Best Practices with Families

Four Pillars of Language Focused Family Engagement

Title I Parent and Family Engagement of the Every Student Succeed Act (ESSA) of 2015 addresses the importance of providing opportunities for the informed participation of English learner (EL) parents and family members. A WIDA 2018 Language-Focused Family Engagement Focus Bulletin states that when “school staff acknowledge the special role that language plays in ELs’ families’ lives,” ELs flourish. Unfortunately, many existing parent and family engagement practices tend to overlook the language learning and development that occur in and out of the school setting. WIDA offers Four Pillars of Language-Focused Family Engagement as a framework to address the language needs of ELs’ parents and families.

Adult ESL & Civics Education
HENRY COUNTY SCHOOLS

The Henry County Schools’ Title III Program has implemented a successful series of English for Adults Courses: Adult ESL and Civics Literacy for EL and immigrant parents and their families. The classes focus on providing language acquisition and literacy support to parents and family members of students enrolled in our school district’s English Speakers Other Languages (ESOL) program as well as parents of students identified as immigrants served in Title III. Beginning Saturday morning, February 6th, the courses run on an 8-week rotation. They use a hybrid model of virtual and in-person instruction, following the district's safety guidelines, and are already full, with a waitlist of interested parents to begin the second rotation in April.

The Adult ESL courses focus on developing basic listening, speaking, reading, and writing English skills. The Introduction to American Government—Civics courses focus on literacy skills and cover a brief history of the United States, its constitution, the rights and duties of its people and how these aspects of our history and government are relevant to our daily life.

The Adult ESL and Civics courses provide needed support for EL and immigrant parents and families by strengthening their literacy skills and helping them become equipped to support their students learning. They also enhance family engagement which can lead to enhanced learning experiences and outcomes.

Contact Rocio.Morrison@henry.k12.ga.us for more information.
A T.E.A.M. Approach to Teaching English to Parents & Family Members
TOGETHER EVERYONE ACHIEVES MORE
ROCKDALE COUNTY SCHOOLS

Every Monday and Wednesday evening in Rockdale County you will find a dedicated group of teachers working with parents and family members of Rockdale County Public School (RCPS) students helping them increase their English proficiency. Our T.E.A.M. program has moved online for the current school year, but will, hopefully, return to in-person at a local middle school in the future. Parents and family members of RCPS students receive live instruction from teachers in our district while also having the opportunity to use Rosetta Stone to increase their English proficiency. Homework support for older children, childcare for the younger ones and transportation to and from the sessions are offered when the program meets in-person. Supporting the families of our students is a priority since they are the students’ first and primary teachers.

For more information, contact Megan Sayago: msayago@rockdale.k12.ga.us

EL Family Resources

GADOE RESOURCES FOR PARENTS
- Communication with Parents Flow Chart
- Parents of English learners' webpage
- Parents' Guide to CCRPI – in Spanish
- Parent Survey in Spanish
- ESSA Alternative FAQs for Families – in Spanish
- A Family Guide to Understanding MTSS – in Spanish
- Lexile Parent Resources including Spanish
- Home Language Survey (15 languages)
- ESOL Form Bank (various languages)

USED RESOURCES
- English Learner Toolkit, Chapter 10
- English & Spanish Tip Sheets for Families, Caregivers, & Early Learning Educators
- Schools’ Civil Rights Obligations to English Learner Students and Limited English Proficient Parents
- Fact Sheet, Information for Limited English Proficient Parents and for Schools and School Districts that Communicate with Them

Do we need to communicate with parents and families in a language they understand?

FEDERAL MANDATES

1. Schools must provide parents school information in a language and format they understand.
2. Schools must identify parent's primary language.
3. Schools must use qualified and competent interpreters and translators to provide effective language assistance.

For more information on Federal funding sources for interpretation and translation services, see GaDOE Federal Programs Handbook Chapter 9, pp. 103-106.

See also: “Dear Colleague Letter: English Learner Students and Limited English Proficient Parents”, Ensuring Meaningful Communication with Limited English Proficient Parents (pp. 37-40)
ESOL Teacher News!

WIDA ACCESS Speaking Study
GEORGIA TEACHERS SELECTED!

Georgia teachers were invited to participate in the WIDA Online ACCESS Speaking Test Pilot Study this year. ESOL Coordinators statewide nominated teachers from their districts to participate in this important research activity. Of those nominated, WIDA selected six Georgia teachers and two alternates to participate in this research study on educator perceptions of English Learners’ (EL) speaking proficiency and how it relates to performance on the Online ACCESS Speaking test. The study is designed to investigate the following research questions:

1. What speaking proficiency level do educators believe represents a threshold at which students no longer need academic English language support services for speaking?
2. To what extent do teachers’ judgments of their students’ English language proficiency in speaking correlate with student scores on Online ACCESS for ELLs assessment?
3. To what extent do teachers’ ratings of speaking responses of students familiar to them on Online ACCESS for ELLs match the ratings of trained raters’ ratings?
4. To what extent do teachers’ ratings of speaking responses of students unfamiliar to them on Online ACCESS for ELLs match trained raters’ ratings?

The study will proceed in two phases. In the first phase, educators will be asked to make judgments about their own students’ speaking proficiency. In the second phase, educators will listen to recordings of these same students’ responses to the Online ACCESS Speaking test. Educators will be asked to judge what level of speaking proficiency those responses represent. In this phase, educators will also listen to some responses by students whom they do not know. WIDA is planning to conduct both phases of the pilot this spring.

For more information, contact Dr. Mary Nesbit-McBride, ACCESS Assessment Specialist—mnesbit@doe.k12.ga.us

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EL Language Programs
Encompass both the state-funded, OCR-required ESOL Language Program and the federally-funded supplemental Title III, Part A Program for English Learners and Immigrant Children and Youth in Georgia's K-12 public schools.

Congratulations to Georgia’s Selected Teachers!

Grade 4:
1. Vilma Hernandez—Rome City Schools
2. Alicia Payne—Floyd County Schools
3. Becky Waters—Metter County Schools
4. Eliza Morález—Houston County Schools

Grade 10:
5. Kathy Swallow—Marietta City Schools
6. Juli Whipple—Jefferson City Schools

Alternates:
7. Kacey Brown—Muscogee County Schools
8. Allison Roberts—Clarke County Schools