESOL students as measured by classroom observations?

Classroom Observations

To understand the fidelity of ESOL instruction at the secondary level, 86 classroom observations were conducted across 22 schools (Table 2). The majority of classes observed had a Promethean Board (88%), although not all teachers utilized this aspect of the classroom environment for instruction. Since ESOL instruction at the secondary level is based on English language proficiency level, it is atypical that classes are comprised of students from all one grade level. At

the middle school level, only 12% of classes were comprised of students from one grade level. The remaining 88% of classes observed contained a blend of students across two to three grade levels. Similarly, 87% of classes observed at the high school level were a blend of students from two or more grade levels.

Table 2
Number and Percentage of Classes Observed, by
ESOL Level and School Level ($N = 86$)

ESOL levels observed	# of classes observed	% of classroom observations
Level 1	21	24.4
Level 2	20	23.3
Level 3	23	26.7
Level 4	11	12.8
Level 5	11	12.8
Middle School		
Level 1	11	33.3
Level 2	10	30.3
Level 3	12	36.4
High School		
Level 1	10	18.9
Level 2	10	18.9
Level 3	11	20.8
Level 4	11	20.8
Level 5	11	20.8

Class Duration

The overall average duration of classes observed was 67 minutes, and the average number of ESOL students in the classes observed was 11 with the average number of teachers in each class being one. Instruction ranged from 42 minutes to 99 minutes. While the mean provides an estimated average minutes of time, it does not take into account the skewed distribution of the data. With this in mind, the median for minutes is also reported. The median is more representative of the central tendency of the data, and the impact of outliers is lessened. In examining the length of class instruction by ESOL level, findings reveal the average length for observation by ESOL level ranged from a high of 82 minutes for ESOL Level 1 to 54 minutes for ESOL Levels 4 and 5 (See Table 3). These findings reveal that the duration of ESOL instruction at the secondary level adheres to the guidelines espoused by The Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs for program instruction.

Table 3
Summary Statistics for Length of Secondary ESOL Observations
Overall and by ESOL Level

General statistics	Min	Max	Mean	Median	SD
Minutes observed ($N = 86$ classes)	42	99	67	62	21.2
ESOL 1 ($n = 21$ classes)	45	99	82	90	18.1
ESOL 2 ($n = 20$ classes)	42	94	70	80	21.3
ESOL 3 ($n = 23$ classes)	43	94	64	50	19.9
ESOL 4 ($n = 11$ classes)	45	90	54	47	17.7
ESOL 5 ($n = 11$ classes)	44	92	54	47	15.5

Middle school class duration. Per ESOL instructional guidelines, middle school students enrolled in ESOL Level 1 should receive a double period ESOL 1 class as well as the academic language class (an ESOL class). Data collection revealed that the majority of the ESOL Level 1 classes observed in middle schools were double-period classes. Although the actual class period on the master schedule for the school may have been two 45-minute classes (90 minutes total), the times recorded include actual instructional time. In some classes there were interruptions that precluded the class from beginning instructional time at the start of the class (e.g., announcements). While the average minutes for ESOL instruction at the middle school level, calculated based on classroom observations, was 81 minutes for ESOL Level 1, it should be noted that not all observers collected data during both class periods, which could impact time calculated. The median calculated for minutes of classroom instruction at the middle school level was 90 minutes, which is more representative of class instructional time since the median is less affected by outliers in the data. The average class length for ESOL Level 2 and Level 3 classes observed was 65 minutes for both, which exceeds the 45-minute guideline specified by the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Services (See Table 4).

Table 4
Summary Statistics for Length of Secondary ESOL Observations
Overall and by ESOL Level

General statistics	Min	Max	Mean	Median	SD
Minutes observed all levels ($N = 33$)	42	98	71	81	20.8
ESOL 1 ($n = 11$)	45	98	81	90	18.2
ESOL 2 ($n = 10$)	42	90	65	60	21.4
ESOL 3 ($n = 12$)	43	90	65	57	20.3

High school class length. High school students enrolled in ESOL Levels 1 and 2 should receive a double period ESOL class according to instructional guidelines. Similar to practices at the middle school level, ESOL 1 students also receive the academic language class. The majority of classes observed for these levels were double-period classes. Some schools split the classes with one early in the day and one toward the end of the school day. The average class length was 83 minutes for ESOL Level 1 and 76 minutes for Level 2. The actual class period on the master schedule for the schools observed may have been 90 minutes. Similar to the caveats for calculating class length at the middle school level, the times recorded at the high school level include actual instructional time. The Division of ESOL/Bilingual Services recommends ESOL students in Levels 3 through 5 receive one ESOL class per day. The average class length in minutes for ESOL Levels 3, 4, and 5 were 62, 54, and 54, respectively (See Table 5).

Table 5
Summary Statistics for Secondary ESOL Observations Overall and by ESOL Level

General statistics	Min	Max	Mean	Median	SD
Minutes observed ($N = 53$)	44	99	65	48	21.4
ESOL 1 ($n = 10$)	46	99	83	90	19.1
ESOL 2 ($n = 10$)	45	94	76	87	30.0
ESOL 3 ($n = 11$)	45	94	62	48	20.4
ESOL 4 ($n = 11$)	45	90	54	47	17.7
ESOL 5 ($n = 11$)	44	92	54	47	15.5

Class Size

The average number of students across all ESOL classes observed was 11. Class sizes ranged from 2 students to 21 students. Average class sizes were similar across middle- and high-school levels (See Table 6).

Table 6
Summary Statistics for ESOL Class Size, by ESOL Level, and by School Level

General statistics	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Overall ($N = 86$)	2	21	11	4.1
ESOL 1 ($n = 21$)	2	15	9	3.5
ESOL 2 ($n = 20$)	4	20	10	3.6
ESOL 3 ($n = 23$)	7	21	12	4.3
ESOL 4 ($n = 11$)	7	20	14	4.5
ESOL 5 ($n = 11$)	9	20	13	3.0
Middle schools	3	17	10	3.4
High schools	2	21	12	4.4

Instructional Format

During classroom observations, data on the types of instructional strategies employed (based on ESOL look-fors) were also recorded. All of the 86 classrooms observed (100%) employed whole-group instruction, 49 (57%) employed small-group instruction, 68 (79%) used direct instruction, 51 (59%) used guided practice, and 66 (77%) used independent practice (See Table 7). Only 23% of classes observed employed a closure activity that summarized the lesson or previewed a subsequent lesson. While it is expected that each class will employ multiple instructional strategies, not all classes observed employed all instructional strategies during the time observed; thus information presented in Table 7 details minutes for those where the strategies were observed. As with most classroom observations, it is unlikely that one will observe every strategy given the observation is conducted on one day and not across multiple sessions. There is not an expectation, however, for the amount of classroom instruction that should be covered using these varied strategies. In examining the length of time classes employed each instructional strategy, findings revealed the arithmetic mean length of time classes used whole-group instruction was 44 minutes; 16 minutes for small-group instruction; 26 minutes, 27 minutes, and 17 minutes for direct instruction, guided practice, and independent practice, respectively.

Table 7
Summary Statistics for Minutes Spent on Specified Instructional Format ($N = 86$)

General statistics	Min	Max	Mean	Median	SD
Minutes for whole-group instruction	12	85	44	42	18.2
Minutes for small-group instruction ($n = 49$)	2	60	16	14	12.3
Minutes for direct instruction ($n = 68$)	4	74	26	20	17.1
Minutes for guided practices ($n = 51$)	2	80	27	22	19.3
Minutes for independent practices ($n = 66$)	3	74	17	15	11.4

Note. Min = minimum and Max = Maximum. Minutes for closure activity were not recorded during observations.

Table 8 provides detail on the instructional format utilized in schools by ESOL level. Whole-group instruction is not reported in the table since all classes observed used this instructional strategy. For middle schools observed, almost all instructional formats were more frequently observed in ESOL Level 1 than in other ESOL levels, except for direct instruction. Direct instruction was observed more frequently in classes for ESOL Level 3 students than the other two levels (See Table 8). Closure activities were more frequently observed in ESOL Level 1 (36%). For high school classes observed, data revealed that small-group instruction was most frequently observed in ESOL Level 3 and Level 1 (73% and 70%, respectively). Direct instruction was most frequently observed in ESOL Level 5 classes (91%); guided practice in ESOL Level 1 classes (70%); independent practice most frequently in ESOL Levels 5, 1, and 2 (82%, 80%, and 80%, respectively). Closure activities were more frequently observed in ESOL Level 1 (30%) and Level 2 (30%).

Table 8
Percentage of Classes Observed Employing Instructional Format by
ESOL Level and School Level ($N = 86$)

Instructional format	ESOL 1		ESOL 2		ESOL 3		ESOL 4	ESOL 5
	Middle	High	Middle	High	Middle	High	High	High
Small group	64	70	50	60	33	73	55	55
Direct instruction	82	80	70	70	92	64	73	91
Guided practice	82	70	40	60	42	55	55	64
Independent practice	91	80	70	80	67	73	73	82
Closure	36	30	20	30	17	27	9	18

Middle school. Of the 33 classrooms observed at the middle school level, all (100%) employed whole-group instruction, 16 (48%) employed small-group instruction, 28 (85%) used direct instruction, 19 (58%) used guided practice, and 25 (76%) used independent practice (See Table 9). In examining the length of time classes employed each instructional strategy, findings revealed the arithmetic mean length of time classes used whole group instruction was 48 minutes, 18 minutes for small-group instruction, 32 minutes for direct instruction, 29 minutes for guided practice, and 20 for independent practice. Only 24% of classes observed had a closure activity.

Table 9
Summary Time Allotted for Specified Formats of
Instruction for Middle School ESOL Observations ($N = 33$)

General statistics	Min	Max	Mean	Median	SD
Minutes for whole-group instruction	12	85	48	45	20.2
Minutes for small-group instruction ($n = 16$)	2	50	18	14	12.4
Minutes for direct instruction ($n = 28$)	5	74	32	26	19.1
Minutes for guided practice ($n = 19$)	2	80	29	22	20.6
Minutes for independent practice ($n = 25$)	5	74	20	15	15.1

Note. Min = minimum and Max = Maximum.

High school. Similar to what was observed for the middle school level, all (100%) of the 53 high school ESOL classes observed used whole-group instruction with students. Of the classrooms observed, 33 (62%) employed small-group instruction, 40 (75%) used direct instruction, 32 (60%) used guided practice, and 41 (77%) used independent practice (see Table 10). Findings revealed the average length of time classes used whole group instruction was 42 minutes, 16 minutes for small-group instruction, 21 minutes for direct instruction, 26 minutes for guided practice, and 15 for independent practice. Twenty-three percent of classes observed used a closure activity.

Table 10
Summary Time Allotted for Specified Formats of Instruction for
High School ESOL Observations ($N = 53$)

General statistics	Min	Max	Mean	Median	SD
Minutes for whole-group instruction	13	85	42	40	16.5
Minutes for small-group instruction ($n = 33$)	3	60	16	13	12.3
Minutes for direct instruction ($n = 40$)	4	67	21	17	14.1
Minutes for guided practice ($n = 32$)	6	68	26	20	18.6
Minutes for independent practice ($n = 41$)	3	34	15	15	8.0

Note. Min = minimum and Max = Maximum.

Instructional Practices

Evaluation specialists observed for activities that should occur in each classroom based on the ESOL Look-Fors document as well as the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) English Language Proficiency Curriculum Standards. Observers recorded the number of times each instructional practice was viewed. Findings are reported in Table 11. Across the 86 classes observed, all (100%) revealed students responding appropriately to oral questions and prompts from teachers. Moreover, almost all encouraged active participation of ESOL students (91%) and maintained a climate of respect for students' ideas, questions, and contributions (98%). Nearly all observed classes revealed collaborative working relationships between teachers and students (93%). The strategies used less frequently include collaborative working relationships between students (74%) and multiple and repetitive strategies such as visuals and nonverbal communication (70%). This was still the majority of classes, but lower compared to other strategies.

Some practices were observed less frequently in classrooms. About three fifths of observed classrooms showed students recognize, acquire, and interpret meaning of vocabulary through exposure to text (59%) (See Table 11). Similarly, in about one half of observed classes, students practice reading silently (to themselves) (50%). The results for this finding may be impacted by ESOL level as this would not necessarily be an expectation for students enrolled in ESOL 1. Table 12 reveals that this practice was observed in only 38% of ESOL 1 classes compared to at least 50% for ESOL Levels 2, 3, and 4 classes. Interestingly, students practiced reading silently to themselves in only 36% of ESOL Level 5 classes observed (Table 12). In a little more than one third of classes (36%), students use of prewriting strategies (e.g., brainstorming, previewing, discussion before writing) to compose text for a variety of purposes were observed (Table 11). An examination of this practice by ESOL level revealed 48% of ESOL Level 1 classes, 40% of ESOL Level 2 classes, 35% of ESOL Level 3 classes, 27% of ESOL Level 4 classes and 18% of ESOL Level 5 classes implemented this practice (Table 12).

Some differences were found in instructional practices when examining implementation by ESOL level (See Table 12). Explicit modeling of skills language in a structured and controlled manner by teachers was observed more frequently in ESOL Levels 1 and 2 (91% and 80%, respectively), than in ESOL Levels 3, 4, and 5 (57%, 46%, and 46%, respectively). This finding would be expected as students in the earlier ESOL levels are new to learning the language, which would require teachers to be more deliberate in their instructional practices. A similar practice, the teacher explicitly models skills/strategies to learn language, was also observed more frequently for ESOL Levels 1, 2, and 3 (81%, 75%, and 74%, respectively) than for ESOL Levels 4 and 5 (55% and 36%, respectively).

Table 11
Percentage of Classrooms Observed Implementing Specified ESOL Instructional Practices (N = 86)

Practice	Observed	Not observed
Students respond appropriately to questions and prompts from the teacher given orally for a variety of purposes (listening and speaking).	100.0	0.0
There is a climate of respect for students' ideas, questions, and contributions. (n = 85)	97.6	2.4
Interactions reflect collaborative working relationships between teacher and students.	93.0	7.0
The teacher uses assessment (formal or informal) to monitor students' comprehension and guide instruction (e.g., checking for understanding).	91.9	8.1
The teacher encourages all students to share ideas. Active participation of all was encouraged.	91.9	8.1
The teacher provides opportunities for students to discuss and define words (e.g., checks prior knowledge of word) that may not be known (new vocabulary words).	89.5	10.5
Students ask questions related to the lesson for a variety of purposes. (Speaking)	88.4	11.6
Students use standard academic American English grammar to develop accuracy and clarity in oral communication. (Speaking)	88.4	11.6
Students read orally with accuracy and appropriate pronunciation, intonation, pacing, and expression. (Reading)	83.7	16.3
The teacher provides structured opportunities for the students to practice and extend language with each other in an authentic and engaged way.	79.1	20.9
Interactions reflect collaborative working relationships between students (e.g., students worked together, talked with each other about the lesson).	74.4	25.6
The instruction incorporates multiple and repetitive strategies such as visuals and nonverbal communication.	69.8	30.2
The teacher explicitly models skills/strategies to learn language (e.g., writing on the white board, showing how to use a glossary).	68.6	31.4
Students participate in basic interpersonal and academic discourse using appropriate verbal and nonverbal behavior (student-to-student interaction). (Listening)	68.6	31.4
The teacher explicitly models skills language in a structured and controlled way (e.g., rephrasing, restating, chunking language).	67.4	32.6
Students compose text to express personal ideas and academic information in order to inform, to describe, to explain, and to persuade. (Writing)	64.0	36.0
Students recognize, acquire, and interpret meaning of vocabulary through exposure to text (e.g., use of a variety of resources—word wall, dictionary, journals).	59.3	40.7
Students practice reading silently (to themselves).	50.0	50.0
Students use prewriting strategies (e.g., brainstorming, previewing, discussion before writing) to compose text for a variety of purposes. (Writing)	36.0	64.0

Table 12
Percentage of Classrooms Observed Implementing Specified ESOL Instructional Practices by ESOL Level (N = 86)

Practice	ESOL 1 N = 21		ESOL 2 N = 20		ESOL 3 N = 23		ESOL 4 N = 11		ESOL 5 N = 11	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1. The teacher uses assessment (formal or informal) to monitor students' comprehension and guide instruction (e.g., checking for understanding).	21	100	17	85.0	22	95.7	10	90.9	9	81.8
2. The teacher provides opportunities for students to discuss and define words (e.g., checks prior knowledge of word) that may not be known (new vocabulary words).	19	90.5	19	95.0	19	82.6	11	100	9	81.8
3. The teacher explicitly models skills language in a structured and controlled way (e.g., rephrasing, restating, chunking language).	19	90.5	16	80.0	13	56.5	5	45.5	5	45.5
4. The teacher provides structured opportunities for the students to practice and extend language with each other in an authentic and engaged way.	19	90.5	17	85.0	19	82.6	7	63.6	6	54.5
5. The teacher explicitly models skills/strategies to learn language (e.g., writing on the white board, showing how to use a glossary).	17	81.0	15	75.0	17	73.9	6	54.5	4	36.4
6. Students respond appropriately to questions and prompts from the teacher given orally for a variety of purposes (listening and speaking).	21	100	20	100	23	100	11	100	11	100
7. Students participate in basic interpersonal and academic discourse using appropriate verbal and nonverbal behavior (student-to-student interaction). (Listening)	16	76.2	15	75.0	14	60.9	7	63.6	7	63.6
8. Students ask questions related to the lesson for a variety of purposes. (Speaking)	18	85.7	17	85.0	22	95.7	9	81.8	10	90.9
9. Students use standard academic American English grammar to develop accuracy and clarity in oral communication. (Speaking)	19	90.5	19	95.0	18	78.3	9	81.8	11	100
10. Students read orally with accuracy and appropriate pronunciation, intonation, pacing, and expression. (Reading)	18	85.7	15	75.0	22	95.7	9	81.8	8	72.7
11. Students practice reading silently (to themselves).	8	38.1	10	50.0	14	60.9	7	63.6	4	36.4
12. Students recognize, acquire, and interpret meaning of vocabulary through exposure to text (e.g., use of a variety of resources—word wall, dictionary, journals).	16	76.2	14	70.0	9	39.1	8	72.7	4	36.4
13. Students compose text to express personal ideas and academic information in order to inform, to describe, to explain, and to persuade. (Writing)	13	61.9	14	70.0	15	65.2	5	45.5	8	72.7
14. Students use prewriting strategies (e.g., brainstorming, previewing, discussion before writing) to compose text for a variety of purposes. (Writing)	10	47.6	8	40.0	8	34.8	3	27.3	2	18.2
15. The teacher encourages all students to share ideas. Active participation of all was encouraged.	21	100.0	18	90.0	22	95.7	10	90.9	8	72.7
16. There is a climate of respect for students' ideas, questions, and contributions.	20*	100.0	19	95.0	23	100	11	100	10	90.9
17. The instruction incorporates multiple and repetitive strategies such as visuals and nonverbal communication.	18	85.7	14	70.0	18	78.3	5	45.5	5	45.5
18. Interactions reflect collaborative working relationships between students (e.g., students worked together, talked with each other about the lesson).	16	76.2	15	75.0	18	78.3	8	72.7	7	63.6
19. Interactions reflect collaborative working relationships between teacher and students.	20	95.2	18	90.0	23	100	10	90.9	9	81.8

*Data missing for one observation.

Middle school. All (100%) of the 33 middle school ESOL classes observed used whole-group instruction with students, and a climate of respect for students' ideas, questions, and contributions was observed in all classes. Of the 33 middle school ESOL classrooms observed, 97% of classes revealed teachers using formal or informal assessment to monitor students' comprehension and teachers encouraging all students to share ideas (See Table 13). The majority of classrooms observed (70% or more) implemented 16 of the 19 practices listed on the observation checklist. Areas that were less frequently observed in middle school classrooms observed were students participate in basic interpersonal and academic discourse using appropriate verbal and nonverbal behavior (student-to-student interaction) (67%); students practice reading silently (to themselves) (49%); and students use prewriting strategies (e.g., brainstorming, previewing, discussion before writing) to compose text for a variety of purposes (49%).

High school. Similar to what was observed for the middle school level, 100% of the 53 classes observed used whole-group instruction with students. Of the 19 practices observed for in high school ESOL classrooms, 12 practices were observed in at least 70% of classes (See Table 14). Some highlights include teachers providing opportunities for students to discuss and define words (87%); collaborative working relationships between teacher and students (93%); the use of informal and formal assessments by teachers to monitor students' comprehension (89%). The remaining seven practices were observed less frequently, with prewriting strategies being observed in only 28% of high school ESOL classrooms.

Table 13
Percentage of Middle School Classrooms Observed Implementing
Specified ESOL Instructional Practices (*N* = 33)

Practice	Observed	Not observed
Students respond appropriately to questions and prompts from the teacher given orally for a variety of purposes (listening and speaking).	100.0	0.0
There was a climate of respect for students' ideas, questions, and contributions. (<i>n</i> = 32)	100.0	0.0
The teacher uses assessment (formal or informal) to monitor students' comprehension and guide instruction (e.g., checking for understanding).	97.0	3.0
The teacher encourages all students to share ideas. Active participation of all is encouraged.	97.0	3.0
The teacher provides opportunities for students to discuss and define words (e.g., checks prior knowledge of word) that may not be known (new vocabulary words).	93.9	6.1
The teacher explicitly models skills/strategies to learn language (e.g., writing on the white board, showing how to use a glossary).	93.9	6.1
Interactions reflect collaborative working relationships between teacher and students.	93.9	6.1
Students ask questions related to the lesson for a variety of purposes. (Speaking)	90.9	9.1
The instruction incorporates multiple and repetitive strategies such as visuals and nonverbal communication.	90.9	9.1
The teacher provides structured opportunities for the students to practice and extend language with each other in an authentic and engaged way.	87.9	12.1
Students read orally with accuracy and appropriate pronunciation, intonation, pacing, and expression. (Reading)	84.8	15.2
Students use standard academic American English grammar to develop accuracy and clarity in oral communication. (Speaking)	81.8	18.2
The teacher explicitly models skills language in a structured and controlled way (e.g., rephrasing, restating, chunking language).	75.8	24.2
Students compose text to express personal ideas and academic information in order to inform, to describe, to explain, and to persuade. (Writing)	75.8	24.2
Students recognize, acquire, and interpret meaning of vocabulary through exposure to text (e.g., use of a variety of resources—word wall, dictionary, journals).	72.7	27.3
Interactions reflect collaborative working relationships between students (e.g., students worked together, talked with each other about the lesson).	72.7	27.3
Students participate in basic interpersonal and academic discourse using appropriate verbal and nonverbal behavior (student-to-student interaction). (Listening)	66.7	33.3
Students practice reading silently (to themselves).	48.5	51.5
Students use prewriting strategies (e.g., brainstorming, previewing, discussion before writing) to compose text for a variety of purposes. (Writing)	48.5	51.5

Table 14
Percentage of High School Classrooms Observed Implementing
Specified ESOL Instructional Practices (*N* = 53)

Practice	Observed	Not observed
Students respond appropriately to questions and prompts from the teacher given orally for a variety of purposes (listening and speaking).	100.0	0.0
There is a climate of respect for students' ideas, questions, and contributions.	96.2	3.8
Students use standard academic American English grammar to develop accuracy and clarity in oral communication. (Speaking)	92.5	7.5
Interactions reflect collaborative working relationships between teacher and students.	92.5	7.5
The teacher uses assessment (formal or informal) to monitor students' comprehension and guide instruction (e.g., checking for understanding).	88.7	11.3
The teacher encourages all students to share ideas. Active participation of all is encouraged.	88.7	11.3
The teacher provides opportunities for students to discuss and define words (e.g., checks prior knowledge of word) that may not be known (new vocabulary words).	86.8	13.2
Students ask questions related to the lesson for a variety of purposes. (Speaking)	86.8	13.2
Students read orally with accuracy and appropriate pronunciation, intonation, pacing, and expression. (Reading)	83.0	17.0
Interactions reflect collaborative working relationships between students (e.g., students worked together, talked with each other about the lesson).	75.5	24.5
The teacher provides structured opportunities for the students to practice and extend language with each other in an authentic and engaged way.	73.6	26.4
Students participate in basic interpersonal and academic discourse using appropriate verbal and nonverbal behavior (student-to-student interaction). (Listening)	69.8	30.2
The teacher explicitly models skills language in a structured and controlled way (e.g., rephrasing, restating, chunking language).	62.3	37.7
Students compose text to express personal ideas and academic information in order to inform, to describe, to explain, and to persuade. (Writing)	56.6	43.4
The instruction incorporates multiple and repetitive strategies such as visuals and nonverbal communication.	56.6	43.4
The teacher explicitly models skills/strategies to learn language (e.g., writing on the white board, showing how to use a glossary).	52.8	47.2
Students practice reading silently (to themselves).	50.9	49.1
Students recognize, acquire, and interpret meaning of vocabulary through exposure to text (e.g., use of a variety of resources—word wall, dictionary, journals).	50.9	49.1
Students use prewriting strategies (e.g., brainstorming, previewing, discussion before writing) to compose text for a variety of purposes. (Writing)	28.3	71.7

Evaluation Question 3: What are the experiences of students receiving ESOL services?

To gain insight into the implementation of ESOL services as experienced by students, surveys were administered to students who were taught by teachers who were observed as a part of this evaluation. Surveys were sent via MCPS interoffice mail to ESOL teachers who were observed in the fall. Surveys were provided in the six most prominent languages for students in ESOL Levels 1 and 2. ESOL students in Levels 3 through 5 completed the survey in English.

A total of 1,032 students completed the survey. Fifty-two percent of students who responded to the survey were male and the remaining 48% were female (Figure 1). Slightly more than one half of respondents reported their first language as Spanish. Other first languages identified included French (11%), Chinese (6%), Amharic (4%), and Vietnamese (3%). There were more respondents at the high school level (66%) than middle school (34%) (Figure 2) (See Table 15). Further disaggregation by grade level reveals a high of 26% were in Grade 9 to a low of 9% enrolled in Grade 12. The distribution of students across ESOL levels who responded to the survey were similar (See Table 16).

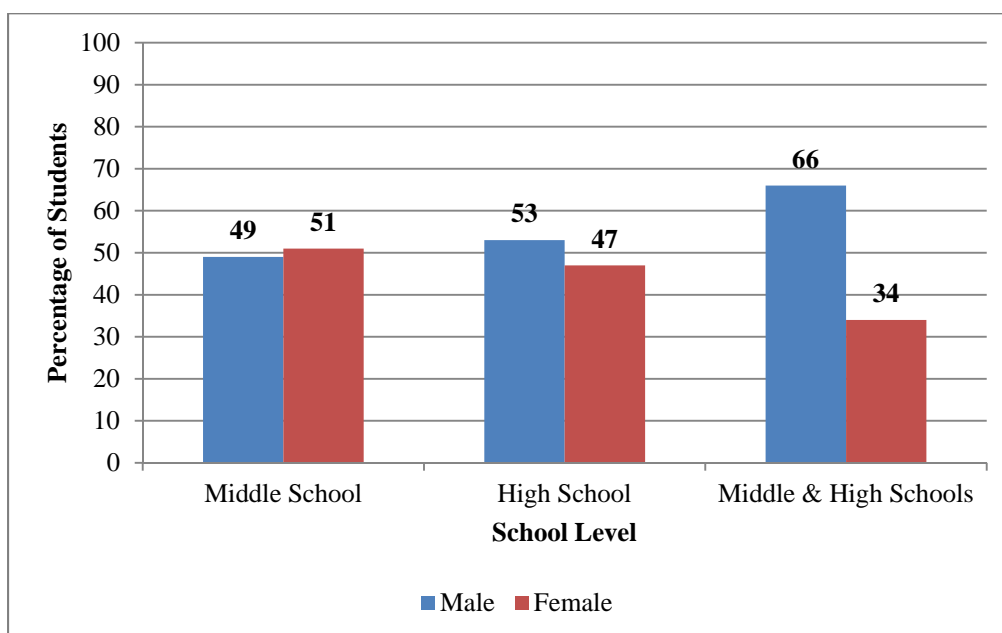


Figure 1. Gender breakdown for percentage of ESOL students who responded to the survey, disaggregated by school level.

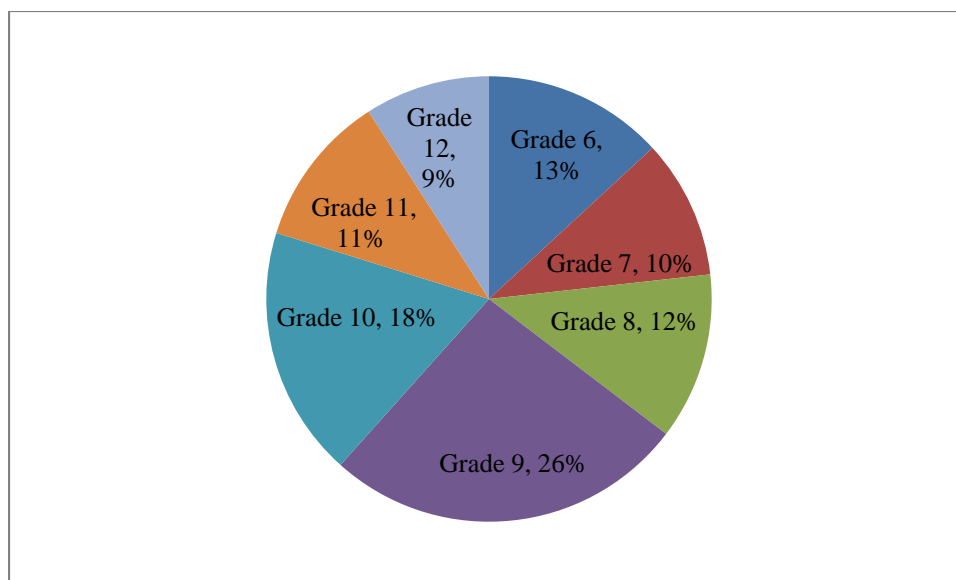


Figure 2. Pie chart showing distribution of ESOL student respondents separated by grade level.

Table 15
Number and Percentage of ESOL Student
Respondents by Grade Level ($N = 1,032$)

Grade level	Number	Percent
6	131	13
7	101	10
8	116	12
9	258	26
10	176	18
11	112	11
12	85	9

Note. Not all students provided this information; thus total does not add to 1,032.

Table 16
Percentage of ESOL Student
Respondents by ESOL Level ($N = 1,032$)

ESOL level	Number	Percent
Level 1	218	21
Level 2	225	22
Level 3	280	27
Level 4	154	15
Level 5	151	15

Note. Not all students provided this information; thus total does not add to 1,032.

Table 17
Percentage of Middle School ESOL Student
Respondents by ESOL Level (N = 354)

ESOL level	Number	Percent
Level 1	117	33
Level 2	99	28
Level 3	137	39

Note. Not all students provided this information; thus total does not add to 354.

Table 18
Percentage of High School ESOL Student
Respondents by ESOL Level (N = 678)

ESOL level	Number	Percent
Level 1	101	15
Level 2	126	19
Level 3	143	21
Level 4	154	23
Level 5	151	22

Note. Not all students provided this information; thus total does not add to 678.

Students were asked to respond to a series of questions indicating their level of agreement with statements about being an ESOL student in their school. The majority of ESOL students who completed the survey agreed (strongly agree or agree) that they feel welcome at their school (Table 19). Some research suggests that feeling welcome at school can impact the success of ESOL students. In addition to feeling welcome, 96% of students agreed with the statement “An important part of succeeding in my school is speaking English.” Along similar lines, 59% of ESOL students agreed they were at a disadvantage in their content-area courses because English is their second language.

Students were also asked their level of agreement with statements about their ability to understand teachers, pass courses, and receive support in content courses (See Table 19). Ninety-six percent of ESOL students who responded to the survey agreed they are able to understand the vocabulary used by teachers in their ESOL classes. In comparison, 90% agreed they are able to understand the vocabulary used by teachers in their content area classes. Students were also asked about their ability to understand spoken (oral) instructions from teachers. The majority of ESOL students who responded to the survey (97%) agreed they are able to understand spoken instructions from ESOL teachers. Similarly, 92% of respondents agreed they were able to understand oral instructions from teachers in their content area classes. Most respondents agreed their English language skills are sufficient to allow passing all courses (91%) and to perform well on required tests (86%). Most respondents to the survey (89%) agreed they receive good academic support in their school content areas such as math, science, social studies, and the arts.

Table 19
Number and Percentage of ESOL Student Agreement With Statements ($N = 1032$)

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
I feel welcome at my school. ($n = 1030$)	489	47	486	47	36	3	19	2
An important part of succeeding in my school is speaking English. ($n = 1024$)	617	60	369	36	28	3	10	1
I am able to understand the vocabulary my teacher uses in my ESOL classes. ($n = 1031$)	571	55	426	41	26	3	8	1
I am able to understand the vocabulary my teacher uses in my content area classes. ($n = 1029$)	360	35	566	55	91	9	12	1
I am able to understand spoken (oral) instructions from my teacher in my ESOL classes. ($n = 1031$)	584	57	409	40	34	3	4	0
I am able to understand spoken (oral) instructions from my teacher in my content area classes. ($n = 1024$)	391	38	555	54	68	7	10	1
My current English language skills are good enough for me to at least pass all my courses this year. ($n = 1029$)	495	48	441	43	72	7	21	2
My current English language skills are good enough for me to perform well on required tests. ($n = 1029$)	342	33	543	53	126	12	18	2
I am at a disadvantage in courses because English is my second language. ($n = 1020$)	210	21	385	38	300	29	125	12
I receive good academic support in areas such as math, science, social studies, and the arts in my school. ($n = 1029$)	447	43	473	46	86	8	23	2
In my school, ESOL teachers have an assigned room for ESOL instruction as needed. ($n = 1025$)	550	54	403	39	51	5	21	2

In addition to experiences in schools related to understanding language and feeling welcome, survey respondents were asked to indicate whether they practice the four skill areas that the ESOL program emphasizes: listening, reading, writing, and speaking (See Table 20). The majority of ESOL respondents indicated practicing speaking English (94%), writing English (98%), listening to English (98%), and speaking English (97%) in their ESOL classes. Students were also asked to indicate their level of practice with these four skills in their content area classes. Eighty-seven percent indicated practicing speaking English in their content area classes. Additionally, 90% practiced writing English, 94% practiced listening to English, and 89% practiced speaking English in their content area classes. Figure 3 provides a visual of the responses by school level.

Table 20
Number and Percentage of ESOL Student Indication of
Practicing Four Skills in Specified Class ($N = 1032$)

	Yes		No	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
In my ESOL classes, I practice speaking English.	964	94	64	6
In my ESOL classes, I practice writing English.	1011	98	17	2
In my ESOL classes, I practice listening to English.	1003	98	23	2
In my ESOL classes, I practice reading English.	992	97	33	3
In my content area classes, I practice speaking English.	891	87	136	13
In my content area classes, I practice writing English.	928	90	99	10
In my content area classes, I practice listening to English.	965	94	61	6
In my content classes, I practice reading English.	916	89	110	11

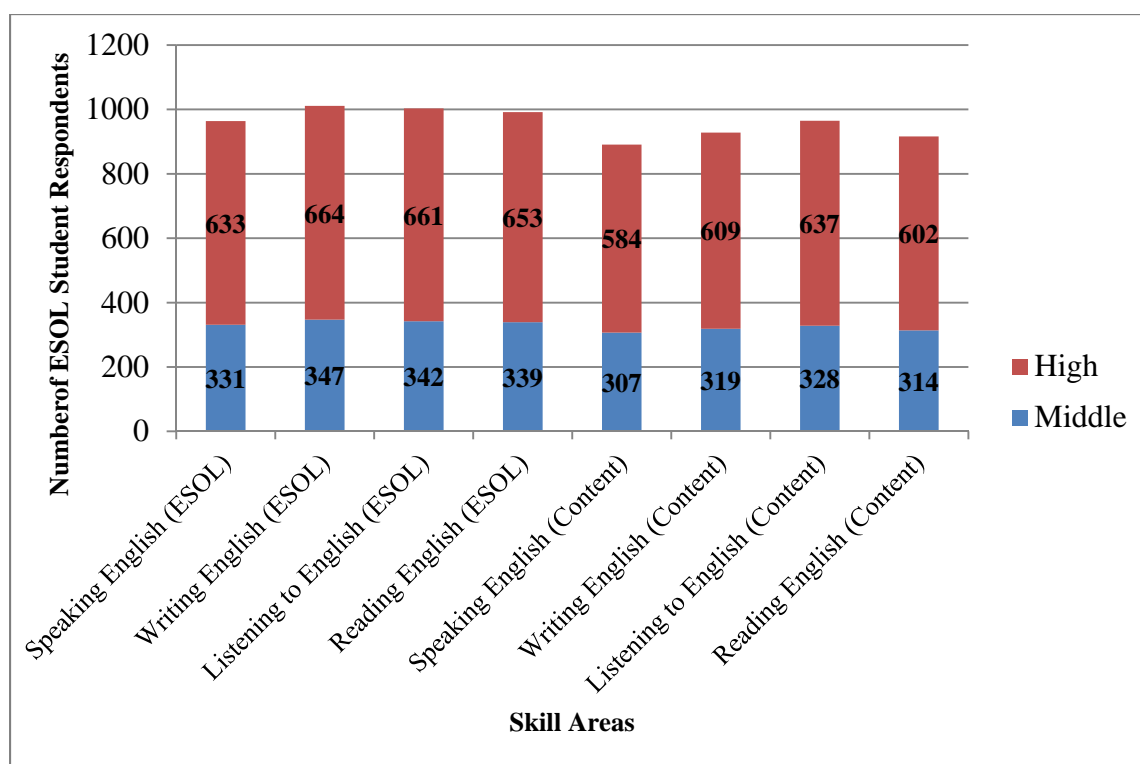


Figure 3. Stacked bar graph showing number of ESOL students reporting practice of the four skill areas emphasized in the ESOL program in ESOL classes and content classes disaggregated by school level.

Students were also asked to identify which of the four skills they believed they improved most during the 2010–2011 school year (See Table 21). Almost 40% of respondents believed they improved their speaking skills, followed by 29% who believed they improved their writing skills the most. Figures 4 and 5 provide findings for this question disaggregated by school level and ESOL level, respectively. In contrast, students were asked to indicate which of the four skills they believed they needed to improve for the following school year. A similar pattern was revealed in that 37% reporting speaking and 30% reporting writing. Figures 6 and 7 provide findings for skills needing improvement disaggregated by school level and ESOL level, respectively.

Table 21
Number and Percentage of ESOL Student Indication of Four Skills
Improved or in Need of Improvement ($N = 1032$)

	Writing		Reading		Speaking		Listening	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Which one of the four key English language skills do you think you improved the most this year? ($n = 1021$)	293	29	186	18	385	38	157	15
Which one of the four key English language skills do you think you need to improve the most next year? ($n = 1011$)	302	30	202	20	373	37	134	13

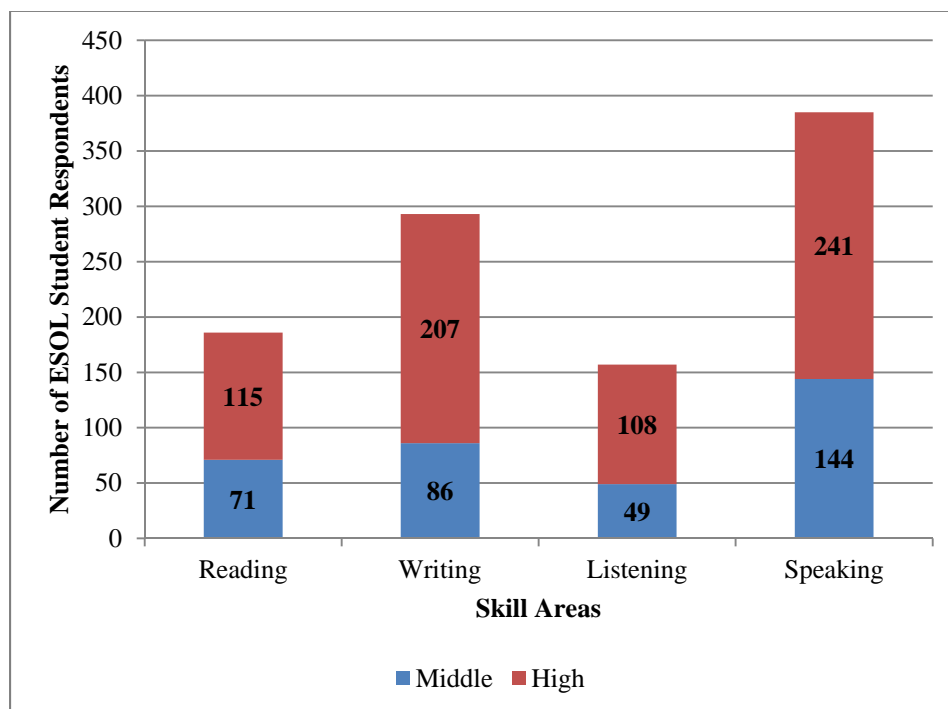


Figure 4. Stacked bar graph showing number of ESOL students reporting which of the four skill areas most improved during the 2010–2011 school year disaggregated by school level.

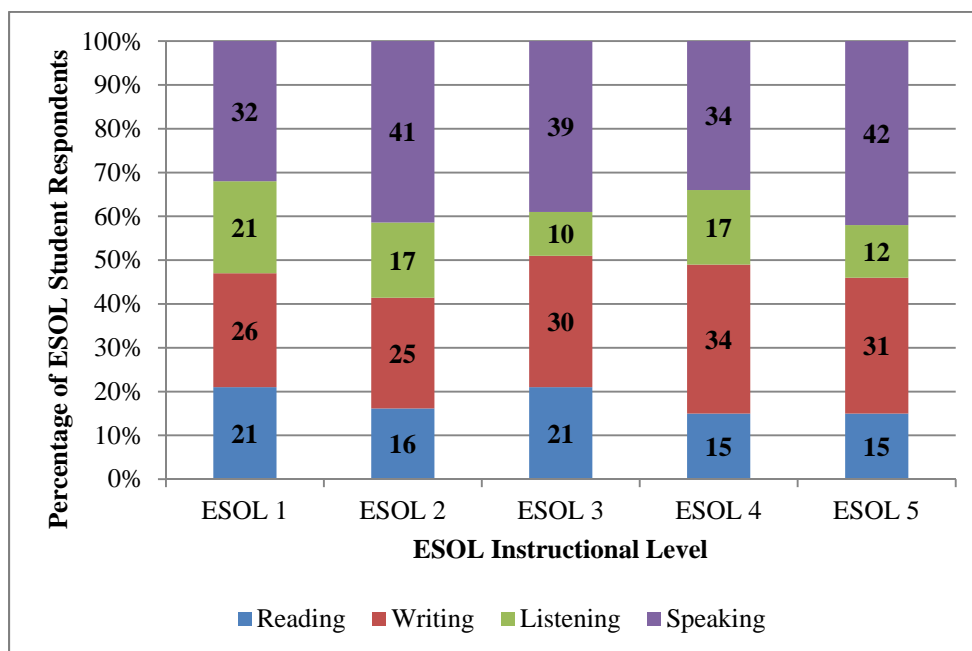


Figure 5. Stacked bar graph showing percentage of middle and high school ESOL students reporting which of the four skill areas most improved during the 2010–2011 school year disaggregated by ESOL level.

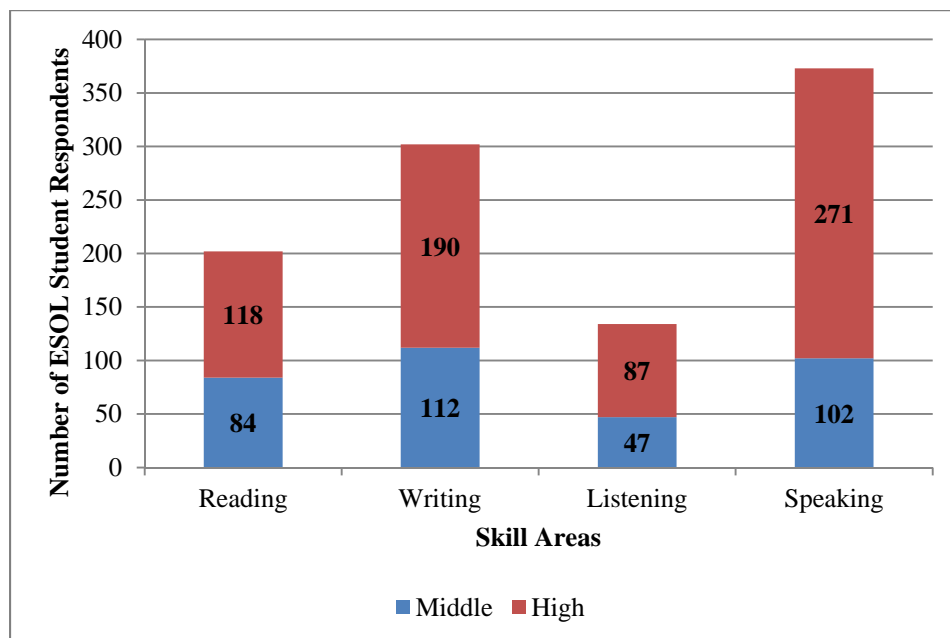


Figure 6. Stacked bar graph showing number of middle and high ESOL students reporting which of the four skill areas needing improvement during the 2011–2012 school year disaggregated by school level.

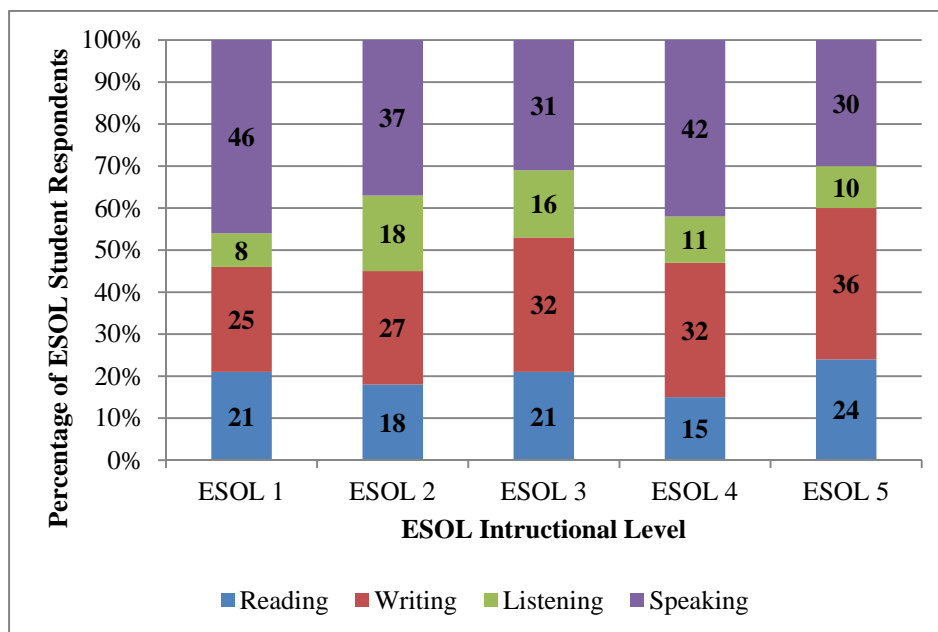


Figure 7. Stacked bar graph showing percentage of middle and high school ESOL students reporting which of the four skill areas needing improvement during the 2011–2012 school year disaggregated by ESOL level.

Informal practicing of the English language can assist ESOL students with language development. To ascertain students' level of practicing language, respondents were asked to indicate the language they generally use when speaking to friends in classes. Over half of respondents reported speaking both their first language and English in classes when speaking to their friends (56%). Slightly more than one third of respondents reported speaking English to their friends in classes. Between 52% and 65% of respondents across ESOL levels reported speaking both English and their first language to friends in classes. For ESOL Level 1 students, 65% reported speaking both English and their first language to their friends in classes. Figures 8 and 9 detail findings disaggregated by school level and ESOL level.

Table 22
Number and Percentage of ESOL Student Indication of
Language Spoken in and out of Classes ($N = 1032$)

	My first language		English		Both my first language and English	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
In my classes, I generally speak to my friends in—	82	8	367	36	573	56
Outside class, I generally speak to my friends in—	237	23	262	26	525	51

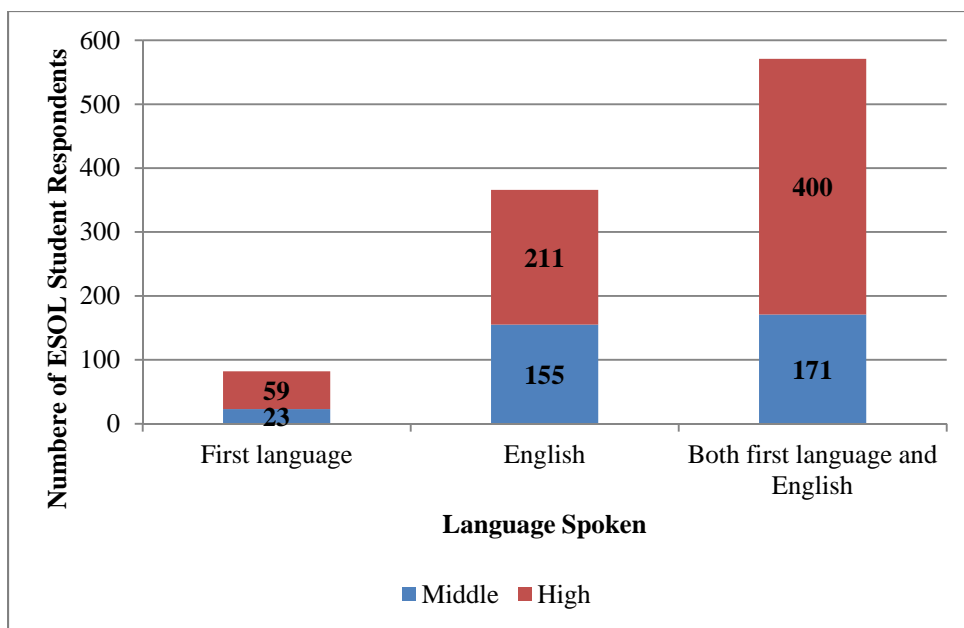


Figure 8. Stacked bar graph showing number of middle and high school ESOL students reporting which language they speak with friends in class disaggregated by school level.

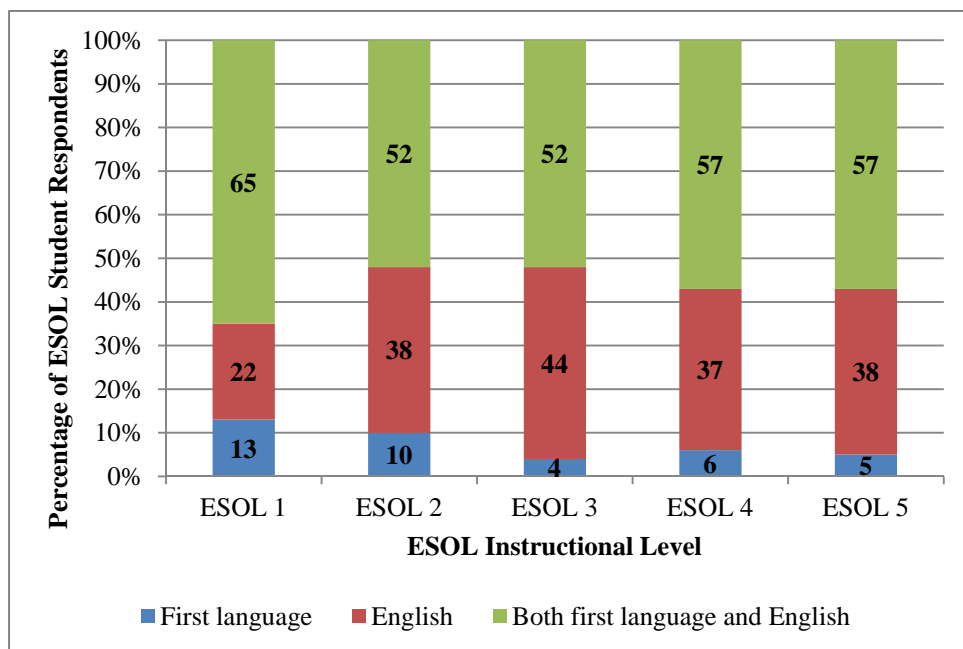


Figure 9. Stacked bar graph showing percentage of ESOL students reporting which language they speak with friends in class disaggregated by ESOL level.

In addition to language spoken to friends in class, students were asked to identify what language they typically used outside of classes when speaking with friends. Slightly over one half of respondents (51%) reported speaking both their first language and English outside of classes when speaking to their friends. About one quarter of respondents reported generally speaking to friends in English outside of classes. At the high school level, 177 students (26% of high school

respondents) reported speaking with friends in their first language outside of classes (See Figure 10). About one third of middle school respondents (115 students) reported speaking to friends outside of class in English. About 50% of respondents at each of the ESOL levels reported speaking both English and their first language to their friends in classes (See Figure 11).

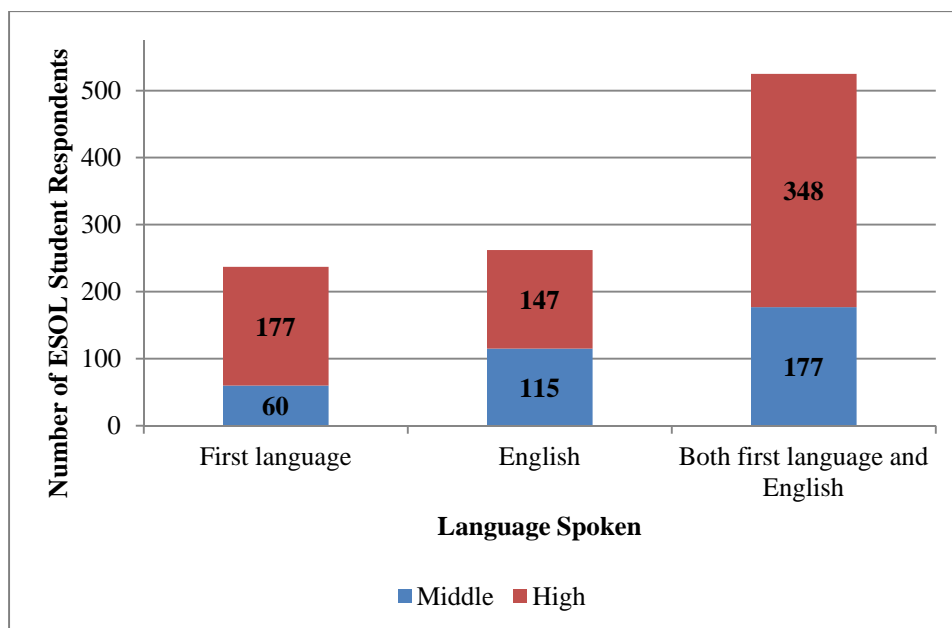


Figure 10. Stacked bar graph showing number of middle and high school ESOL students reporting which language they speak with friends outside of class disaggregated by school level.

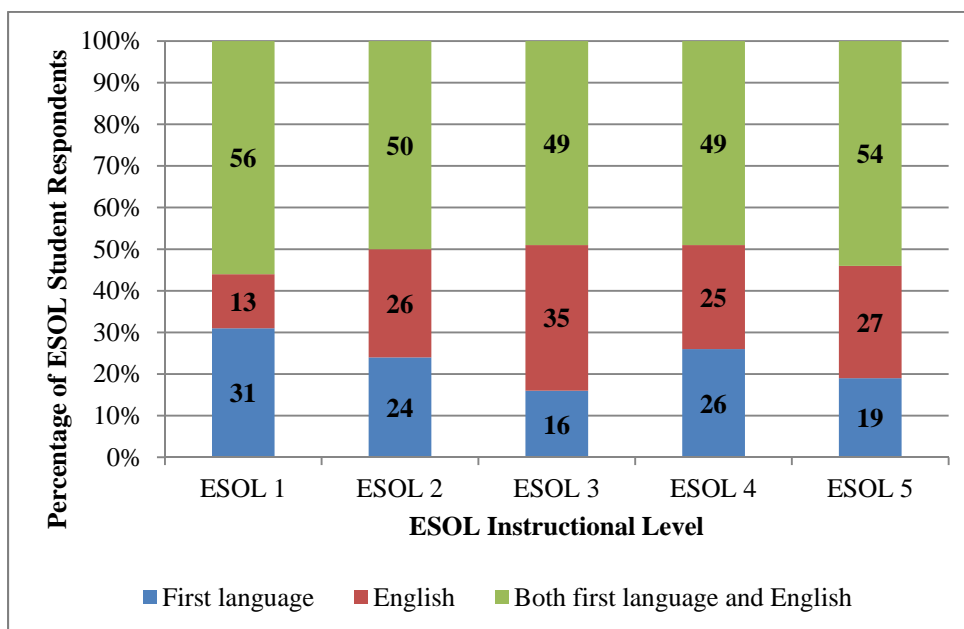


Figure 11. Stacked bar graph showing percentage of ESOL students reporting which language they speak with friends outside of class disaggregated by ESOL level.

ESOL Students were asked to rate their English language skills. About one third of respondents rated themselves as intermediate, 26% rated themselves as high, 20% selected advanced, 11% selected very high, and 12% selected beginner (See Table 23). Disaggregation by school level and ESOL level reveals a similar pattern to the overall results (See Figures 12 and 13).

Table 23
Number and Percentage of ESOL Student
Rating of English Language Skills ($N = 1032$)

Rating	Number	Percent
Beginner	119	12
Intermediate	327	32
High	265	26
Very High	110	11
Advance	200	20
Total	1021	100

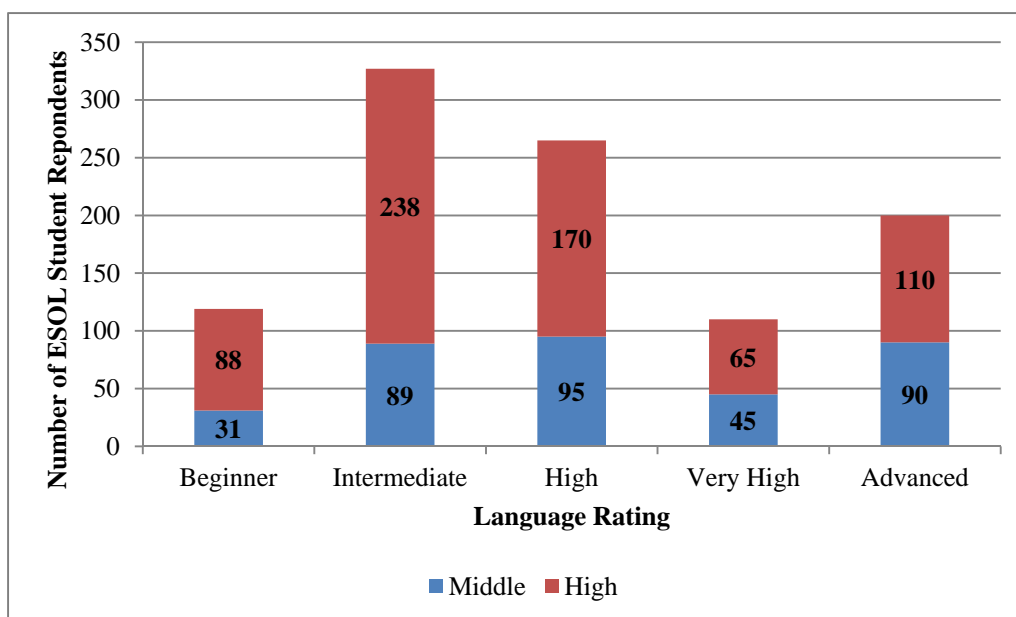


Figure 12. Stacked bar graph showing number of ESOL students rating of their English language skills disaggregated by school level.

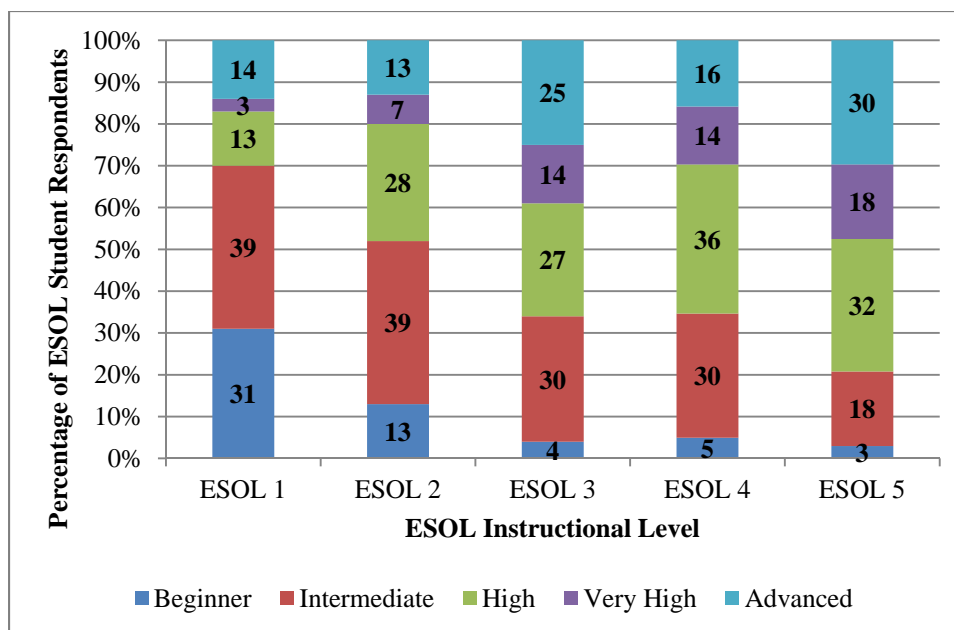


Figure 13. Stacked bar graph showing percentage of ESOL students rating of their English language skills disaggregated by ESOL level.

Time spent in ESOL instruction and English language progress is essential for ESOL students as it promotes development of proficiency in academic English. Survey respondents were asked to indicate the amount of time they spent each week in ESOL instruction at school and developing their English language skills outside of school. Slightly more than one half of respondents reported spending five to six hours (27%) or seven or more hours (28%) in ESOL instruction at their school (See Table 24). In contrast, about one third of respondents report spending one to two hours (32%) outside of classes developing their English language skills.

Table 24
Number and Percentage of Hours Spent in ESOL Instruction and
Developing Language Skills by ESOL Students (N = 1032)

	None		1–2 Hours		3–4 Hours		5–6 Hours		7 + Hours	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
How many hours per week do you spend in ESOL instruction at your school?	28	3	191	19	242	24	271	27	281	28
How many hours per week do you spend outside of your classes developing your English language skills?	101	10	332	32	222	22	127	12	241	24

High school students reported spending more hours in ESOL instruction than students at the middle school level when disaggregated (See Figure 14). Two hundred and three students at the high school level (30% of high school respondents) reported spending seven hours or more per week in ESOL instruction at their school. In comparison, 78 students at the middle school level (22% of middle school respondents) reported spending seven or more hours in ESOL instruction at their school.

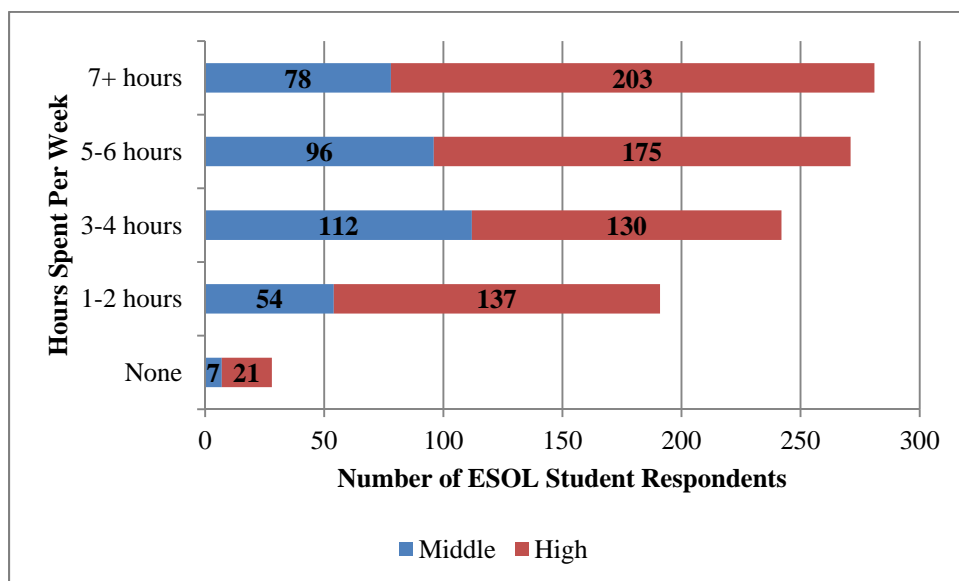


Figure 14. Number of ESOL students providing number of hours spent in ESOL instruction each week disaggregated by school level.

Further disaggregation of hours spent in ESOL instruction each week by ESOL level reveals that 55% of students enrolled in ESOL Level 1 reported spending seven hours or more in ESOL instruction at their school. Interestingly, 44% of students enrolled in ESOL 4, which is only high school students, reported spending five to six hours in ESOL instruction at their school (Figure 15).

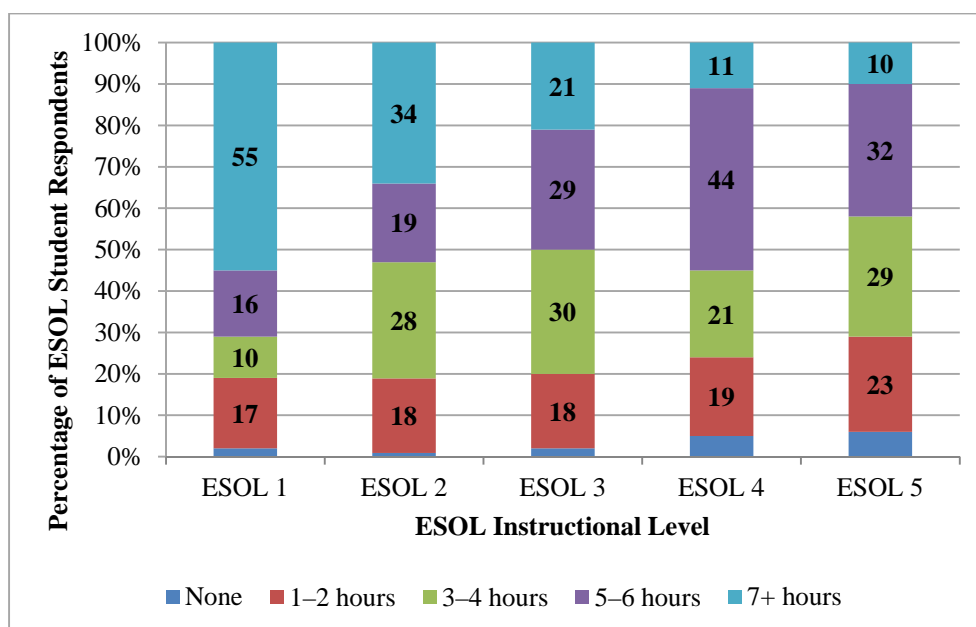


Figure 15. Percentage of ESOL students number of hours spent in ESOL instruction each week disaggregated by ESOL level.

A slightly higher percentage of high school students reported spending seven or more hours per week outside of classes developing their English language skills compared to middle school students (25% vs. 21%, respectively). Comparable proportions of students at middle and high schools reported spending one to two hours outside of classes developing English language skills (33% for middle school and 32% for high school). Figure 16 provides the numbers of students in middle and high schools reporting hours spent developing English language skills outside class.

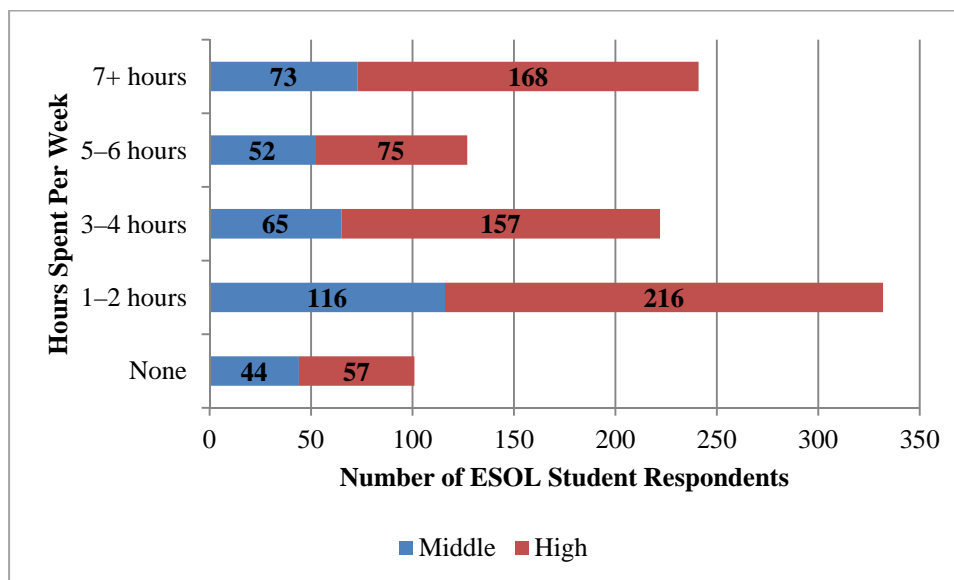


Figure 16. Number of ESOL students providing number of hours spent developing English language skills outside classes each week disaggregated by school level.

Disaggregation of hours spent each week developing English language skills outside classes by ESOL level reveals that 44% of students enrolled in ESOL Level 1 reported spending one to two hours. Data reveal that 34% of students enrolled in ESOL Level 5 reported spending seven or more hours developing English language skills outside of classes. This pattern may reflect the fact that students feel more comfortable speaking English since they are in a higher level of ESOL (Figure 17).

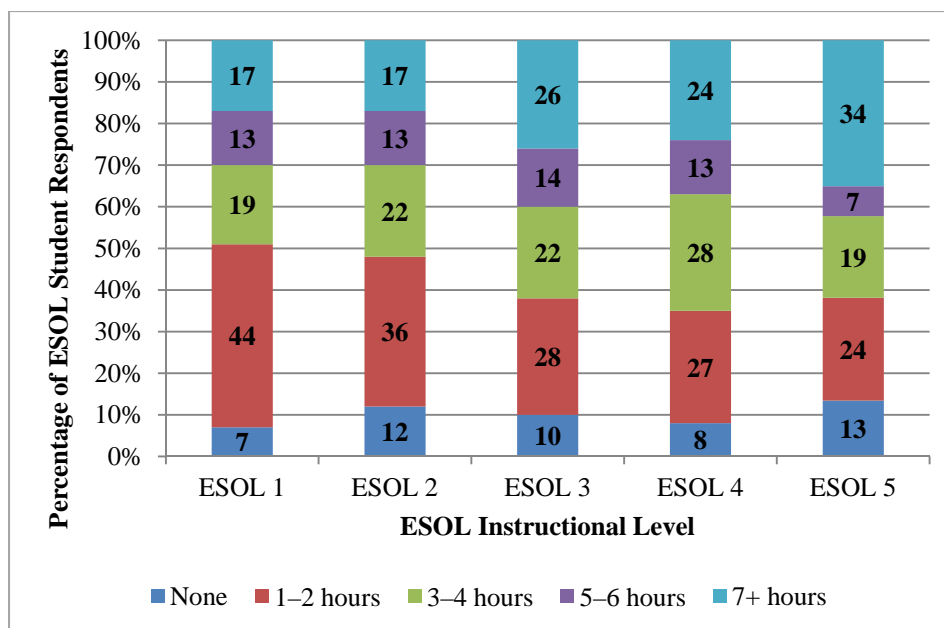


Figure 17. Percentage of ESOL students number of hours spent developing English language skills outside classes each week disaggregated by ESOL level.

The importance of improving academic and conversational English during the 2010–2011 school year were asked of student survey respondents. The majority of respondents reported that improving conversational English and academic English were very important (80% and 82%, respectively) (Table 25). Eighty percent of high school ESOL students who responded (537 students) to the survey deemed improving conversational English during the 2010–2011 school year very important to them (Figure 18). Similarly, as illustrated in Figure 20, 298 students (85% of middle school respondents) reported improving academic English as very important. Figures 18 through 21 detail level of importance for ESOL students with regard to improving conversational and academic English.

Table 25
Number and Percentage of Students Indicating Level of Importance of
Improving Conversational and Academic English ($N = 1032$)

	Not very important		Somewhat important		Very important	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
How important was it for you to improve your conversational English this school year?	40	4	163	16	817	80
How important was it for you to improve your academic English this school year?	32	3	146	14	837	82

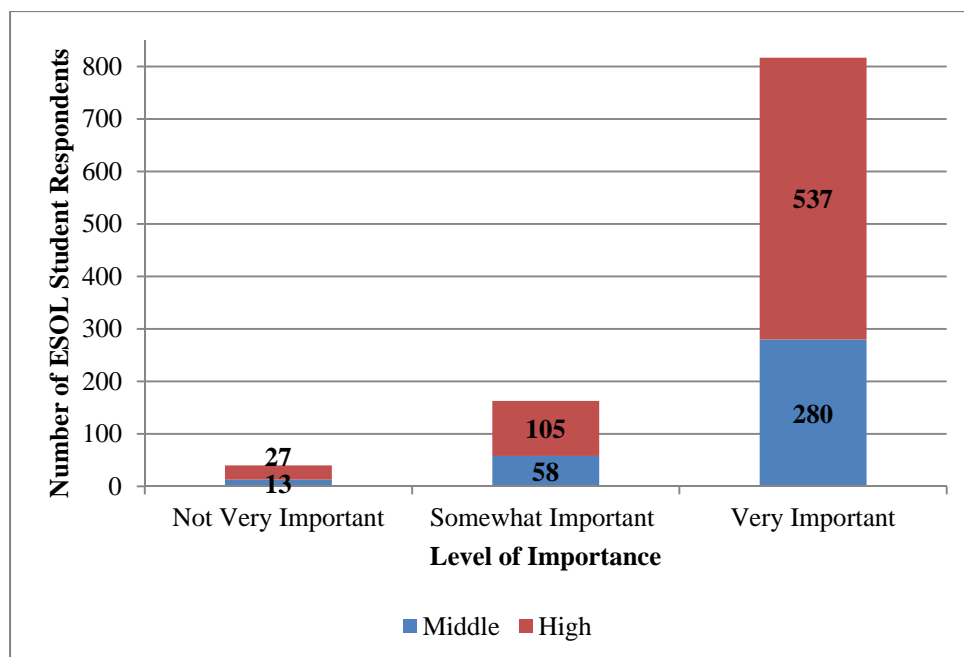


Figure 18. Level of importance in improving conversational English for number of ESOL students disaggregated by school level.

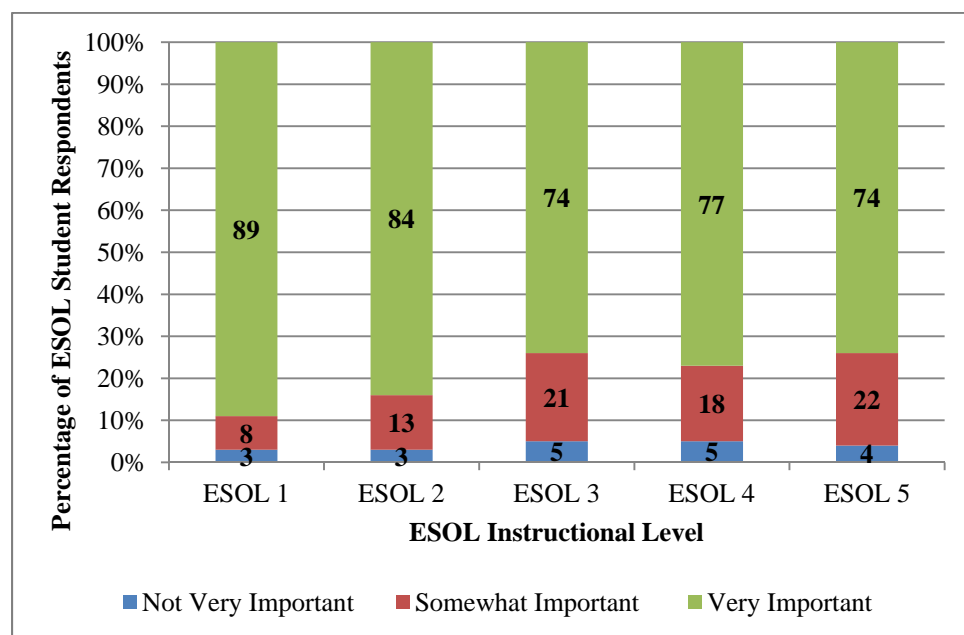


Figure 19. Level of importance in improving conversational English for percentage of ESOL students disaggregated by ESOL level.

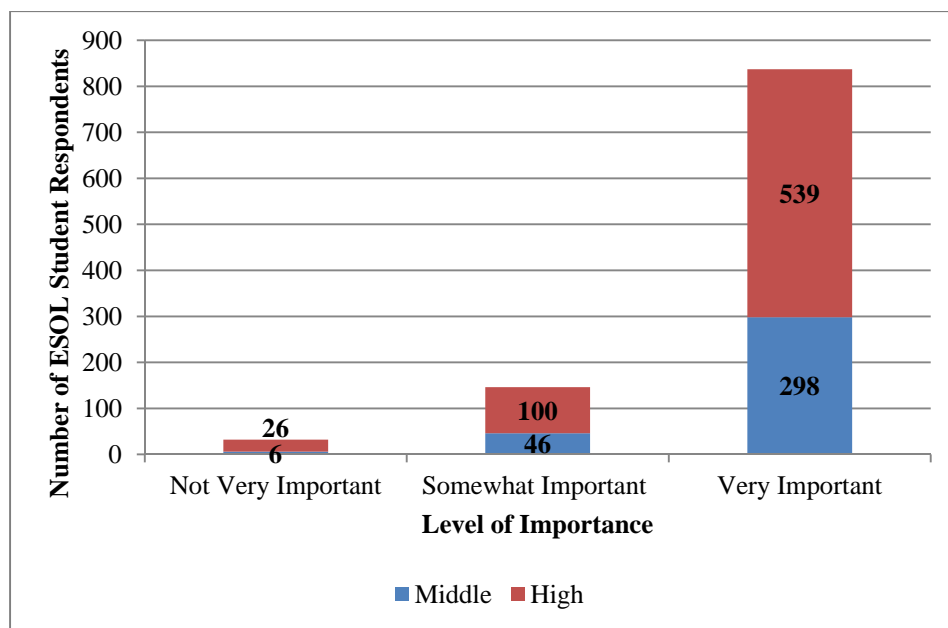


Figure 20. Level of importance in improving academic English for number of ESOL students disaggregated by school level.

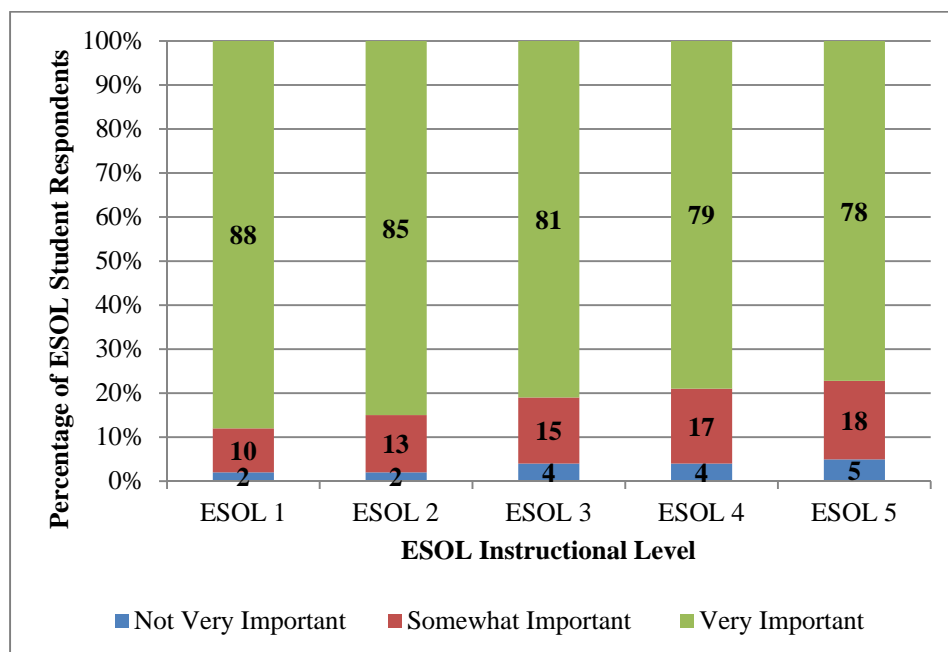


Figure 21. Level of importance in improving academic English for percentage of ESOL students disaggregated by ESOL level.

Evaluation Question 4: To what extent is the ESOL program perceived to be effective (by ESOL teachers)?

The following section details findings from electronic web-based surveys that were administered to secondary ESOL teachers. As mentioned previously, a link to complete a survey gathering feedback on their perceptions and experiences with ESOL instruction in individual schools was sent to ESOL teachers across all middle and high schools. The findings for this section will be presented overall and then by school level (middle and high).

Findings from ESOL Teacher Surveys

ESOL Teacher Respondents. The overall response rate for the ESOL teacher survey was 66%. The majority of the respondents (90%) had more than six years' teaching experience and about four fifths (80%) had more than six years of experience in teaching ESOL (Figure 22). A little less than one half of respondents (47%) had been teaching ESOL at their current school for five years or less.

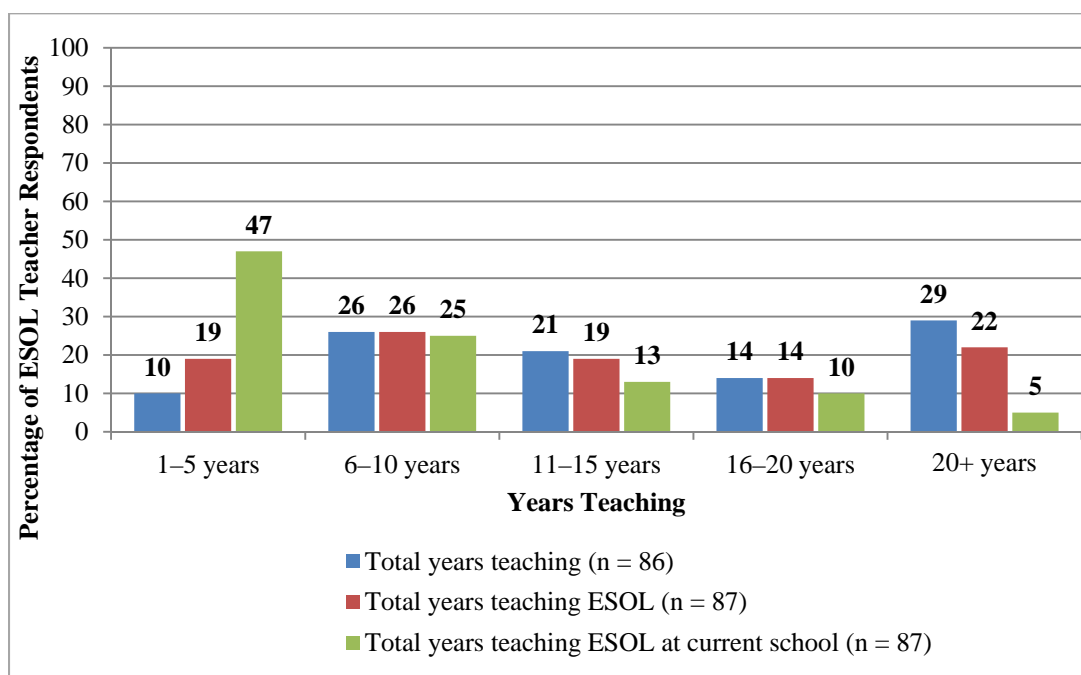


Figure 22. Teaching experience for all ESOL teacher respondents.

Middle school ESOL teacher respondents. The overall response rate for middle school ESOL teachers was 65%. A little more than 80% of respondents had at least six years or more of teaching experience and more than 70% had six years or more of experience in teaching ESOL (Figure 23). A little less than two thirds of respondents (62%) had been teaching ESOL at their current school for five years or less.

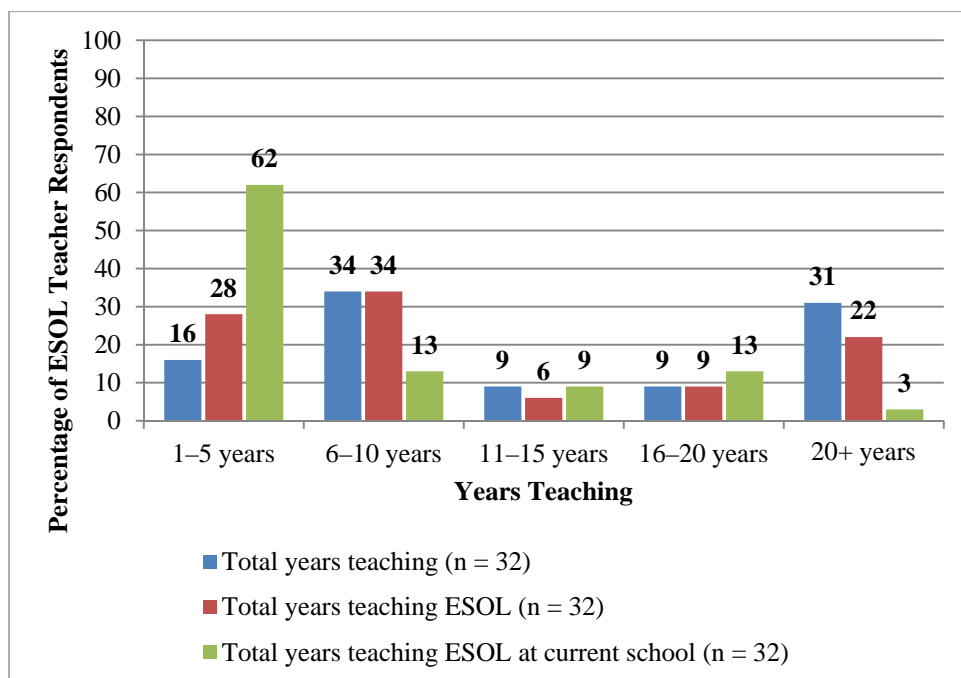


Figure 23. Teaching experience for middle school ESOL teacher respondents.

High school ESOL teacher respondents. The overall response rate for high school ESOL teachers was 67%. The majority of the respondents (93%) had more than six years' teaching experience and more than four fifths (85%) had six years or more of experience in teaching ESOL (Figure 24). A little more than one third of respondents (38%) had been teaching ESOL at their current school for five years or less.

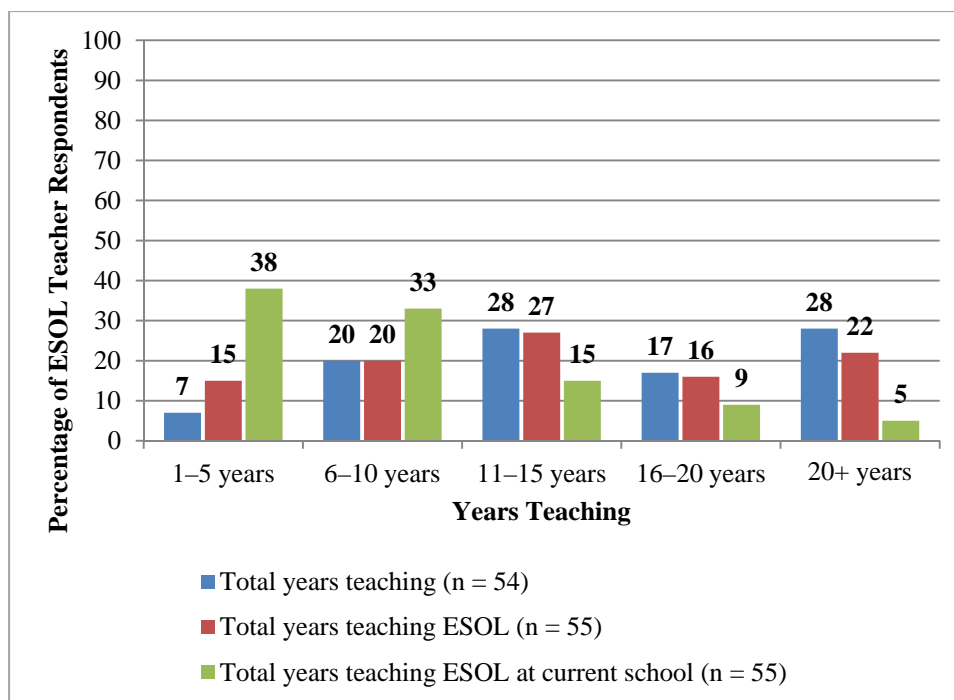


Figure 24. Teaching experience for high school ESOL teacher respondents.

Planning of Instruction for ESOL Students

The majority of ESOL teachers (89%) indicated that at least 40% of their lessons are planned using the MCPS ESOL Curriculum Guide. In contrast, only 24% of respondents indicated that 40% or more of their lessons were planned using the Reading/Language Arts Instructional Guide (Table 26). Teachers were not asked about their use of *Milestones* as a curriculum guide. *Milestones* is an approved purchased curriculum that is used for beginning level ESOL in middle and high schools. Teachers may have used this curriculum in planning instruction, which may have accounted for low percentages reported in response to the MCPS ESOL Curriculum Guide.

Table 26
Number and Percentage of ESOL Teachers Indicating Curricula
Usage by Percentage of Lessons Planned (N = 93)

Statement	0%		1–39%		40–79%		80–100%	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Percentage of lessons planned using the MCPS ESOL Curriculum Guide (n = 90)	3	3	7	8	32	36	48	53
Percentage of lessons planned using the Reading/Language Arts Instructional Guide (n = 87)	43	49	23	26	15	17	6	7

ESOL teachers were also asked to indicate the percentage of the ESOL curriculum they had completed by the end of the third marking period. Slightly fewer than two thirds of teacher respondents reported covering 40 to 79% of the ESOL curriculum by the end of the third marking period (Table 27).

Table 27
Number and Percentage of ESOL Teachers Indicating Percentage
of Curricula Covered by End of Marking Period 3

Statement	0–39%		40–79%		80–100%		NA	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
ESOL Levels 1 – 2 (<i>n</i> = 76)	3	3.9	49	64.5	11	14.5	13	17.1
ESOL Levels 3 – 5 (<i>n</i> = 76)	4	5.3	46	60.5	12	15.8	9	11.8

Note. Middle schools only responded for ESOL levels 1, 2, and 3 as they do not have levels 4 and 5.

Coordination and Implementation of ESOL Instruction

ESOL teachers were asked to indicate what assessment data they used and also how they used assessment data available to them. Ninety-six percent of ESOL teachers indicated using the Language Assessment System (LAS)-Links and 84% indicated using Measures of Academic Progress–Reading (MAP-R) (Table 28). When asked to indicate how they used the assessment data, over 90% of respondents indicated using available assessment data to evaluate student progress (90%) and to identify students not making progress (94%). Eighty-three percent of ESOL teacher respondents indicated using assessment data to adjust instruction (Table 29).

Table 28
Number and Percentage of ESOL Teachers Indicating
Use of Types of Assessment Data (*N* = 93)

Assessment data (multiple response)	Total	
	<i>n</i>	%
LAS-Links	89	96
MAP-R	78	84
Other* (please specify)	52	51

*Examples for other: Diagnostic Online Math Assessment (DOMA), formative assessments, MSA, common tasks, and in-class assessments.

Table 29
Number And Percentage ESOL Teachers Indicating Use of Assessment Data (*N* = 93)

Use of available assessment data (multiple response)	Total	
	<i>n</i>	%
To evaluate student progress	84	90
To adjust my instruction in areas where students encountered problems	77	83
To identify students not making progress	87	94
To place students in instructional groups	70	75
To review data with other teachers across grade levels	64	69
To inform parents of a student's progress	51	55
Other* (please specify)	8	9

* Examples for other: to move students between ESOL levels, to give specific feedback to students, to advocate for program changes, and to talk about placement of ESOL students with counselors.

Participation in ESOL-Related Activities

ESOL teachers were asked to indicate which activities they had participated in during the 2010–2011 school year. Findings are reported in Table 30. Almost all respondents (93%) reported they reviewed ESOL students data in the four skill areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. High percentages of ESOL teachers reported sharing and discussing ESOL student work with other ESOL teachers and sharing and discussing teaching methods with other ESOL teachers (85% and 83%, respectively). Similarly, ESOL teachers reported a) discussing academic needs of ESOL students with classroom teachers (77%), b) discussing the progress of ESOL students with classroom teachers (75%), and c) sharing and discussing teaching methods with non-ESOL teachers (72%). These findings revealed ESOL teachers collaborated with each other to improve student learning.

Less than one half of respondents reported participating in the following activities: observing ESOL instruction in other ESOL classrooms (44%), participating in grade-level team meetings (43%), and providing input on the school improvement plan as it relates to ESOL students (40%) (Table 30). About one third or less of respondents reported working with classroom teachers to determine when ESOL students needed accelerated instruction (29%), examining the scope and sequence of ESOL curricular topics at grade-level team meetings (24%), participating in the development of the school's master schedule (24%), working with the Bilingual Assessment Team regarding students referred to the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team (22%), and coordinating instruction with staff who provide accelerated instruction and services for identified Gifted and Talented highly able students (10%).

Table 30
ESOL Teachers' Participation in Specified Activities^a During 2010–2011 (*N* = 93)

Activities (multiple response)	Total %
Reviewed ESOL student data in the four skill areas (reading, writing, listening, and speaking)	93
Shared and discussed ESOL student work with other ESOL teachers	85
Shared and discussed teaching methods with other ESOL teachers	83
Discussed academic needs of ESOL students with classroom teachers	77
Discussed progress of ESOL students with classroom teachers	75
Shared and discussed teaching methods with non-ESOL teachers	72
Attended ELL team meetings	71
Shared and discussed ESOL student work with non-ESOL teachers	71
Planned ESOL lessons in collaboration with other ESOL teachers	66
Shared data related to ESOL student progress with classroom teachers	66
Built close relationships with individual teachers to facilitate mutual learning	63
Collaborated with classroom teachers about reclassifying or exiting students from ESOL services	62
Contributed to the establishment of collaborative culture in school	58
Worked with classroom teachers to determine when ESOL students required adjustments to essential learning	56
Observed ESOL instruction in other ESOL classrooms	44
Participated in grade-level team meetings	43
Provided input on the school improvement plan as it related to ESOL students	40
Coordinated instruction with special education teachers	39
Implemented common task assessments in ESOL when ESOL students needed accelerated instruction	34
Participated in cross-grade-level team meetings	34
Met regularly with the school administrators to discuss ESOL programming matters	29
Worked with classroom teachers to determine when ESOL students needed accelerated instruction	29
Examined scope and sequence of ESOL curricular topics at grade-level team meetings	24
Participated in the development of the school's master schedule	24
Worked with the Bilingual Assessment Team regarding students referred to the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team	22
Coordinated instruction with staff who provide accelerated instruction and services for identified Gifted and Talented and highly able students	10

Note. The percentage of responses may exceed 100% because respondents marked more than one response.

^a List was adapted from a list of roles and responsibilities of ESOL teachers provided on the 2006–2007 survey of ESOL teachers developed by Maina (2007).

Middle school ESOL teacher participation in ESOL-related activities. Nearly all middle school ESOL teachers (97%) reported they reviewed ESOL students data in the four skill areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking (Table 31). About 80% or more of middle school ESOL teachers reported discussing progress of ESOL students with classroom teachers (91%), discussing academic needs of ESOL students with classroom teachers (89%), participating in grade-level team meetings (83%), sharing and discussing ESOL student work with non-ESOL teachers (80%), and collaborating with classroom teachers about reclassifying or exiting students from ESOL services (80%). Less than one third of respondents indicated they observed ESOL instruction in other ESOL classrooms (31%), worked with the Bilingual Assessment Team regarding students referred to the IEP team (23%); examined the scope and sequence of ESOL

curricular topics at grade-level team meetings (20%), and coordinated instruction with staff who accelerated instruction and services for identified Gifted and Talented and highly able students (20%) (Table 31).

High school ESOL teacher participation in ESOL-related activities. Ninety-five percent of respondents reported sharing and discussing ESOL student work with other ESOL teachers and sharing and discussing teaching methods with other ESOL teachers (Table 32). Exactly 90% of high school ESOL teachers reported they reviewed ESOL students in the four skill areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Between 71% and 79% of high school ESOL responding teachers indicated they planned ESOL lessons in collaboration with other ESOL teachers (79%), shared and discussed teaching methods with non-ESOL teachers (72%), discussed academic needs of ESOL students with classroom teachers (71%), and attended ELL team meetings (71%) (Table 32).

Table 31
Middle School ESOL Teachers' Participation in Specified Activities^a During 2010–2011 (*N* = 35)

Activities (multiple response)	Total %
Reviewed ESOL student data in the four skill areas (reading, writing, listening, and speaking)	97
Discussed progress of ESOL students with classroom teachers	91
Discussed academic needs of ESOL students with classroom teachers	89
Participated in grade-level team meetings	83
Shared and discussed ESOL student work with non-ESOL teachers	80
Collaborated with classroom teachers about reclassifying or exiting students from ESOL services	80
Shared data related to ESOL student progress with classroom teachers	74
Shared and discussed teaching methods with non-ESOL teachers	71
Attended ELL team meetings	71
Worked with classroom teachers to determine when ESOL students required adjustments to essential learnings	71
Shared and discussed ESOL student work with other ESOL teachers	69
Shared and discussed teaching methods with other ESOL teachers	63
Contributed to the establishment of collaborative culture in school	60
Built close relationships with individual teachers to facilitate mutual learning	52
Participated in cross-grade-level team meetings	51
Provided input on the school improvement plan as it related to ESOL students	46
Planned ESOL lessons in collaboration with other ESOL teachers	43
Coordinated instruction with special education teachers	40
Implemented common task assessments in ESOL when ESOL students needed accelerated instruction	40
Met regularly with the school administrators to discuss ESOL programming matters	37
Worked with classroom teachers to determine when ESOL students needed accelerated instruction	37
Observed ESOL instruction in other ESOL classrooms (Peer classroom observation)	31
Participated in the development of the school's master schedule	26
Worked with the Bilingual Assessment Team regarding students referred to the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team	23
Examined scope and sequence of ESOL curricular topics at grade-level team meetings	20
Coordinated instruction with staff who provide accelerated instruction and services for identified Gifted and Talented and highly able students	20

Note. The percentage of responses may exceed 100% because respondents marked more than one response.

^a List was adapted from a list of roles and responsibilities of ESOL teachers provided on the 2006–2007 survey of ESOL teachers developed by Maina (2007).

Table 32
High School ESOL Teachers' Participation in Specified Activities^a During 2010–2011 (*N* = 58)

Activities (multiple response)	Total %
Shared and discussed ESOL student work with other ESOL teachers	95
Shared and discussed teaching methods with other ESOL teachers	95
Reviewed ESOL student data in the four skill areas (reading, writing, listening, and speaking)	90
Planned ESOL lessons in collaboration with other ESOL teachers	79
Shared and discussed teaching methods with non-ESOL teachers	72
Discussed academic needs of ESOL students with classroom teachers	71
Attended ELL team meetings	71
Built close relationships with individual teachers to facilitate mutual learning	69
Discussed progress of ESOL students with classroom teachers	66
Shared and discussed ESOL student work with non-ESOL teachers	66
Shared data related to ESOL student progress with classroom teachers	60
Contributed to the establishment of collaborative culture in school	57
Collaborated with classroom teachers about reclassifying or exiting students from ESOL services	52
Observed ESOL instruction in other ESOL classrooms (Peer classroom observation)	52
Worked with classroom teachers to determine when ESOL students required adjustments to essential learnings	47
Coordinated instruction with special education teachers	38
Provided input on the school improvement plan as it related to ESOL students	36
Implemented common task assessments in ESOL when ESOL students needed accelerated instruction	31
Examined scope and sequence of ESOL curricular topics at content area team meetings	26
Participated in cross-grade-level team meetings	24
Met regularly with the school administrators to discuss ESOL programming matters	24
Worked with classroom teachers to determine when ESOL students needed accelerated instruction	24
Participated in the development of the school's master schedule	22
Worked with the Bilingual Assessment Team regarding students referred to the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team	21
Participated in grade-level team meetings	19
Coordinated instruction with staff who provide accelerated instruction and services for identified Gifted and Talented and highly able students	3

Note. The percentage of responses may exceed 100% because respondents marked more than one response.

^a List was adapted from a list of roles and responsibilities of ESOL teachers provided on the 2006–2007 survey of ESOL teachers developed by Maina (2007).

In addition to reporting participation in specific activities, respondents were asked to indicate the level with which they agreed with statements about ESOL services provided in their school during the 2010–2011 school year. The majority of respondents (80% or more) strongly agreed or agreed with the following statements: a) In my school, ELLs are assessed for placement in the ESOL program (93%); b) In my school, there are rigorous core mainstream courses available to ESOL students (87%); c) I routinely access ESOL student data (87%); d) In my school, ESOL teachers have assigned rooms for ESOL (83%); and e) In my school, instructional materials are adequate to meet the English language needs of my ESOL students (80%). Slightly more than half of respondents (58%) strongly agreed or agreed with the statement “ESOL students should

not be included in general education classes until they attain a minimum level of English proficiency (See Table 33). Tables 34 and 35 provide the responses disaggregated by school level (middle and high).

Table 33
ESOL Teachers' Agreement With Statements About ESOL Services Provided ($N = 93$)

Statements	Strongly Agree or Agree ^a		Strongly Disagree or Disagree ^a	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
In my school, ELLs are assessed for placement in the ESOL program. ($n = 89$)	83	93	6	7
In my school, there are rigorous core mainstream courses available to ESOL students. ($n = 92$)	80	87	12	13
I routinely access ESOL student data. ($n = 92$)	80	87	12	13
In my school, ESOL teachers have assigned rooms for ESOL. ($n = 92$)	76	83	16	17
In my school, instructional materials are adequate to meet the English language needs of my ESOL students. ($n = 91$)	73	80	18	20
In my school, instructional materials are appropriate to ESOL instruction. ($n = 91$)	72	79	19	21
The inclusion of ESOL students in content area classes benefits all students. ($n = 92$)	71	77	21	23
In my school, there are sufficient numbers of ESOL teachers to support the ESOL population. ($n = 91$)	68	75	23	25
In my school, ESOL students are successful in achieving academic content. ($n = 92$)	68	74	24	26
Content area teachers do not have enough time to meet the needs of ESOL students. ($n = 92$)	64	70	28	30
In my school, the ESOL instruction is aligned with grade-level standards as students move through the ESOL instructional levels. ($n = 88$)	61	69	27	31
In my school, exit criteria for students from the ESOL program ensure mainstream academic success. ($n = 92$)	62	67	30	33
In my school, instructional materials are adequate to meet the academic needs of my ESOL students. ($n = 91$)	61	67	30	33
ESOL students should not be included in general education classes until they attain a minimum level of English proficiency. ($n = 92$)	53	58	39	42

^a Categories of Agree and Strongly Agree are combined; categories of Strongly Disagree and Disagree are combined.

Table 34
Middle School ESOL Teachers' Agreement With Statements About ESOL Services Provided (*N* = 35)

Statements	Strongly Agree or Agree ^a		Strongly Disagree or Disagree ^a	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
In my school, ELLs are assessed for placement in the ESOL program. (<i>n</i> = 33)	32	97	1	3
In my school, ESOL teachers have assigned rooms for ESOL. (<i>n</i> = 34)	31	91	3	9
I routinely access ESOL student data. (<i>n</i> = 34)	31	91	3	9
In my school, there are rigorous core mainstream courses available to ESOL students. (<i>n</i> = 34)	31	91	3	9
In my school, instructional materials are appropriate to ESOL instruction. (<i>n</i> = 34)	29	85	5	15
In my school, there are sufficient numbers of ESOL teachers to support the ESOL population. (<i>n</i> = 34)	28	82	6	18
In my school, ESOL students are successful in achieving academic content. (<i>n</i> = 34)	28	82	6	18
In my school, instructional materials are adequate to meet the English language needs of my ESOL students. (<i>n</i> = 34)	28	82	6	18
Content area teachers do not have enough time to meet the needs of ESOL students. (<i>n</i> = 34)	27	79	7	21
The inclusion of ESOL students in content area classes benefits all students. (<i>n</i> = 34)	27	79	7	21
In my school, exit criteria for students from the ESOL program ensure mainstream academic success. (<i>n</i> = 34)	25	74	9	26
In my school, the ESOL instruction is aligned with grade-level standards as students move through the ESOL instructional levels. (<i>n</i> = 32)	23	72	9	28
In my school, instructional materials are adequate to meet the academic needs of my ESOL students. (<i>n</i> = 34)	23	68	11	32
ESOL students should not be included in general education classes until they attain a minimum level of English proficiency. (<i>n</i> = 34)	13	38	21	62

^a Categories of Agree and Strongly Agree are combined; categories of Strongly Disagree and Disagree are combined.

Table 35
High School ESOL Teachers' Agreement With
Statements About ESOL Services Provided (*N* = 58)

Statements	Strongly Agree or Agree ^a		Strongly Disagree or Disagree ^a	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
In my school, ELLs are assessed for placement in the ESOL program. (<i>n</i> = 56)	51	91	5	9
In my school, there are rigorous core mainstream courses available to ESOL students.	49	84	9	16
I routinely access ESOL student data.	49	84	9	16
In my school, instructional materials are adequate to meet the English language needs of my ESOL students. (<i>n</i> = 57)	45	79	12	21
In my school, ESOL teachers have assigned rooms for ESOL.	45	78	13	22
The inclusion of ESOL students in content area classes benefits all students.	44	76	14	24
In my school, instructional materials are appropriate to ESOL instruction. (<i>n</i> = 57)	43	75	14	25
In my school, there are sufficient numbers of ESOL teachers to support the ESOL population. (<i>n</i> = 57)	40	70	17	30
In my school, ESOL students are successful in achieving academic content.	40	69	18	31
ESOL students should not be included in general education classes until they attain a minimum level of English proficiency.	40	69	18	31
In my school, the ESOL instruction is aligned with grade-level standards as students move through the ESOL instructional levels. (<i>n</i> = 56)	38	68	18	32
In my school, instructional materials are adequate to meet the academic needs of my ESOL students. (<i>n</i> = 57)	38	67	19	33
In my school, exit criteria for students from the ESOL program ensure mainstream academic success.	37	64	21	36
Content area teachers do not have enough time to meet the needs of ESOL students.	37	64	21	36

^a Categories of Agree and Strongly Agree are combined; categories of Strongly Disagree and Disagree are combined.

Degree of Implementation

Respondents were asked to indicate how often specific activities in their school were implemented using a four-point scale. Ninety-two percent of respondents reported that ELLs are assessed in reading on an ongoing basis most of the time or some of the time in their school (Table 36). More than 80% responded “implemented most of the time” or “implemented some of the time” for the following statements: a) Assessment data are used to inform program design (85%); b) A comprehensive schoolwide vision includes LEP students (84%); c) Administrators, teachers, and school support staff in this school share a belief of high expectations for LEP students (83%); and d) Exited ELLs are monitored for a period of two years post exit (82%). Only 50% of respondents indicated that curriculum articulation developed between ESOL and content area courses is implemented most of the time or some of the time.

Table 36
Percentage of Secondary Teachers Reporting Implementation of Activities as Specified ($N = 93$)

	Most of the time	Some of the time	Not very often	Not implemented
ELLs are assessed in reading on an ongoing basis. ($n = 92$)	62	30	6	1
Exited ELLs are monitored for a period of two years post exit. ($n = 91$)	52	30	14	4
Administrators, teachers, and school support staff in this school share a belief of high expectations for LEP students. ($n = 91$)	49	34	13	3
Assessment data are used to inform program design. ($n = 89$)	45	40	11	3
A comprehensive schoolwide vision (e.g., school improvement plan) includes LEP students. ($n = 92$)	37	47	13	4
This school provides ongoing staff development opportunities for content area teachers who instruct LEP students. ($n = 91$)	23	41	26	10
Content learning and English language skill development are integrated into the content area curriculum. ($n = 84$)	23	39	19	19
Content area teachers and ESOL teachers in this school collaborate. ($n = 92$)	22	42	33	3
Curriculum articulation is developed between ESOL and content area courses. ($n = 92$)	12	38	34	16

In examining level of implementation as perceived by ESOL teachers for middle school and high schools, similar findings were revealed. Tables 37 and 38 detail the responses for middle school ESOL teachers and high school ESOL teachers, respectively. More middle school ESOL teachers indicated a comprehensive schoolwide vision that includes LEP students as being implemented most of the time or implemented some of the time compared to high school ESOL teachers (91% vs. 78%) (see Table 37 and Table 38). High school ESOL teachers reported higher percentages (implemented most of the time and implemented some of the time) compared to middle school ESOL teachers for the following statements: a) This school provides ongoing staff

development opportunities for content area teachers who instruct LEP students (72% vs. 50%); b) Curriculum articulation is developed between ESOL and content area courses (54% vs. 44%); c) Content learning and English language skill development are integrated into the content area curriculum (67% vs. 50%); and d) Exited ELLs are monitored for a period of two years post exit (86% vs. 72%).

Table 37
Percentage of Implementation of Activities as Specified by Middle School ESOL Teachers ($N = 35$)

	Most of the time	Some of the time	Not very often	Not implemented
ELLs are assessed in reading on an ongoing basis. ($n = 34$)	82	15	3	0
Administrators, teachers, and school support staff in this school share a belief of high expectations for LEP students. ($n = 34$)	56	32	12	0
Assessment data are used to inform program design. ($n = 33$)	54	33	12	0
A comprehensive schoolwide vision (e.g., school improvement plan) includes LEP students. ($n = 34$)	53	38	9	0
Exited ELLs are monitored for a period of two years post exit. ($n = 33$)	45	27	21	6
Content area teachers and ESOL teachers in this school collaborate. ($n = 34$)	32	29	35	3
Content learning and English language skill development are integrated into the content area curriculum. ($n = 28$)	25	25	36	14
This school provides ongoing staff development opportunities for content area teachers who instruct LEP students. ($n = 34$)	18	32	35	15
Curriculum articulation is developed between ESOL and content area courses. ($n = 34$)	9	35	35	21

Table 38
Percentage of Implementation of Activities as Specified by High School ESOL Teachers ($N = 58$)

	Most of the time	Some of the time	Not very often	Not implemented
Exited ELLs are monitored for a period of two years post exit.	55	31	10	3
ELLs are assessed in reading on an ongoing basis.	50	40	9	1
Administrators, teachers, and school support staff in this school share a belief of high expectations for LEP students. ($n = 57$)	46	35	14	5
Assessment data are used to inform program design. ($n = 56$)	39	45	11	5
A comprehensive schoolwide vision (e.g., school improvement plan) includes LEP students.	28	50	16	7
This school provides ongoing staff development opportunities for content area teachers who instruct LEP students. ($n = 57$)	26	46	21	7
Content learning and English language skill development are integrated into the content area curriculum. ($n = 56$)	21	46	11	21
Content area teachers and ESOL teachers in this school collaborate.	16	50	31	3
Curriculum articulation is developed between ESOL and content area courses.	14	40	33	14

Strategies Used With ESOL Students

Successful strategies. Respondents were asked to identify what they considered successful techniques or strategies used in their school with ESOL students. Out of 93 ESOL teachers across middle and high school, 70 individuals (75%) responded to this open-ended question. The use of technology, visual aids, and hands-on activities ($n = 19$; 27%) were deemed as successful strategies used by both middle school and high school ESOL teachers. Following the use of technology, support measures through specialized classes and programs such as Read 180 ($n = 18$; 26%) was another successful technique utilized by ESOL teachers. Students working collaboratively with other students ($n = 17$; 24%) was one strategy mentioned by respondents. Statements about student collaboration ranged from the benefits of small group activities to peer review of written work. Modeling/scaffolding ($n = 13$; 19%), vocabulary supports ($n = 12$; 17%), and staff collaboration and support ($n = 11$; 16%) were other frequently cited responses by ESOL teachers.

Unsuccessful strategies. ESOL teachers were asked to identify techniques or strategies that were not successful with ESOL students in their school. Out of 93 ESOL teachers across middle and high school, 51 individuals (55%) responded to this open-ended question. Twenty-two respondents (43%) reported that lectures and not providing interactive lessons were unsuccessful techniques to use with ESOL students. Mainstreaming ESOL students without proper support or too early ($n = 8$; 16%) was also mentioned by teachers. As one respondent mentioned, “Putting ESOL 1 students in mainstream classes and requiring them to get grades after just two quarters is not successful... They focus on those classes rather than language acquisition.” Other techniques believed to be unsuccessful by ESOL teachers included co-teaching without common planning or a shared vision ($n = 4$; 8%), unavailability of appropriate ESOL materials ($n = 4$; 8%), and large classes or multiple ESOL levels in one class ($n = 7$; 14%).

Recommended changes to implementation. Respondents also were asked to identify changes they would make to the ESOL program in their school to improve its effectiveness. Fifty-six percent of survey respondents ($n = 51$) provided suggestions to this open-ended question. The most frequently cited area in need of change was classes offered to ESOL students ($n = 19$; 37%). Some ESOL teachers suggested continuing sheltered classes. As one teacher mentioned, “Continue sheltered classes that meet the needs of the lower proficient ESOL population so that they can continue to improve their English language skills and make progress toward graduation.” In addition to classes for students, some respondents suggested the need for more planning time or collaboration with either other ESOL teachers or classroom teachers to better fulfill the needs of ESOL students ($n = 12$; 24%). In this area, teachers expressed the difficulty with finding time to collaborate. One teacher made the following suggestion, “Combine department meetings with ESOL teachers and content teachers at least once a semester.” Additional areas of change recommended included additional materials to be used with ESOL classes ($n = 11$; 22%), the need for alignment or enhancements to the ESOL curriculum ($n = 10$; 20%), and training for non-ESOL teachers and staff in schools ($n = 4$; 8%).

Conclusions

This evaluation was conducted to examine the implementation of ESOL instruction at the secondary level in MCPS. Quantitative data procedures were employed examining instructional practices and experiences of teachers regarding ESOL, as well as experiences of ESOL students. The following conclusions are based on the findings from the multiple data collection activities and are organized by the evaluation questions.

How are secondary students in MCPS identified and assessed to determine eligibility for ESOL services?

Prior to receiving ESOL services in MCPS, a student must be referred for testing. Students, whose native language is not American English, can be referred by Residency and International Admissions, an administrator, a classroom teacher, a counselor, parent/guardian(s), an ESOL teacher, or by himself/herself to the ESOL Testing and Achievement Center. Students from outside the United States go to the ESOL Testing and Achievement Center while those from the United States are assessed in school. The criteria for identification and placement of ESOL students are located in Appendix B. The Center assesses a student's proficiency (measured by the LAS Links) in English in four areas: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Results from the assessment are sent to the student's school and if the student is deemed eligible for ESOL services, the ESOL staff coordinates the appropriate placement.

A review of MCPS documents on regulations and policies and the ESOL Accountability Handbook revealed that procedures to identify, assess, and place students at the secondary level whose primary language is not English are in place in MCPS and were consistently used. A policy and regulation are developed to provide guidance to schools and administrators on the proper procedures to follow with regard to ESOL students. Moreover, findings from ESOL teachers via survey indicate that the majority of ESOL teachers surveyed reported that ELLs were assessed for placement in ESOL in their school. In addition to having established guidelines for placing students, the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs has action plans for the division strategic plan and monitors the activities regularly.

With what fidelity are instructional practices implemented as intended for ESOL students?

Findings about fidelity of implementation of the ESOL program to support ESOL students were gathered from classroom observations. ESOL instruction was observed across 22 middle and high schools with an average of three observations per middle school and five observations per high school. A total of 86 classes were observed. The average length of each classroom observation was about 70 minutes. Practices implemented in the observed classrooms revealed that the majority of language development skills espoused by the Division of ESOL/Bilingual programs and MSDE were implemented in most secondary level ESOL classes. Findings also revealed that there is room for improvement with the implementation of the writing development skill for ESOL students as this instructional practice was observed in fewer classes.

What are the experiences of students receiving ESOL services?

The majority of ESOL students who completed the survey stated they felt welcome in their school and that speaking English was a vital piece of success in their school. Students expressed confidence in their language skills development and the performance in courses and on assessments. Almost all students reported the practice of the four language skills that should be emphasized in ESOL classes: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. High percentages of respondents also reported the practice of these language skills in their content area classes. Students expressed a need to improve their speaking and writing skills during the 2011–2012 school year.

To what extent is the ESOL program perceived effective (by ESOL teachers)?

Most ESOL teachers agreed there are rigorous core mainstream courses available to ESOL students in their school. In addition, many agreed that the instructional materials in their school are appropriate for ESOL instruction and that ESOL students are successful in academic content achievement. ESOL teachers proposed ways of providing more efficient services to ESOL students and suggested revising the classes offered to ESOL students to promote continued academic success of ESOL students. Other recommended areas for improvement included more planning time and collaboration with other ESOL teachers and content area teachers, alignment or enhancements to the ESOL curriculum, and training for non-ESOL teachers and school-based staff.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of this study. The recommendations have been grouped into the following categories:

- Professional Development for ESOL and Classroom Teachers to Support Teaching and Learning
- Curriculum Clarification and Instructional Practices to assist ESOL Students Learn English and Academic Content
- Teacher Collaboration to Promote Teaching and Learning

Professional Development for ESOL and Classroom Teachers to Support Teaching and Learning

- Continue to provide guidance and professional development to content area teachers on effective strategies proven to work with ESOL students. Seventy percent of ESOL teachers agreed with the statement that content area teachers do not have enough time to meet the needs of ESOL students. Providing professional development opportunities to these teachers would allow for a better understanding of how to work with ESOL students and support them via differentiated instruction.
- Provide strategies to ESOL teachers on how to encourage collaborative relationships among students and structured opportunities for students to practice language in the classroom. These were two areas that were not observed with great frequency although they are key areas in the ESOL look-fors. Approximately one half of the classrooms observed implemented these activities.
- Investigate the extent to which the progress of English Language Learners is monitored in schools after exiting ESOL. Data from the ESOL teacher survey revealed that slightly more than half reported monitoring of exited ELLs as being implemented most of the time in their school.
- Provide strategies and guidance to ESOL teachers on methods to incorporate more opportunities to practice language using writing skills. Findings from classroom observations revealed that this area was not observed in the majority of classes, specifically prewriting strategies.

Curriculum Clarification and Instructional Practices to assist ESOL Students Learn English and Academic Content

- Clarify the existing alignment of the ESOL curriculum with content area courses. Findings from the ESOL teacher survey revealed that half of ESOL teacher respondents (50%) reported “curriculum articulation is developed between ESOL and content area courses” as not implemented very often or not implemented in their school. Providing a better understanding of the alignment may positively impact ESOL students’ readiness for mainstream instruction as well as assessments.

- Ensure there is consistency with the implementation of closure activities in ESOL classes. Findings from observations revealed that only about one third of classes observed at both the middle and high school levels employed this practice.
- Examine the courses (specifically reading and sheltered classes) offered for ESOL students to ensure adequate fit and course-taking patterns to meet needs of ESOL students. Some ESOL teachers suggested the current structure of courses for ESOL students does not meet their academic and language development needs.
- Provide explicit guidance to schools regarding to what extent the ESOL look-fors should be implemented for each ESOL instructional level. While the look-fors were exhibited in each ESOL classroom, some were not observed as frequently due to the English language level of ESOL students. Providing guidance to ESOL teachers as to the percentage of the class that should include the various instructional practices would prove beneficial.

Teacher Collaboration to Promote Teaching and Learning

- Establish structures for collaboration between ESOL teachers and classroom teachers that can support effective teaching and learning for ESOL students in content classes. Results from the ESOL teacher survey revealed only 22% of respondents indicated collaborating with content area teachers most of the time.

Strengths and Limitations

This study sought to examine the implementation of ESOL services to students enrolled in MCPS during the 2010–2011 school year. The findings provided insight into the instructional practices employed in schools and experiences of teachers and ESOL students with ESOL instruction. The following strengths and limitations of the study should be considered.

Strengths

This study has benefited from a multi-method approach. Document review, stakeholder surveys, and classroom observations were used to examine implementation of ESOL services at the secondary level in MCPS. Most of the evaluation questions were examined by means of cross-method comparisons and triangulation. Triangulation is often used by researchers as “a strategy for improving the validity of research or evaluation findings” (Mathison, 1988).

The extent to which an evaluator can generalize the results of a study to the population and setting of interest in evaluations is known as the study's external validity. A stratified random sampling process was employed, which provides a way to obtain a representative sample and to determine the sample of schools that would be selected for classroom observations. To determine the sample, schools were first organized into three categories based on the percentage of ESOL students (i.e., 0–20%, 21–40%, and 41% or higher). The ESOL percentage category was used as a criterion for randomly selecting schools to be observed. The second criterion used in the selection process was school cluster to ensure that a representative proportion of schools in the district were covered. Because the sample was representative of the ESOL population during the 2010–2011 school year, the results can be generalized to all schools providing ESOL services in this school year; thus providing evidence of the external validity of the study.

Another strength of the study was the development of the observation instrument. This tool was developed not only in conjunction with program staff, but also extracted key concepts from the ESOL Look-fors instrument as well as curriculum standards for ESOL provided by the Maryland State Department of Education. These documents offer fundamental activities that should take place in a classroom designed for ESOL instruction and tasks that ESOL students should engage in. The use of this document to develop the observation instrument supports internal validity of the information gathered. Correspondingly, the total number of observations conducted in examining the implementation of instructional practices in classrooms was also an added strength of this study. A total of 86 classroom observations were conducted across 22 secondary schools with approximately three observations conducted per middle school and five observations conducted per high school. The average length of each classroom observation was 67 minutes.

While an actual response rate for the each ESOL class could not be calculated, the number of students who responded to the survey ($N = 1032$) represented about 30% of ESOL students enrolled at the secondary level ($N = 3647$). A sample size calculator was used based on the total number of ESOL students enrolled at the secondary level. The recommended sample size for the population with a confidence level of 99% and confidence interval of 3.5 was 990. The number

of students surveyed exceeds the recommended sample size ($N = 1032$). The larger the sample size, the more confident one can be that their answers truly reflect the population.

Limitations

Due to the unavailability of total students in attendance for the ESOL course during the day of the student survey, the response rate for student surveys based on student enrollment in each ESOL instructional level class could not be calculated, which is one limitation of this study. A response rate allows one to determine not only the representativeness of the population under the study, but also the generalizability of the information gathered through surveys.

Another limitation is that survey data is based on self-reports. Self-reported information is subjective and therefore subject to error. Some respondents may not have been truthful, fearing consequences to some of their responses, or their recollection of events was not accurate. Chaney (1994) found that self-report errors on a survey could be classified into several areas: a) errors of omission, in which the respondent fails to include something; b) errors of bias, in which the respondent overstates something; and c) errors of “telescoping,” in which the respondent reports an event that recently occurred. Related to this limitation is that responses to the questions on the survey are voluntary. Thus non-response on some items may affect generalizability of the results for that item.

References

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Appendix A

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION FOR ESOL HIGH SCHOOL

Observer:	SCHOOL	
Teacher Name:	<input type="checkbox"/> Blair	<input type="checkbox"/> Springbrook
Other adult(s) in room? (student teacher, special education teacher, paraeducator, etc.) _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Einstein	<input type="checkbox"/> Wootton
	<input type="checkbox"/> Gaithersburg	<input type="checkbox"/> Walter Johnson
	<input type="checkbox"/> Northwood	<input type="checkbox"/> Watkins Mill
	<input type="checkbox"/> Sherwood	<input type="checkbox"/> Whitman
	<input type="checkbox"/> Seneca Valley	
Date of observation:	Class period number: _____ From ____:____ to ____:____ Length of period: ____	
Room Number:		
Number of Students in class at time of observation:		
ESOL Level of students in class: <input type="checkbox"/> Level I <input type="checkbox"/> Level II <input type="checkbox"/> Level III <input type="checkbox"/> Level IV <input type="checkbox"/> Level V ESOL Program Type: <input type="checkbox"/> Pull out <input type="checkbox"/> Co-Taught		
Grade level of students (check all that apply): <input type="checkbox"/> 9 <input type="checkbox"/> 10 <input type="checkbox"/> 11 <input type="checkbox"/> 12	Student information from teacher (check all that apply): <input type="checkbox"/> Class includes students with IEP	
Is this classroom equipped with Promethean technology? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION FOR ESOL HIGH SCHOOL

DESCRIPTION OF LESSON

Write the amount of time (in minutes) students participated in each type of instruction.

Component observed? (✓ = yes)	Order	Lesson Component	Approx. minutes	Describe Activity or Make Notes
<input type="checkbox"/>		Whole Group		
		All members actively engaged in task? __Y__N		
		Some members socialize a lot, work a little. __Y__N		
		One or two members refuse to work __Y__N		
<input type="checkbox"/>		Small Group		
		All members actively engaged in task? __Y__N		
		Some members socialize a lot, work a little. __Y__N		
		One or two members refuse to work __Y__N		
<input type="checkbox"/>		Direct Instruction		
<input type="checkbox"/>		Guided Practice		
<input type="checkbox"/>		Independent practice		
<input type="checkbox"/>		Closure Activity that summarizes, reflects, and/or previews subsequent lesson		
		TOTAL LESSON TIME		

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION FOR ESOL HIGH SCHOOL

	Not Observed	Total Number of Times	Observation Notes
1. The teacher uses assessment (formal or informal) to monitor students' comprehension and guide instruction (e.g., checking for understanding).			
2. The teacher provides opportunities for students to discuss and define words (e.g., checks prior knowledge of word) that may not be known (new vocabulary words).			
3. The teacher explicitly models language in a structured and controlled way (e.g., rephrasing, restating, chunking language).			
4. The teacher provides structured opportunities for the students to practice and extend language in an authentic and engaged way (e.g., extend student phrases into complete sentences).			
5. The teacher explicitly models skills/strategies to learn language (e.g., writing on the whiteboard, showing how to use a glossary).			
6. Students respond appropriately to questions and prompts from the teacher given orally for a variety of purposes (Listening & Speaking).			
7. Students participate in basic interpersonal and academic discourse using appropriate verbal and nonverbal behavior (Student to student interaction) (Listening).			
8. Students ask questions related to the lesson for a variety of purposes (Speaking).			

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION FOR ESOL HIGH SCHOOL

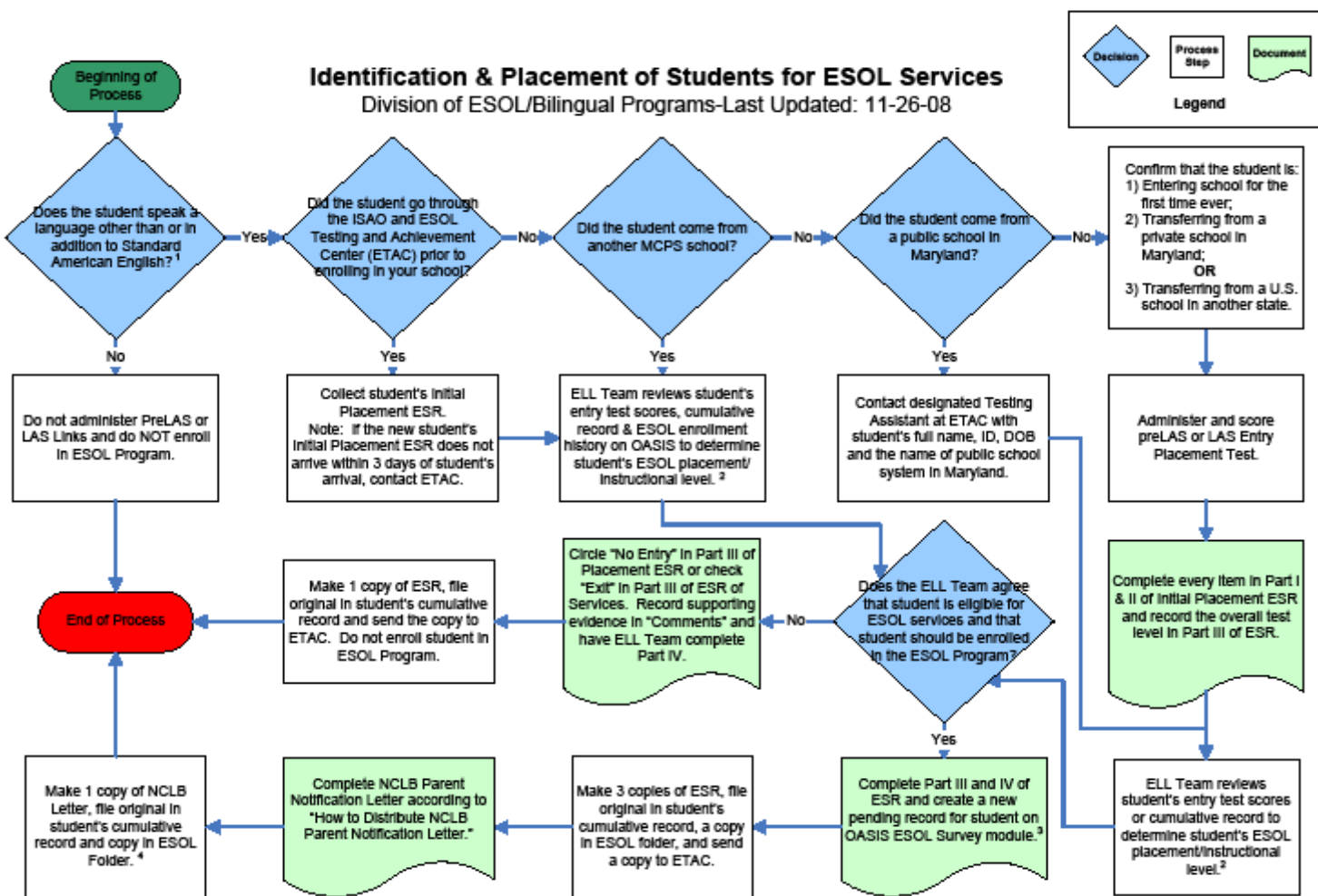
	Not Observed	Total Number of Times	Observation Notes
9. Students use standard academic American English grammar to develop accuracy and clarity in oral communication (Speaking).			
10. Students read orally with accuracy and appropriate pronunciation, intonation, pacing and expression (Reading).			
11. Students practice reading silently (to themselves).			
12. Students recognize, acquire, and interpret meaning of vocabulary through exposure to text (e.g., use of a variety of resources – word wall, dictionary journals) (Reading).			
13. Students compose text to express personal ideas and academic information in order to inform, to describe, to explain, and to persuade (Writing).			
14. Students use prewriting strategies (e.g., brainstorming, previewing, discuss before writing) to compose text for a variety of purposes (Writing).			
15. Teacher encourages all students to share ideas. Active participation of all encouraged.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
16. There was a climate of respect for students' ideas, questions, and contributions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION FOR ESOL HIGH SCHOOL

	Not Observed	Total Number of Times	Observation Notes
17. The instruction incorporates multiple and repetitive strategies – such as visuals and nonverbal communication.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
18. Interactions reflected collaborative working relationships (e.g., students worked together, talked with each other about the lesson).	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
19. Interactions reflected collaborative working relationships between teacher and students.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		

Appendix B

Identification & Placement of Students for ESOL Services Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs-Last Updated: 11-26-08



¹As indicated on the ISAO Intake and Referral Form, New Student Information Sheet, Yellow Emergency Card, or Home Language Survey document used for Pre K and K spring registration only.
 ²If student scores 4 or 5 on Pre K test or IN on K-12 test, DO NOT enroll student in the ESOL.
 ³All OASIS transactions are to be created within 5 school days of the "Action Date" and supporting documentation forwarded to ETAC within 5 school days after the transaction is created.
 ⁴If parent returns NCLB Letter refusing ESOL services BEFORE student is enrolled in ESOL, DO NOT enroll student in ESOL or create a new pending record on OASIS. Obtain parent refusal letter. Change information on part III of original ESR to "No Entry," add "Parent refusal" in "Comments" section, and distribute copies as indicated above. If parent refuses AFTER student is already enrolled, have parent sign the Parent Request for Exit letter and exit student on OASIS. Complete a new ESR of Services to exit the student and distribute copies as indicated on ESR.

Appendix C

Description of MCPS ESOL Levels – Grades 6-8					
This document describes expectations for student performance in each skill area <i>by the end of the ESOL level</i> . ELL Teams use this document to determine appropriate level placement in the ESOL instructional program. This document is also used to determine strategies for differentiated instruction and to assign assessment accommodations that are appropriate for various levels of English language proficiency.					
ESOL LEVEL	ESOL LEVEL 1		ESOL LEVEL 2		ESOL LEVEL 3
	LOW BEGINNING	HIGH BEGINNING	LOW INTERMEDIATE	HIGH INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED
SPEAKING	Comprehends and interprets: ▪ basic vocabulary ▪ phrases and simple patterned sentences ▪ short oral presentations or discussions presented in words and simple patterned sentences with repetition and strong visual and contextual support	Comprehends and interprets: ▪ a limited range of academic vocabulary ▪ simple and compound sentences ▪ short oral presentations or discussions presented in simple language structures with repetition and strong visual and contextual support	Comprehends and interprets: ▪ a moderate range of academic vocabulary ▪ simple, compound and complex sentences ▪ oral presentations or discussions presented with repetition, rephrasing, and visual support	Comprehends and interprets: ▪ a wide range of academic vocabulary ▪ a variety of sentence patterns ▪ oral presentations or discussions presented with some repetition and rephrasing	Comprehends and interprets: ▪ an extensive range of academic vocabulary ▪ a variety of complex sentence patterns ▪ extensive oral presentations or discussions presented using academic language without difficulty
LISTENING	Communicates using: ▪ words, phrases and a few highly patterned sentences ▪ basic vocabulary ▪ pronunciation and fluency with errors that frequently interfere with meaning	Communicates using: ▪ simple and compound sentences and questions in the present and past tenses ▪ limited description and detail ▪ basic academic vocabulary ▪ pronunciation and fluency with errors that often interfere with meaning	Communicates using: ▪ ideas with adequate description and detail ▪ a moderate range of academic vocabulary and grammatical structures ▪ pronunciation and fluency with errors that sometimes interfere with meaning	Communicates in most situations using: ▪ relevant description and detail ▪ a wide range of academic vocabulary and grammatical structures ▪ pronunciation and fluency with errors that rarely interfere with meaning	Communicates with ease in a range of situations using: ▪ effective description and detail ▪ an extensive range of academic vocabulary and grammatical structures ▪ near native-like pronunciation and fluency with few errors
READING	Comprehends, analyzes, and interprets written text with: ▪ some academic vocabulary ▪ predictable, simple grammatical patterns ▪ phrases and simple patterned sentences ▪ strong picture support	Comprehends, analyzes, and interprets written text with: ▪ a limited range of academic vocabulary ▪ simple grammatical structures ▪ simple and compound sentences ▪ some figurative language and picture support	Comprehends, analyzes, and interprets written text with: ▪ a moderate range of academic vocabulary and grammatical structures ▪ simple, compound and complex sentences ▪ a limited range of figurative language	Comprehends, analyzes, interprets and evaluates written text with: ▪ a wide range of academic vocabulary and grammatical structures ▪ a variety of sentence patterns ▪ a moderate range of figurative language	Comprehends, analyzes, interprets and evaluates written text with: ▪ an extensive range of academic vocabulary and grammatical structures ▪ a variety of complex sentence patterns ▪ a wide range of figurative language
WRITING	Composes text using: ▪ phrases or simple, modeled sentence patterns ▪ basic, repetitive vocabulary ▪ a few basic writing conventions	Composes text using: ▪ a limited range of details and basic academic vocabulary ▪ simple and compound sentences ▪ limited transitions and some writing conventions	Composes text using: ▪ a moderate range of details, academic vocabulary, sentence patterns and grammatical structures ▪ limited transitions ▪ appropriate format and writing conventions	Composes text using: ▪ a wide range of details, academic vocabulary, sentence patterns and grammatical structures ▪ transitions effectively ▪ appropriate format and accurate writing conventions	Composes text using: ▪ an extensive range of details, academic vocabulary, sentence patterns and grammatical structures ▪ transitions fluently ▪ appropriate format and effective writing conventions
Speaking, listening, reading, and writing proficiency may develop at different rates and should be assessed and graded separately.					

Description of MCPS ESOL Levels – Grades 9 - 12					
This document describes expectations for student performance in each skill area <i>by the end of the ESOL level</i> . ELL Teams use this document to determine appropriate level placement in the ESOL instructional program. This document is also used to determine strategies for differentiated instruction and to assign assessment accommodations that are appropriate for various levels of English language proficiency.					
ESOL LEVEL	ESOL LEVEL 1	ESOL LEVEL 2	ESOL LEVEL 3	ESOL LEVEL 4	ESOL LEVEL 5
	LOW BEGINNING	HIGH BEGINNING	LOW INTERMEDIATE	HIGH INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED
SPEAKING	Comprehends and interprets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> basic vocabulary phrases and simple patterned sentences short oral presentations or discussions presented in words and simple patterned sentences with repetition and strong visual and contextual support 	Comprehends and interprets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a limited range of academic vocabulary simple and compound sentences short oral presentations or discussions presented in simple language structures with repetition and strong visual and contextual support 	Comprehends and interprets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a moderate range of academic vocabulary simple, compound and complex sentences oral presentations or discussions presented with repetition, rephrasing, and visual support 	Comprehends and interprets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a wide range of academic vocabulary a variety of sentence patterns oral presentations or discussions presented with some repetition and rephrasing 	Comprehends and interprets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an extensive range of academic vocabulary a variety of complex sentence patterns extensive oral presentations or discussions presented using academic language without difficulty
LISTENING	Communicates using: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> words, phrases and a few highly patterned sentences basic vocabulary pronunciation and fluency with errors that frequently interfere with meaning 	Communicates using: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> simple and compound sentences and questions in the present and past tenses limited description and detail basic academic vocabulary pronunciation and fluency with errors that often interfere with meaning 	Communicates using: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ideas with adequate description and detail a moderate range of academic vocabulary and grammatical structures pronunciation and fluency with errors that sometimes interfere with meaning 	Communicates in most situations using: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> relevant description and detail a wide range of academic vocabulary and grammatical structures pronunciation and fluency with errors that rarely interfere with meaning 	Communicates with ease in a range of situations using: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> effective description and detail an extensive range of academic vocabulary and grammatical structures near native-like pronunciation and fluency with few errors
READING	Comprehends, analyzes, and interprets written text with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some academic vocabulary predictable, simple grammatical patterns phrases and simple patterned sentences strong picture support 	Comprehends, analyzes, and interprets written text with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a limited range of academic vocabulary simple grammatical structures simple and compound sentences some figurative language and picture support 	Comprehends, analyzes, and interprets written text with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a moderate range of academic vocabulary and grammatical structures simple, compound and complex sentences a limited range of figurative language 	Comprehends, analyzes, interprets and evaluates written text with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a wide range of academic vocabulary and grammatical structures a variety of sentence patterns a moderate range of figurative language 	Comprehends, analyzes, interprets and evaluates written text with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an extensive range of academic vocabulary and grammatical structures a variety of complex sentence patterns a wide range of figurative language
WRITING	Composes text using: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> phrases or simple, modeled sentence patterns basic, repetitive vocabulary a few basic writing conventions 	Composes text using: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a limited range of details and basic academic vocabulary simple and compound sentences limited transitions and some writing conventions 	Composes text using: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a moderate range of details, academic vocabulary, sentence patterns and grammatical structures limited transitions appropriate format and writing conventions 	Composes text using: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a wide range of details, academic vocabulary, sentence patterns and grammatical structures transitions effectively appropriate format and accurate writing conventions 	Composes text using: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an extensive range of details, academic vocabulary, sentence patterns and grammatical structures transitions fluently appropriate format and effective writing conventions
Speaking, listening, reading, and writing proficiency may develop at different rates and should be assessed and graded separately.					

Appendix D

Secondary ESOL Curriculum Overview

Middle School Curriculum

ESOL Level 1–2 Curriculum. MCPS has adopted the *Milestones* program by Heinle-Cengage for beginning ESOL students. The content of this program is aligned with Maryland English Language Proficiency Standards as well as with key English Language Arts indicators. The program has excellent cross-curricular connections. The program systematically develops academic vocabulary using the six-step vocabulary development program based on the work of educational theorist Robert Marzano. The program also provides opportunities for students to connect language to literacy as they apply their knowledge of both language skills and reading strategies when reading both literary and informational texts. The curriculum provides assessments that can be used to monitor both language acquisition and prepare students for the Maryland State Assessment.

ESOL Level 3 Curriculum. The standards-based ESOL 3 curriculum (2008) is aligned with the Maryland State Department of Education Voluntary Curriculum. This curriculum integrates Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and the four language skill areas of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The curriculum focuses on developing Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) for advanced ESOL students. The ESOL middle school curriculum is presented in four units, each of which covers nine weeks of study. This ESOL 3 curriculum emphasizes:

- Reading and exposition
- Academic vocabulary
- Speaking to narrate, inform, and persuade
- Purposeful listening to speakers and presenters
- Writing paragraphs and essays
- Making inferences, drawing conclusions, and evaluating text

ESOL 3 and its assessments serve as a system of monitoring both language acquisition and for purposes of preparing students for the Maryland State Assessment.

High School Curriculum

ESOL Level 1–2 Curriculum. MCPS has adopted the *Milestones* program by Heinle-Cengage for beginning ESOL students. The content of this program is aligned with Maryland English Language Proficiency Standards as well as with key English Language Arts indicators. The program has excellent cross-curricular connections. The program systematically develops academic vocabulary using the six-step vocabulary development program based on the work of educational theorist Robert Marzano. The program also provides opportunities for students to connect language to literacy as they apply their knowledge of both language skills and reading strategies when reading both literary and informational texts. The curriculum provides

assessments that can be used both to monitor language acquisition and prepare students for the Maryland State Assessment.

ESOL Level 3–5 Curriculum. The standards-based curriculum for ESOL Levels 3-5 have been aligned with the Maryland State Department of Education Voluntary State Curriculum. This curriculum integrates Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and the four language skill areas of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The curriculum emphasizes the development of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) for intermediate and advanced ESOL students. The ESOL high school curriculum is presented in four units, each of which covers nine weeks of study. This ESOL curriculum focuses on using language for various academic functions and focuses on:

- Reading and exposition
- Academic vocabulary
- Speaking to narrate, inform, and persuade
- Purposeful listening to speakers and presenters
- Writing paragraphs and essays
- Making inferences, drawing conclusions, and evaluating text

These curricula documents provide Common Tasks, Formative Assessments, and Final Exams that serve as a system of monitoring both language acquisition and preparing students for the Maryland State Assessment for high school students. This curriculum develops the academic language to prepare ESOL students for college readiness.

Source: The Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs Website.