Elementary Principal Survey: English Learner Program Spring 2020

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Introduction

This brief presents findings from a survey of elementary principals about the planning and coordination of the instructional program for English learners (ELs) at their schools. The survey served two purposes: 1) to elicit information on the program for ELs in general, as well as (2) to examine school leaders' experience with the implementation of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services for ELs with interrupted education (if any). While only three elementary schools have Multidisciplinary Educational Training and Support (METS) programs, at the beginning of school year (SY) 2019–2020, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) stopped assigning ELs with interrupted education to the METS sites. ELs with interrupted education are placed directly at their home school.

Background

There are established guidelines from both the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and MCPS that detail the process for assessing and meeting the needs of students eligible for ESOL services, which includes ELs who are new to a school district and have interrupted or limited education. Per the guidance, each EL will:

1) be assessed for eligibility for ESOL services and interrupted education,
2) be assigned to appropriate service delivery models, such as the METS program to support their English language development (ELD) and learning in the content areas, and.
3) be instructed at grade-level standards, regardless of English language proficiency (ELP) levels.

In addition, schools and districts are expected to monitor and report on the progress of ELs in ELD and their attainment of state academic achievement standards [MSDE, 2020; U.S. Department of Education (USDE), 2016].

School leaders play an essential role in the success of ELs in their schools because they are responsible for hiring and assigning teachers to classrooms, planning, and evaluating the performance of staff who are implementing the instructional program for ELs. Tung et al. (2011) reported that principals in consistently high-performing schools could clearly articulate their

schools' policies for EL students to school staff, model the behaviors and attitudes they expected teachers to adopt, and communicate a clear vision of high expectations for learning outcomes for ELs. Many studies have highlighted principals' pivotal role in building the capacity of teachers of EL students by improving their own cultural competence and that of all of their staff (Hill & Flynn, 2004; Tung et al., 2011). Other researchers have stressed that professional development programs that target school leaders in boosting the language development and overall academic achievement of ELs are very important to ensure that schools have a comprehensive instructional program for ELs (USDE, 2016; Hill & Flynn, 2004; Horwitz et al., 2009).

Methodology

Data Collection

A web-based survey was conducted between February and March 2020. Developed in collaboration with staff from Curriculum and Instructional Programs, several items on the survey were adapted from a survey of principals developed by Grady and O'Dwyer (2014). The survey was designed to obtain information on school leaders' experience with the implementation of the instructional program for ELs at their schools. The experiences included: (1) planning and coordination of instruction for ELs, (2) types of professional learning opportunities related to ELs that principals have received and would recommend for the teachers, (3) overview of successful aspects and challenges when implementing an instructional program for ELs, and (4) changes they would recommend making the instructional program more effective. The survey also asked the principals to indicate if their school had any ELs with interrupted education and the number of ELs with interrupted education at the school or who transitioned to their school after completing the elementary METS program.

The survey was pilot tested with two principals and one former principal.

Notably, the principal survey was initially planned to support data collection activities for the evaluation of the METS program at the elementary school level. Bearing in mind that the focus of the METS evaluation was to get a holistic view of the educational experiences of ELs with interrupted education in MCPS, an email containing a link to the online survey was sent to all 134 elementary school principals, asking them to complete the survey. The survey was distributed to all 134 because 1) at the beginning of the school year (SY) 2019–2020, ELs with interrupted education were placed directly at their home school and 2) stakeholders expressed interest in eliciting information related to the school level planning and coordinating of the program for all ELs. Reminders to non-respondents were programmed to go out every five days.
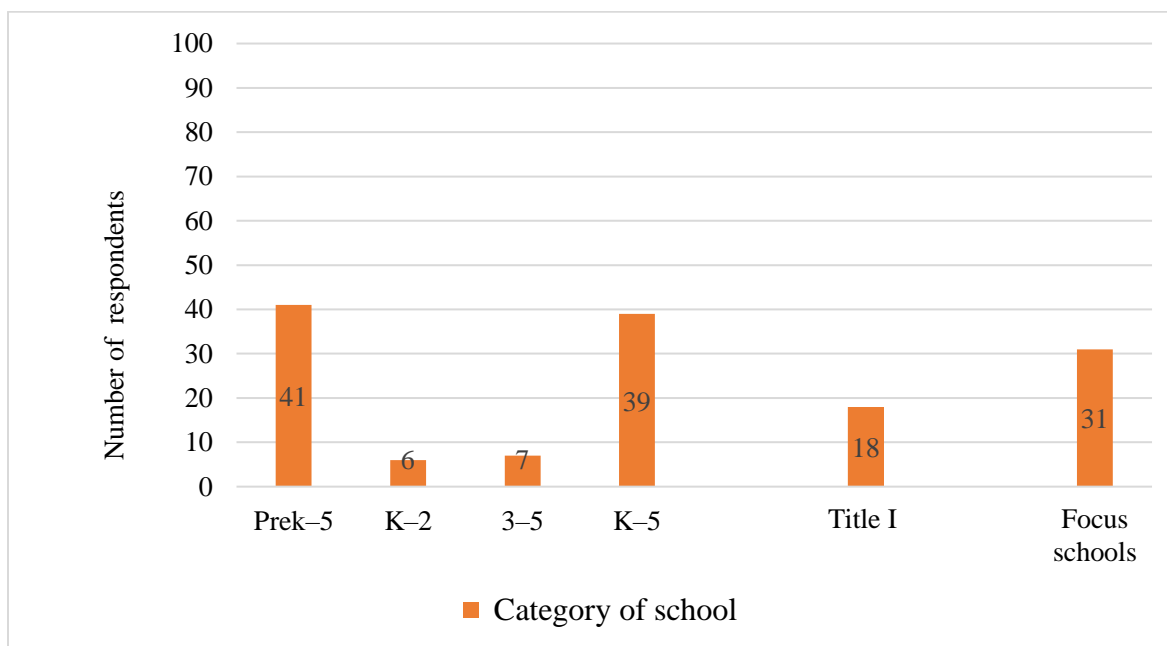
Response Rate

The majority of elementary principals completed the survey, with a response rate of 80 percent (107 of 134). However, not all respondents completed all the items on the survey, and fewer respondents responded to the open-ended questions. The results show that the respondents

adequately represented the various elementary school settings in MCPS: Pre-K–5, K–2, K–5, Grades 3–5, Title I schools, and Focus schools (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Characteristics of respondents' school

Data Analysis Procedures

Descriptive summary statistics were computed for the structured items on the survey. From two items on the survey—number of EL students in the school and total enrollment—the percentage of ELs per school was computed. The percentage of ELs was not drawn from official district records because the survey was anonymous and respondents could not be linked directly to data in institutional databases. Using the computed percentage of ELs, the schools represented by the respondents were categorized into four quartiles or groups of schools: High-ELs and Low-EL schools. All information from the open-ended responses was reviewed, analyzed, and coded to summarize similar comments into themes.

Where applicable, Chi-square tests were conducted to examine relationships between the principals' responses and the type of schools they represented: schools with high/low ELs, schools with/without ELs with interrupted education, Title I status, and grade levels (e.g., K–2, Grades 3–5, K–5, and Pre-K–5).

Results

The findings are organized by topics on the survey.

Characteristics of Respondents and Schools Represented

Experience. Principals were asked to indicate the number of years they had worked in MCPS, served as a classroom teacher, and served as a principal. Of the 90 principals who responded to this item, the average years working in MCPS was 20.7 years. Principals also reported an average of 12.8 years as classroom teachers. The respondents had been the principal at their current school for an average of 6.6 years, and as the principal at current and other schools for 8.7 years (Table 1).

Table 1
Average Years in MCPS and as Principal

Years	Mean	Standard deviation	Median
MCPS (*N*=90)	20.7	8.4	20
Classroom teaching (*N*=89)	12.8	9.4	10
As administrator at current school (*N*=91)	6.6	5.0	5.0
As a principal (current school + other schools) (*N*=91)	8.7	8.3	6.0

Note. The number of respondents for each item varies because not all respondents provided responses to all items.

Number of reported ELs per school reported by principals. Because the survey was anonymous, the principals were asked to indicate the number of ELs in their schools on the survey. The data on number of students receiving ESOL varied noticeably among the schools represented in the survey. The reported number of students receiving ESOL services ranged from 7 to a high of 624 students, with an average of 153 students per school (Table 2). The majority (75 of 107) of respondents indicated that they had no ELs who were identified with interrupted formal education at their school/ enrolled at their school after completing the METS program.

Table 2
Average Number of Students per School in Each Category of ELs as Reported on the Survey

Category	Mean	Median	SD	Max	Min
Total enrollment (*N*=84)	564	559	157.9	900	279
Receiving ESOL services (*N*=83)	153	119	130	624	7
Exited ESOL services (N=59)	31	20	34.6	200	2
SIFE ELs *(*N*=78)	4	0	12.8	40	0
Number of ELs SIFE who came to the school after attending a METS program (*N*=78)	--	0	--	5	0

Note. The number of respondents for each item varies because not all respondents provided responses. *The mean could be misleading because the SIFE ELs are primarily housed in three locations.

Percentage of ELs in school population. Additional analyses confirmed that ELs were concentrated in a quarter of schools represented in the survey (Table 3). Twenty respondents were principals of High EL schools (median = 52%). The maximum percentage of ELs within the High ELs groups shows that in some schools, 89 percent of the students were receiving ESOL services. On the other hand, the students receiving ESOL services made up about 16 percent of the population in Low-Med EL schools (*n*=22) and 10 percent of students in Low ELs schools (*n*=20). Additional analyses showed that Pre-K–5 schools and Title I schools were more likely to house higher percentages of ELs (*p*<0.05) than schools not in these two categories (Appendix A–2).

Table 3
Distribution of Students Receiving ESOL Services across MCPS and as Reported in the Survey

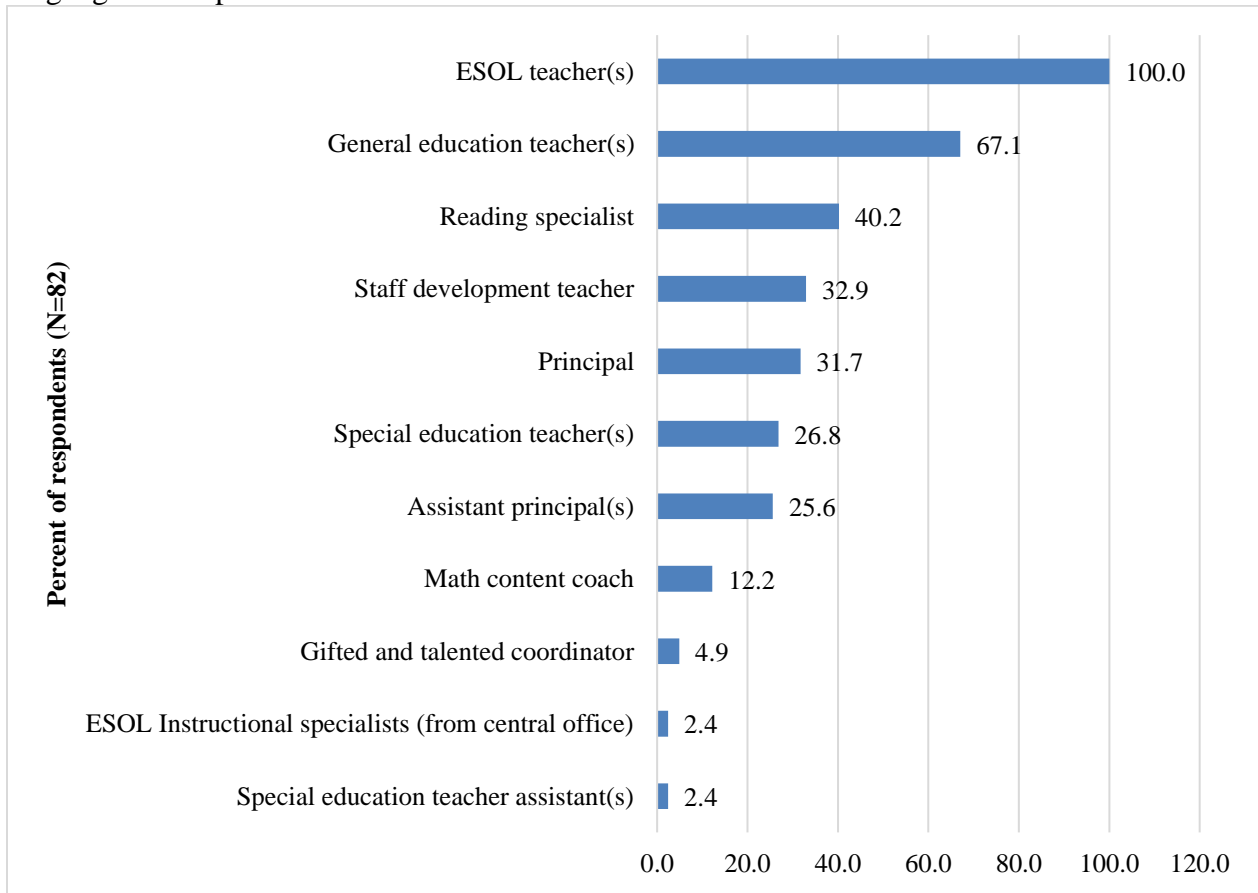| Percentile group by	MCPS (*N*=134)			Respondents (*N*=83)		
% ELs in MCPS	*n*	Max	Med	*N*	Max	Med
Low EL	33	11.7	8.5	20	10.3	8.1
Low-Med EL	34	18.8	15.5	22	19.2	16
Med-High EL	34	33.8	25.7	21	37.2	29.6
High EL	33	74.6	48.3	20	88.9	52.2

Note. The MCPS data are provided to show the distribution of ELs across the MCPS schools based on official data and to show that the respondents' schools are representative of the MCPS schools.

Personnel Directly Responsible for Planning of Instruction or Monitoring Progress of ELs

Planning instruction in ELD. Principals were asked to identify who in their building was responsible for planning and monitoring instruction of ELs. As expected, all respondents (100%) indicated ESOL teachers were directly responsible for planning and monitoring instruction of ELs in ELD in their schools (Figure 2). The other categories of staff who were identified as routinely involved in the planning of instruction and monitoring progress included general education teachers (67.1%), reading specialists (40.2%), staff development teachers (32.9%), and principals (31.7%).

Figure 2. Personnel reported as responsible for planning and monitoring instruction for English language development

Coordinating instruction and monitoring academic progress of ELs in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. In response to an open-ended item asking about the staff involved in monitoring the overall academic progress of ELs in ELA and mathematics, the majority of respondents mentioned ESOL teachers (92%), general education teachers (88%), staff development teachers (61%), and reading specialists (59%). Other staff mentioned by about a third of the respondents included the principal (37%) and core team/team leaders (31%) (Table 4).

Table 4
Personnel Responsible for Monitoring the Overall Academic Progress of ELs (*N*=56)

ESOL teacher(s)	47	92.2
General education teacher(s)	45	88.2
Staff development teacher	31	60.8
Reading specialist	30	58.8
Principal	19	37.3
Core team/team leaders	16	31.4
Gifted and talented coordinator	11	21.6
Special education teacher(s)	10	19.6
Math content coach	10	19.6
Special education teacher assistant(s)	10	19.6
Assistant principal(s)	5	9.8
Math support teacher	4	7.8
EL teacher assistant(s)/paraeducators	3	5.9

Note. Percentages add up to more than 100 because a single comment could be coded with more than one topic/theme.

English Language Development Instructional Models

English language development models. The principals reported that their schools used a combination of instructional models for ELD. The most commonly reported were plug-in/push-in (89%), pullout (82%), and co-teaching between ESOL teachers and general education teachers (64%) (Table 5). Additional analyses revealed that a higher percentage of respondents from High-ELs schools reported the use of co-teaching than their counterparts from schools with fewer students receiving ESOL services ($p<0.05$). Also, higher percentages of respondents from non-Title I schools and K–5 schools reported the use of the pullout model compared with respondents not in the two categories (Appendix A–3).

Table 5
Number and Percent Reporting English Language Models in Use at Their Schools (Valid *N*=83)

ELD Model	n	%
Plug-in/push-in	72	88.9
Pull-out	66	**81.5****
Co-teaching between ESOL and classroom teachers	52	**64.2***
Pull aside	41	50.6
Sheltered content instruction (SIOP)	6	7.4
METS program	3	3.7
Two-way/dual language	3	3.7

Note. The percentage of responses may exceed 100% because respondents could check all that apply. *Indicates statistically higher use of co-teaching between the High ELs and Title I schools relative schools not in these categories

Professional development. The total number of professional development (PD) hours reported varied widely among the respondents, ranging from 1–2 hours to more than 8 hours (Figure 3). Additional analyses showed that principals of Title I schools (72%) and High-ELs (52%) schools were more likely to report more than 8 hours of PD related to the education of ELs than respondents from schools not in these two categories (*p*<0.05). .

Table 6
Number of Professional Development Hours Related to ELs During the Last
Three School Years

Number of Hours	N	%
1—2 hours	13	16.5
3—4 hours	22	27.8
4—6 hours	14	17.7
6—8 hours	7	8.9
More than 8 hours	24	**30.4***
Other (please explain)	1	1.3

Note. *Indicates that respondents from High-EL and Title I schools were more likely to report more than 8 hours of PD than respondents from Low-EL or non-Title I schools.

For one item, principals were asked to select all the PD sessions they received during the three years prior to the survey (2018–2020) from a checklist of specified topics. The vast majority of respondents reported receiving PD related to culturally responsive education practices (87%), the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) ELD Standards (68%), and research-based instructional methods for ELs (60%) during the last three years (Table 7).

Notably, very few respondents reported receiving PD about evaluation of general education teachers with ELs in their classroom (10%), ESOL teacher evaluation (5%), criteria for identifying ELs with interrupted education (5%), and instructional needs for students with interrupted education (4%).

In addition, less than 20 percent reported receiving PD related to ELs in special education (17%), how to track the ELD of ELs at specific intervals during the school year (14%) or MSDE EL program exit criteria (Table 6).

Table 7

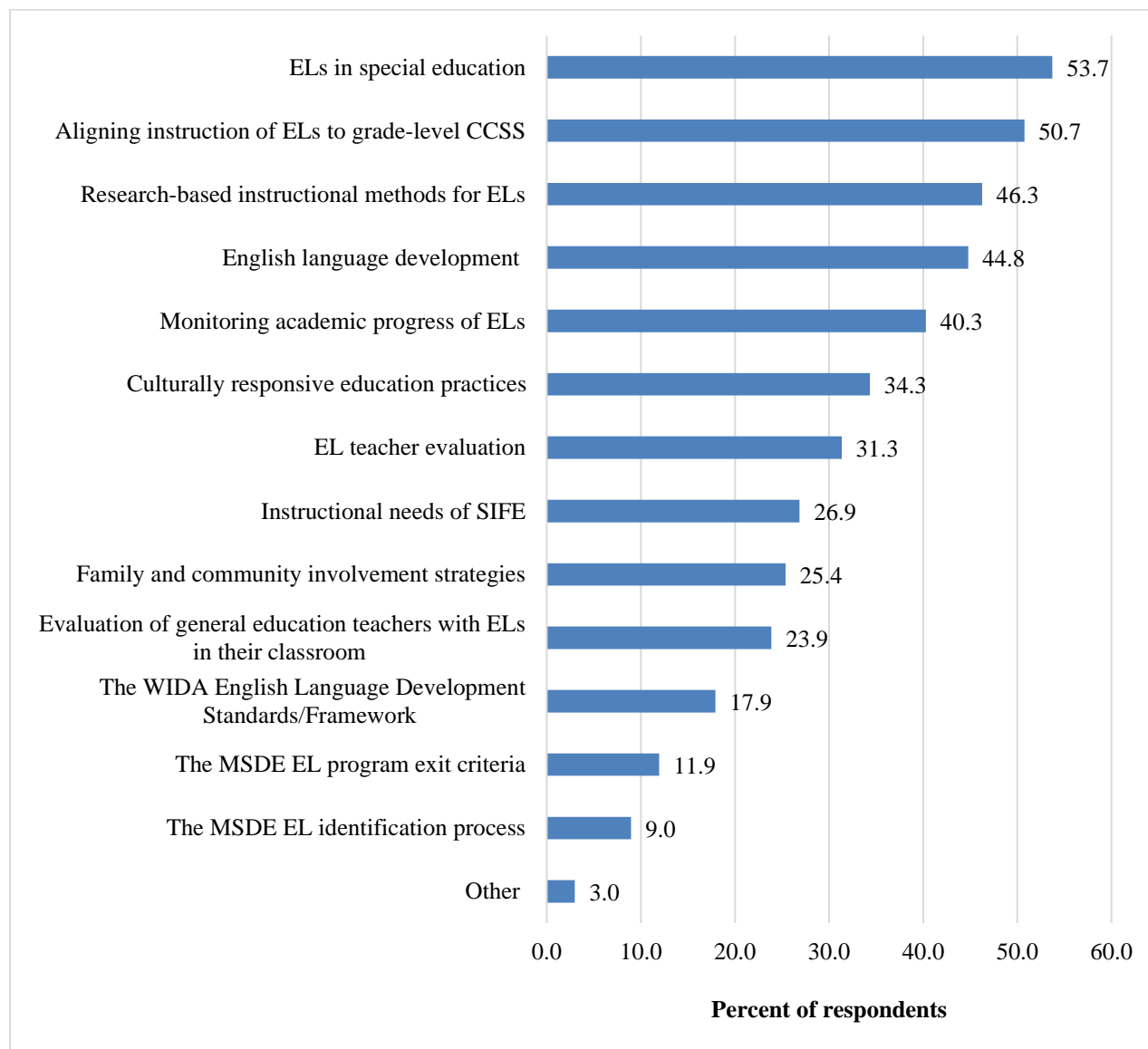Number and Percentage of Principals Reporting Topics and Content of PD Received (*N*=79)

Focus	*%*
Culturally responsive education practices	87.3
The WIDA ELD Standards	68.4
English language development (ELD)	59.5
Research-based instructional methods for English language learners (ELs)	54.4
Family and community involvement strategies	34.2
ELs in special education	16.5
How to track English language development of ELs at specific intervals during the school year	13.9
The MSDE EL program exit criteria	13.9
The MSDE EL identification process	11.4
Evaluation of general education teachers with ELs in their classroom	10.1
ESOL teacher evaluation	5.1
The criteria used for identifying ELs with limited or interrupted education	3.8
Instructional needs of ELs with limited or interrupted education	3.8

Note. Percentages add to more than 100 because a single comment could be coded with more than one topic/theme.

Principals also were asked to indicate the areas they would like to receive additional PD from a list of specified topics. Overall, most principals would like additional PD related to the instructional needs of ELs in special education (54%) and aligning EL instruction to grade-level Common Core State Standards (CCSS; 51%). Topics mentioned by 40 percent or more of the respondents included: PD related to research-based instructional methods for ELs; ELD in general; and monitoring the academic progress of ELs (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Areas in which principals would like additional professional development

Further analyses showed that the majority of the principals (*n*=32) who reported they had ELs with interrupted education in their school would like PD related to the instructional needs of ELs with interrupted education (57%), aligning instruction of ELs to grade-level CCSS (57%), and ELs in special education (54%).

Principals' recommendations for PD and other supports for classroom teachers. Through an open-ended item, 29 out of 92 principals provided suggestions for topics, supports, and activities they would recommend for next year's PD sessions for classroom teachers. Suggestions for PD activities, topics, and resources included:

- Increased focus on instructional strategies for working with cultural linguistically diverse students for all staff;
- How to better align instruction of ELs with grade-level CCSS;
- How to provide differentiated instruction for ELs within the new curricula;
- Provide strategies for working with ELs in specific situations—modifying and differentiating instruction for ELs with a wide range of academic needs;
- Increase familiarity with research-based instructional strategies and supports for newcomer ELs, ELs with disabilities, and ELs with interrupted education;
- Build ESOL and general education teachers' capacity to establish learning objectives using Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State (ACCESS) for ELLs and Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) scores;
- Increase the understanding of the role of the ESOL teachers;
- Provide exemplars and strategies for successful co-teaching;
- Provide additional and updated resources for beginners—level 1 and 2 ELs; and
- Guide the use ESOL resources for wide range of needs (special education and varying ESOL levels).

Data Used to Monitor Progress of ELs

The majority of the 80 principals who provided responses reported using ACCESS for ELLs scores (88%), input from teachers (85%), and MAP-R (79%) to monitor the progress students made in in ELD (Table 8). The respondents specified that the other data they used to gauge the progress of ELs in ELD were derived from formative assessments tools–Oral reading records (ORR), Reading foundation skills, MAP-P Reading Fluency, Assessment Program in Primary Reading, reading fluency, quarterly assessments, student artifacts, district assessments written assessments, Benchmark Literacy assessments, and student voice (Appendix 5a).

The 81 responding principals conveyed that the most frequently data used to monitor the overall academic progress of ELs were data MAP-R (94%), content area grades (88%), ACCESS for ELLs (86%), and input from teachers (85%) (Table 8).

Table 8
Data Routinely Used in ELD and Academic Progress of ELs

Data	English language development (Valid N=80)		Overall academic progress (Valid N=81)	
	n	%	*n*	%
ACCESS for ELLs	71	87.7	69	86.3
Input from teachers	69	85.2	68	85.0
Measures of Academic Progress in Reading (MAP-R)	63	77.8	75	93.8
Measures of Academic Progress in Mathematics (MAP-M)	56	69.1	68	85.0
Content area grades	55	67.9	70	87.5
WIDA MODEL	49	60.5	44	55.0
Input from parents	33	40.7	33	41.3
Other	13	16.0	12	15.0

Note. Percentages add to more than 100 because a single comment could be coded with more than one topic/theme.

Factors Supporting or Hindering Implementation of Instructional Program for ELs

Successful aspects of the instructional program for ELs. Fifty-two of the principals provided responses to an open-ended item on the most successful aspects of their instructional program for ELs (see Appendix A–5b). The most frequently reported aspects were:

- ESOL teachers—expertise, dedication, and flexibility (*n*=14)
- collaborative planning among the ESOL and general education teachers (*n*=13)
- co-teaching between the ESOL and general education teachers (*n*=10)
- the use of EL-specific instructional models such as the plug-in or pullout models (*n*=9)
- a focus on capacity building through professional development sessions at the school or district-level (*n*=7)
- use of the benchmark training and resources (n=6)
- built in flexibility in scheduling and grouping of students during instruction (n=4)

When asked what factors facilitated the successful aspects discussed above, 48 respondents provided open-ended comments (Appendix A–6). The staff pointed to varying expertise of their dedicated staff- ESOL teachers, classroom teachers, specialists at the school (*n*=17) and ongoing opportunities for professional development to staff capacity to work with ELs (*n*=14) as the main factors facilitating the implementation of the EL program. The respondents expounded that having these staff facilitated co-teaching and provision of other supports to the ELs, which strengthened the program for ELs. For these staff, there was a key focus on ELs during the collaborative planning process at their schools—whereby they included multiple staff and discussed a variety of data.

Three respondents noted that co-teaching reduced classroom distractions stemming from pulling students out of class at their schools. Another three respondents reported that their entire teaching staff was trained on how to plan and deliver instruction that supports the development of academic language. At least one respondent mentioned-- that flexible scheduling and grouping, peer-to-peer instruction, writing support, and PD for general education teachers also influenced the successful instruction for ELs.

Challenges to implementing an optimal instructional program for ELs. From a checklist, the principals identified a variety of situations that presented significant or moderate challenges to the implementation of instructional programs for ELs (Table 9).

Table 9
Number and Percent of Principals Reporting Moderate to Significant Challenges

Specified challenge	Moderate to Significant challenge	
	n	*%*
Teachers' limited capacity to address the complex demands of teaching ELs in the content areas (*N*=66)	50	75.8
Teaching CCSS content to beginning ELs (*N*=66)	48	70.6
Making time for general education teachers to collaborate with ESOL teachers (*N*=66)	45	66.2
Accommodating the recommended time for ESOL instruction in the master schedule (*N*=66)	45	66.2
Implementing CCSS in classes with wide range of academic levels among ELs and continually changing needs (*N*=66)	44	64.7
Implementing IEPs for ELs with disabilities (*N*=66)	38	55.9
Implementing ELD instructional models as intended. (*N*=66)	32	50.0
Insufficient formative assessments for assessing ELD (*N*=66)	33	48.5
Implementing academic interventions for ELs (*N*=66)	30	44.8
Locating instructional resources for ELs (*N*=66)	28	41.2
Monitoring academic progress of former ELs (*N*=69)	27	39.1
Engaging parents of ELs	26	38.2
Working with ELs with interrupted education (*N*=69	23	34.8
Insufficient tools for monitoring ELD throughout the year (*N*=69)	21	30.4
Limited familiarity with research on effective instructional practices for ELs (*N*=66)	19	27.9
Evaluating ESOL teachers (*N*=69)	15	21.7
Evaluating non-ESOL teachers who have ELs in their classrooms (*N*=69)	13	19.1
Interpreting ACCESS for ELLs scores (*N*=69)	10	15.2

Note. The number of respondents for each item varies because not all respondents responded to all items.

The majority of respondents stated the following factors presented moderate to significant challenges:

- teachers' limited capacity to address the complex demands of teaching ELs in the content areas (76%),
- teaching CCSS to Level 1 students (71%),
- time for general education teachers to collaborate with ESOL teachers (66%),
- accommodation of recommended time for ESOL instruction in the master schedule (66%),
- implementing CCSS in classes with a wide range of academic levels (65%),
- implementation of Individualized Education Program (IEPs) for ELs (56%), and
- implementation of ELD models as intended (50%).

A significantly higher percentage of respondents from High-ELs schools reported that 1) evaluating ESOL teachers, 2) engaging parents/guardians of ELs, and 3) locating resources for ELs posed significant challenges at their schools compared with peers at Low-ELs schools (p<0.05). This finding suggests that schools with more students receiving ESOL services faced more obstacles with the planning and coordinating of the program for ELs program than schools with fewer ELs.

Further analyses showed that the majority of the sample of principals who indicated they had any ELs with interrupted education (n=32) at their school, reported moderate to significant challenges related to:

- Wide range of academic levels among ELs/diverse and continually changing needs (80.0%)
- Implementing CCSS aligned lessons for ELs with a wide range of English proficiency levels at each grade level (76.0%)
- Allocating the recommended time for ESOL instruction in the master schedule (72.0%)
- Making time for general education and ESOL teachers to collaborate, insufficient tools for assessing ELD
- Working with ELs with interrupted education
- Implementing IEPs for ELs
- Engaging parents/guardians of ELs

Additional challenges. Nine respondents provided responses on additional challenges not specified in the list (Appendix A–7). Though not mentioned with high frequency, the additional challenges expounded on a variety of unique situations that presented obstacles for these respondents. One elaborated that the proficiency-based staffing formula for ESOL staffing allocation is not aligned to Benchmark ELD requirements for every student to receive 30 minutes of ELD instruction every day. Other noted concerns that the WIDA assessment (ACCESS for ELLs) reports arrive at schools in the spring, which is too late to guide instruction. Also conveyed by one respondent is that some staff need help to interpret the subscale scores on the ACCESS for ELLs.

Three responses were related to ELs with interrupted education. The respondents indicated that 1) newcomers in general and ELs new to the U.S., in particular are not used to school routines and 2) the ELs with interrupted education have sometimes experienced extreme trauma, which gets in the way of their learning. It also takes a long time for staff to get to know ELs with interrupted education and to assess their academic and socioemotional needs sufficiently. It also was conveyed that the ELs identified with interrupted education, continue to lag behind their peers because they do not get the instruction they need when they are forced to be in age aligned grade level, working on content ahead of their skill levels.

Furthermore, one respondent noted that even though the newcomer ELs at their school were not identified with interrupted education, they had received a very limited education in their previous country; therefore, the students needed similar level of support as the ELs identified with interrupted education.

Changes Principals Would Make to the Instructional Program for ELs

The key change that most of the 35 respondents to the open-ended item would make is to review the staffing formula for ELs with a goal of increasing the number of ESOL staff per school and aligning ESOL allocations to the specific needs of ELs in each school (*n*=13) (Appendix A–7). To expound on the need for additional ESOL staff, the respondents pointed out that each school should have a full-time ESOL teacher regardless of the number of ELs and that utilizing one ESOL teacher for all students in K–5 is unrealistic and ineffective. The same was said of the situation of having one ESOL teacher split among several schools. The principals conveyed that, with the shortage of staff, it was very challenging for their schools to adequately ensure that ELs get differentiated lessons in the content areas based on their ELs ability and needs. Other changes principals would include are having more, sustained, and quality PD for all teachers working with ELs (*n*=10). Four commented that elementary school teachers should be encouraged to have ESOL certification. The four respondents who provided responses specific to ELs with interrupted education and newcomer ELs requested more accurate tools for assessing the needs, strengths, as well as documenting the progress made by ELs with interrupted education; working out approaches to provide an adjusted day for students to catch up on key mathematics skills that students don't have; and to include PD targeted at strategies for intensive teaching of the English language for newcomers and Level 1 ELs.

Conclusion

This survey provided information on the planning and coordination of the instructional program for ELs. The survey also highlights the types of professional development 1) that principals would like to receive and 2) they would recommend for their teachers working with ELs. Further, the findings highlight the challenges schools face and areas needing improvements common in most school settings.

Key Highlights

The results are drawn from survey responses of 92 elementary principals who provided complete responses to survey questions, representing 86 percent of 107 principals who received the survey (N=134).

- The respondents represented all the possible elementary school settings: K–2; K–5; Pre-K–5, Title I, and Focus schools, and--
  - had been principals of their schools for an average of 6 years.
  - managed schools that housed an average of 153 ELs, receiving or past recipients of ESOL services.
- Thirty percent of the 83 respondents with completed data on the item reported that one third or more of students in their schools were receiving ESOL services.
- The schools used a combination of models for ELD. The most commonly used models and strategies for ELD at respondents' schools were Push-in/Plug-in (89%), Pullout (82%), and co-teaching between ESOL and general education teachers (64%).
- About one third (30%) reported having received more than 8 hours of PD related to ELs over the last three years; focused primarily on 1) culturally responsive education practices, and 2) the WIDA English Language Development Standards[1], and 3) overview of the English language development process.
- At the school level, staff in a variety of roles were involved in the planning and coordinating of the instructional experiences for ELs and monitoring the progress of ELs in ELD—primarily ESOL teachers (100%) as well as general education teachers (67%), reading specialists (40%), staff development teachers (33%), principals (33%), and assistant principals (32%). The general education (88%), staff development teachers (61%) and reading specialist (59%) also were involved in planning and monitoring the progress of ELs in content areas, but to a greater extent than in ELD.
- The majority of the respondents reported that their schools use ACCESS for ELLs (88%), teacher input (85%), and MAP-R data (78%), to monitor the progress of ELs in ELD. More than four fifths reported the use of MAP-R data (93%), ACCESS for ELLs (86%), content areas grades (88%), teacher input (85%), and MAP-M (85%) to monitor the progress of ELs in the content areas.
- The implementation of the instructional program for ELs was facilitated by collaborative planning among the ESOL and general education teachers, co-teaching between the ESOL and general education teachers, PD sessions for teachers, flexible scheduling and grouping of students, and the ELD resources embedded in the Benchmark curriculum. Further, the use of a combination of ESOL instructional models—Plug-in/Push-in, Pullout, pull-aside—as appropriate, helped the schools to address the instructional needs of the ELs.

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[1] Maryland is a member of the WIDA Consortium and has adopted WIDA's English Language Development (ELD) standards.

The survey of elementary principals also highlighted the following concerns:

Few respondents reported receiving PD related to criteria for identification of ELs with interrupted education (4%), instructional needs for ELs with interrupted education and newcomer ELs in general (4%), ESOL teacher evaluation (5%), evaluation of general education teachers with ELs in their classroom (10%), or the MSDE EL program exit criteria (11%) in the last three years. In addition, only 17% reported receiving PD on how to track the ELD of ELs at specific intervals during the school year.

The respondents identified many situations that presented moderate to significant challenges in implementing the instructional program for ELs. The challenges reported by the majority of respondents were:
- teachers' limited capacity to address the complex demands of teaching ELs in the content areas (76%),
- teaching Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to Level 1 or beginner ELs (71%),
- making time for general education teachers to collaborate with ESOL teachers (66%),
- accommodating recommended time for ESOL instruction in the master schedule (66%),
- having a wide range of academic and ELP levels of ELs in the same classroom (66%), and
- implementation of IEPs for ELs with disabilities (56%).

The respondents called for more ESOL teacher's allocation and sustained PD offerings related to the instruction of ELs for all teachers and staff.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the results from the survey.

- Increase the allocation for ESOL teachers
- Continue to involve staff in a variety of roles expand the expertise for staff working with ELs
- Increase the types and frequency of PD related to ELs for all staff
  - increase teachers' capacity to address the complex demands of teaching ELs in the content areas
  - teaching CCSS to ELs particularly Level 1 or beginner ELs
- Increase PD offerings on identifying ELs with interrupted education, evaluating ESOL teachers, evaluating general education teachers of ELs, ELs in special education, and how to track the ELD of ELs at specific intervals during the school year
- Provide more and a variety of instructional resources for ELD, and particularly valid/appropriate assessment tools for use with beginner or Level 1 ELs and newcomer ELs, and ELs with interrupted education

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Appendices

Appendix A–1a. Characteristics on Schools Led by Principals Who Reported Having Students with Interrupted Education at their School (N=32)

School Characteristics		n	%
School category	Prek-5	18	56.3
	K–2	2	6.3
	3–5	3	9.4
	K–5	9	28.1
	Not indicated	0	0.0
Title 1	Title 1	12	37.5
	Not Title 1	20	62.5
High and Low ELS	Low ELs and Low-Med ELs schools (Percentile group 1 and 2)	8	25.0
	Med-High and High ELs schools (Percentile Groups 3 and 4)	24	75.0

Appendix A–2. Characteristics of Schools, by Percentage of ELs and Title I School Status

School Category	Percentile Group Based on Percentage of ELs				Title I Status			
	Low to Low-Med ELs		Med-High to High ELs		Title 1		Not Title 1	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Pre-K–5	12	28.6	22	**53.7**	13	**72.2**	28	37.8
K–2	1	2.4	4	9.8	2	11.1	3	4.1
3–5	2	4.8	4	9.8	3	16.7	4	5.4
K–5	27	**64.3**	11	26.8	0	0.0	39	**52.7**

Note. **Bold** represents statistically higher percentage of respondents from schools in these categories between schools with Low-Med-EL schools and Med-High to High ELs schools or Title I and non-Title I schools

Appendix A–3. Number and Percentage reporting use of specified ELD Models by percentage of ELs in the School and Title I Status

ELD Models	Percentile Group based on Percentage of ELs				Title 1			
	Low to Low-Med ELs		Med-High to High ELs		Title 1		Not Title 1	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Co-teaching between ESOL and general education teachers	19	**47.5**	32	**80.0**	16	**94.1***	36	56.3
Pull-out	35	87.5	30	75.0	10	58.8	56	**87.5***
Plug-in/Push-in	34	85.0	37	92.5	16	94.1	56	87.5
Pull aside	19	47.5	21	52.5	8	47.1	33	51.6

Note. **Bold** represents statistically high her percentage of respondents from schools in these categories between schools with Low-Med-EL schools and Med-High to High ELs schools or Title I and non-Title I schools at P<0.05.

Appendix A–4. Number of Professional hours Related to ELs During the Last Three Years by Percentage of ELs in School and Title I School Status

Time For PD.	Percentile Group Based on Percentage of ELs				Title I School Status			
	Low to Low-Med ELs		Med-High to High ELs		Title 1		Not Title 1	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1—2 hours	8	21.1	5	12.5	1	5.6	12	19.7
3—4 hours	15	**39.5***	7	17.5	0	0	**22**	**36.1***
4—6 hours	8	21.1	6	15.0	3	16.7	11	18
6—8 hours	4	10.5	2	5.0	1	5.6	6	9.8
More than 8 hours	4	10.5	**20**	**50.0***	**13**	**72.2***	11	18

Note. * represents statistically high her percentage of respondents from schools in these categories between schools with Low-Med-EL schools and Med-High to High ELs schools or Title I and non-Title I schools

Appendix 5a. Verbatim Responses Specifying Other data Used for Monitoring Progress of ELs in English Language Development

benchmark assessments
Benchmark Assessments (However, ESOL teachers do not have access to this data in Benchmark)
Benchmark Literacy assessments and district math/literacy assessments
District and External measures
District Assessments
Early literacy assessments in Spanish
Formative assessment
Formatives, District Assessments
MAP-P , MAP-RF & ORR
Oral Reading Record, Formative assessments in reading and math
ORR, MAP-RF, MCAP, Quarterly Assessments,
Student artifacts, student voice surveys
Written Responses/ District Assessments/Eureka End of Module assessments

Appendix A–5b: Verbatim Comments: Successful Aspects of the EL Program

Verbatim Comments: Successful Aspects of the EL Program	Theme
Benchmark designated ELD lessons amplify the grade level content delivered by the homeroom teachers.	
The Benchmark Advance ESOL curriculum has been beneficial for our students.	
The use of Benchmark ELD system that directly links to the instruction happening in the classroom.	
ELD supplements in Benchmark relates to what is being taught in the classrooms	
Use of grade level curriculum Flexibility in scheduling Language rich environment Flexible grouping	Benchmark curriculum and related resources
Co- teaching, co-planning among ESOL and Gen Ed teachers in dyads and triads.	
Collaborative model	
Collaborative Planning and data analysis meetings to review student response to instructional, identify appropriate supports and scaffolds, tasks that engage students in the content, and supports language development. This structure has been beneficial for the general educators as they are learning how to integrate language into daily instruction and how to use language data to prepare learning tasks for continual application of grade level content knowledge.	
Collaborative planning with all stakeholders	
Coordination between classroom teachers and ESOL teacher.	
Co-Teaching	
Co-teaching and co-planning with ESOL teachers and general education teachers.	
Co-teaching Model, Shared Accountability of Student Performance	
Co-teaching; embedding EL instruction through content areas; incorporating listening, speaking, reading and writing objectives through all lessons	Co-planning and co teaching
Creating a positive environment where the L1 is valued and encouraged. We also are skilled at teaching early literacy through guided practice. There is knowledge of sentence frames and the explicit teaching of vocabulary; however, I think we can improve in the consistency of this area.	
differentiated small group instruction during the reading block for primary students where vocabulary can be the focus	
Training the staff on vocabulary development and strategies to embed in their lessons.	Focus on capacity building
ESOL and general education teacher's work collaboratively to plan, implement, assess, and support English Learners.	
ESOL in grade-level collaborative planning provide input on elevation of language needs.	ESOL teacher expertise and overall contribution

Verbatim Comments: Successful Aspects of the EL Program	Theme
Our ESOL teachers are flexible in their delivery of instruction and work with staff to co-teach, coordinate instruction, and provide resources.	
ESOL instructed incorporated in Benchmark Instruction	
ESOL teacher pullout instruction, plug-in instruction, co-teaching	
ESOL teachers are involved in planning with classroom teachers to assure all students are able to access the curriculum.	
ESOL teachers collaborating with gen ed teachers to plan lessons that relate to gen ed topics.	
ESOL teachers creating lessons for the ESOL students they work with.	
Flexibility of ESOL teachers Benchmark Curriculum Collaboration between ESOL teachers and classroom teachers	
knowledgeable SDT	
Teachers are doing a nice job with CAN DO strategies. ESOL teacher are building the capacity of the general education/special education teachers around CAN Do strategies. ESOL teachers are being trained in the Gen Ed. curriculum so they can access the material and make necessary modifications. The ESOL profile sheets that indicate expected growth.	
The Majority of ESOL staff are committed to students and are able to co-teach using language frames and supports to help students access the curriculum	
Most of the classroom teachers are very flexible and willing to collaborate and provide supports that help ELs access the curriculum.	
Staff is invested that all teachers are ESOL teachers.	

Appendix A–6: Verbatim Comments: Factors that Facilitated the Success in Instruction of ELs

Verbatim Comments: Factors that Facilitated the Success in Instruction of ELs	Theme
central office support	Staff in a variety of roles
classroom teachers	
ESOL teacher contributions	
ESOL teachers	
general education teachers	
instructional ESOL specialist support	
instructional specialist	
reading specialist	
staff	
staff development teacher	
teachers	
ELD trainings	Professional development sessions
ESOL teacher training	
ESOL trainings	
feedback	
MCPS ESOL teacher training	
professional development	
strategies	
understanding curriculum	
training	
opportunities to share information	
language objectives	Instructional/curricular resources/data
literacy classrooms	
instructional data	
ESOL allocation	
ESOL teacher staffing allocation	
staffing to provide co-teachers	
support staff	
data	
descriptors	
ESOL curriculum	
resources	
student performance data	
ESOL	
balance schedules	
benchmark	New curriculum resources and
benchmark advance training	

Verbatim Comments: Factors that Facilitated the Success in Instruction of ELs	Theme
benchmark training	training related to curriculum implementation
curriculum implementation	
collaborative team planning	Instructional model
Co-teaching model	
co-teaching strategies	
TWI program	
planning	
scheduling	
focus on English language development	
balance	
focus	Students
el students	
ESOL students	
language learner	
newcomers	

Appendix A–6 Verbatim Comments: Additional Challenges

Concerns noted with staffing reductions and the ability to push in to meet student needs
For ELs with interrupted education, they come in behind and stay behind because they do not get the correct instruction for their needs- they are forced to be in grade levels working far ahead of their skill levels
Getting WIDA scores so late after taking the assessment in January that many of the students have moved on to middle school.
Proficiency-based staffing is not aligned with the Benchmarks ELD requirements of having every student receive 30 minutes of ELD instruction every day
The amount of time ESOL teachers have to devote to assessing ESOL students and the amount of time ESOL students are involved in being assessed is excessive.
The challenge with interpreting scores from ACCESS is on my part. There is the overall score, but the sub scores are the key pieces of information that really helps drive instructional decisions. So, the challenge is obtaining the sub scores in a more efficient way. The bigger challenge is that the assessments for non ESOL don't provide the true data for our early level ELL, due to their limited experience or the level of English language acquisition.
There are more ELs with interrupted education, and we are doing a great job of making it work because our ESOL team is amazing, but it is a challenge.
We have very limited enrollment of students who had interrupted education. Instead, the students are more limited in the education that they received in their prior country. Education was not important, or the students did not attend school.
We need correct staffing allocation to allow for all the work. It is our focus group on SIP and allocation less than 1.0 makes all the work challenging

Appendix A–7: Verbatim Comments: Changes principals Would Make to Instructional Program of ELs to make it More Effective

- More guidance for Gen Ed teachers on how to teach the CCSS's with the lenses on presentation, process, and product for ELL access. - Build ESOL teacher's capacity to read gen ed lessons, identify the elements to elevate for language, and be able to give concrete examples for materials, visuals, how to present the lesson, and what product to use to assess the ELLs knowledge of the CCSS.
As a school implement an inclusive model for plug-in supports
Assessing their needs, not having the staffing or resources to address their needs adequately
Classroom teachers need to see themselves as teachers of language
Curricular supports to help language instruction be more intentional, and explicit.
differentiated lessons based on ability that support grade level content
Examination of ESOL staffing model - it is not meeting needs with the formats of the new curriculum
Full time ESOL teacher regardless of number of ELLs.
High quality PD for ESOL teachers Targeted PD for gen ed, along with ESOL teachers more availability to resources for students with special needs
How to use the grade level curriculum to teach to ELs and use ESOL strategies from ESOL teachers to modify/adjust accordingly.
If they are performing on a first grade English level on in a 4th grade class.
Improve the staffing formula for ESOL teachers
Increased staffing which would allow for more small groups that are need focused.
Many of our ESOL students are also in our Elementary Learning Center program and have identified significant language disabilities. Because of these expressive and receptive language disabilities, they sometimes show little progress on ESOL measures of progress.
Many of the items marked above are relative as well as folks having the knowledge of strategies to utilize as well as time for collaborative planning between the general education teacher and the ESOL teacher.
Many states require their elementary educators to be ESOL certified. ESOL teachers are not common in some states with high ELLs. Having ALL general educators certified as ESOL teachers will ensure that ELD instruction is embedded in the general curriculum
MET student: Example- writing was difficult, as the student did not have the hand strength to cut or write. The ELD content in Benchmark was written for an additional 30 minutes outside the ELA block. This is not possible.
More coordinated plug-in services provided by ESOL teachers engaged in collaborative planning with the general education teachers.
More ELL hours (staffing)
More pull aside instruction for Level 1 students
More resources to bridge the gap for newcomers to learn the standards
More staffing. When we have fewer than three ESOL teachers to support students across PK-5, it is next to impossible to provide sufficient time for collaborative planning with ESOL and classroom teachers as well as the ability in their schedule to properly service students.
More support with resources and training. More gen ed teachers need to be ESOL certified.
None
Our ESOL team is really doing a fantastic job of assessing student need and making the grade-level standards accessible to all learners. Therefore, they are making it work and bridging the gap.
Part time ESOL teacher - hard to meet with teachers and work with students. PRAXIS teacher - not sure how much actual knowledge she has

PD for teachers to help integrate the lessons into the content areas. Best practices for service delivery.

See prior message.

Teachers need to be trained so our ELs are always receiving supports in class.

The only change would be more time to devote to planning, co-teaching, and direct teaching in small groups.

The standard at which allocation is made should be consistent throughout the county. The number that we have for the number of hours is more than some schools yet our teacher moves to 3 different schools during one week. Not an effective way to work with the most vulnerable of students.

Time

Use a baseline assessment in their native language that shows what skills they have from their home country in order to identify their assets and strengths. Have a way to provide an adjusted day to catch them up on key mathematics that they do not have. Include intense English language teaching for newcomers through Level 2. This could be done in a multi-age classroom.

Utilizing one ESOL teacher (.8) for students in grades K-5 is unrealistic. The schedule will not allow one person to cover across so many classes in a realistic way. This creates planning challenges as well.

We are using ESOL as a rotation in Benchmark when we receive the new curriculum next year and will need more PD for level 1 learners.

We would insure content teaching targeted for EL students. We do not have enough staffing to support that.