Diversity of English Learners

Long-term English learners (LTEL)
WHAT CAN WE DO?

Most of Georgia’s English learners, who start ESOL in Kindergarten, will reach full English proficiency before Grade 5. Those who don’t have been called Long-term English learners (LTELS) - students who have been in U.S. schools for 6+ years who have not made significant progress in English and who lag behind their peers academically. Most ELs who remain in ESOL programs long-term were born and raised in the U.S., lack grade-level academic language proficiency (literacy), although they are socially and conversationally fluent in English. For these stalled EL students, “graduation is often an elusive goal” (Klein, Education Week, May 11, 2016).

ESEA statute, as amended under the ESSA in 2017, now requires schools that receive federal funds under Title III, Part A to report the number and percentage of English learners who have not attained English language proficiency within 5 years of initial classification as an EL and first enrollment in the local educational agency (LEA). See ESEA/ESSA Section 3121(a)(6).

In 2020, there were 1,351 ELs in Georgia who had been in ESOL programs longer than five years, some even for 10-15 years. Chapter nine of U.S. Department of Education (ED)’s English Learner Toolkit provides school leaders with tools and resources for evaluating the effectiveness of EL programs. One key question is: Are ELs in our schools making progress toward achieving language proficiency within a reasonable period of time?

In 2018, WIDA published a descriptive research report of LTELS in 15 WIDA states. In 2017, the Hanover Research group published key findings on effective inter-

ventions for LTELS. Earlier, in 2016, REL West/ WESTEd published a Fact Sheet encouraging schools to focus on LTELS’ literacy development. ASCD’s Educational Leadership shared an article on common characteristics of LTELS as far back as 2009. And, finally, Calderón & Minaya-Rowe’s 2011 book on Preventing Long-Term ELs (Corwin Press) provides school leaders with many ideas on how to support ELs’ development of academic English and progress toward proficiency at the expected rate.

Visit www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/index.html for more information.

Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE)
WHAT ARE WE DOING?

U.S. Department of Education (ED) uses M. Calderón’s 2008 definition for SLIFE as “students in grades 4-12 who have experienced disruptions in their educations in their home countries and/or the U.S. and who are unfamiliar with the culture of schooling”. Check out ED’s Newcomer Tool Kit for more information on how to meet the needs of newcomers who may be SLIFE as well.

At our next ESOL Directors’ Munch & Learn Webinar (December 2), Dr. April Roberts will highlight what Federal Programs’ Title I, Part C is doing for Migrant SLIFE. Use the registration link on the ESOL Directors’ Munch & Learn website.
New Screener for Kindergarten
COMING MARCH 30, 2021

The new WIDA Screener for Kindergarten launches in Georgia beginning March 30, 2021. Training and test materials will be available in the secure WIDA Portal. The new WIDA K-Screener replaces the Kindergarten W-APT, which will be retired at the end of this school year.

All school systems must use the new WIDA Screener for Kindergarten to screen potential English learners (ELs) who enter Kindergarten in the 2021-2022 school year. Starting next Fall, neither the K-WAPT nor the K-MODEL may be used to identify ELs in Kindergarten or 1st Semester Grade 1.

The Listening & Speaking Domains will be administered to ELs in 1st semester Kindergarten. All four domains will be administered to ELs in 2nd semester Kindergarten or 1st semester Grade 1. Students scoring less than Proficiency Level 5.0 will be identified as English learners and coded as such in the school system’s information system to report to the state. IEP teams must consider WIDA Screener accommodations for potential ELs with identified disabilities. Federal funds may not be used to cover screener costs. Visit www.wida.wisc.edu/assess/screener/kindergarten for more information.

WIDA ELD Standards 2020 Edition
COMING JANUARY 2021

WIDA will soon release the 2020 Edition of the WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards. An electronic edition can be downloaded from the WIDA website or paper copies can be purchased from the WIDA Store.

The WIDA ELD Standards resources can be used to plan units, lessons, and assessments that develop content and language by ensuring meaningful engagement of ELs in grade-level opportunities and language expectations.

Per Georgia’s updated ESOL State Board Rule 160-4-5.02, English language proficiency standards are the set of statements derived from the four language domains that describe developmental levels of language proficiency that students need to construct social, instructional, and academic communication.

WIDA Professional Learning
COMING SPRING 2021

School Improvement Planning for Equitable Education of MLLs —eWorkshop

Engaging with the WIDA Standards: A Collaborative Approach —eWorkshop

All WIDA eWorkshops (7) are in the secure WIDA Portal, eLearning Center. Ask your school system ESOL Coordinator for a login/password.

Planning with the 2020 Standards ELD Framework — WIDA-facilitated 90-minute webinars (2) for ESOL teachers across Georgia (by RESA regions) to learn how to use the standards’ resources for instructional planning purposes. Ask your school system ESOL Coordinator for more information.
more el diversity

Gifted English Learners (ELs)
IDENTIFICATION & SERVICE

Although the EL population in Georgia is growing, their representation in gifted identification and programming lags behind that of non-EL students. For the 2019-2020 school year, less than 1% of our English learners in Georgia were also identified as gifted learners, and even less of those identified were served. (The total gifted population for that year was 10.4%.) Please review the data from your district to ensure that your EL population has the services needed. Partner with your district gifted coordinator to develop strategies to enhance referrals, identification, and services for our EL students who would also benefit from gifted services.

The National Center for Research on Gifted Education has published 15 Tips for Identifying Gifted EL Students, and an Exploratory Study on the Identification of ELs for Gifted & Talented Programs.

Visit the GaDOE Gifted Education website or contact: Gail Humble, ghumble@doe.k12.ga.us or MaryJean Banter, mbanter@doe.k12.ga.us for more information.

Multitiered System of Supports (MTSS) for English Learners (ELs)
A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE FRAMEWORK OF TIERED SUPPORT

In September, 2016, ED’s Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) funded projects focusing on tiered approaches to improving reading and language outcomes for ELs. These projects are developing culturally and linguistically responsive models (MTSS4ELs) and have published a series of briefs highlighting effective practices for ELs. The Center on Multi-Tiered System of Supports at the American Institutes for Research (AIR) also houses resources for educators working with ELs. Check out their Resource Library - www.mtss4success.org/special-topics/english-learners.

In Georgia, English learners are taught academic English through the Tier 1 core curriculum, either in differentiated standards-based content classrooms (ESOL push-in/collaborative or Sheltered Content) or in stand-alone English language development courses (Pull-out or Scheduled ESOL). Some ELs may need a Tier 2 intervention for language or academic reasons. The success of a tiered system of supports for ELs is dependent on teachers’ use of high-leverage practices (HLPs) for ELs. Visit Georgia’s Tiered System of Supports for Students or contact: Karen Suddeth, ksuddeth@doe.k12.ga.us for more information.