



English as a Second Language (ESL) Program: *Evaluation Readiness Report*

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this Evaluation Readiness Report is to comply with School Board Policy 6-26. According to the policy, “Existing programs will be evaluated based on an annual Program Evaluation Schedule which will be developed by the Program Evaluation Committee and approved by the School Board annually.” On September 6, 2017, the School Board approved the 2017-2018 Program Evaluation Schedule in which the English as a Second Language (ESL) program was recommended for an Evaluation Readiness Report. Based on School Board Policy 6-26, for programs scheduled for an Evaluation Readiness Report, the Office of Planning, Innovation, and Accountability (PIA) will “assist program staff in defining measurable goals and objectives, as well as linkages with activities and outcomes.” According to the policy, an Evaluation Readiness Report focusing on the outcomes of this process and recommendations regarding continued evaluation of the program will be presented to the Superintendent and School Board.

Results of the Evaluation Readiness Process

- The ESL Evaluation Readiness Committee and staff from PIA’s Office of Research and Evaluation met to discuss the evaluation process. Goals and measurable objectives were developed, along with a three-year program evaluation plan.
- The first goal is that ESL teachers and classroom teachers participate in professional learning to understand the needs of English learners and collaborate to seek ways to best serve their EL students. Specific objectives include:
 - Having ESL teachers participate in effective professional learning to increase their instructional effectiveness with EL students.
 - Having classroom teachers participate in effective professional learning to increase their understanding of and capacity to teach EL students.
 - Having ESL teachers and classroom teachers collaborate to meet EL students’ needs.
- The second goal is that ESL program will foster EL students’ social and emotional development to support students as they become confident learners who feel part of their school community. Specific objectives include having EL students:
 - Demonstrate confidence through class participation and group collaboration.
 - Participate in athletics, clubs, and other extracurricular activities.
 - Attend school regularly.
 - Report positive relationships with peers, teachers, and administrators.
 - Report a sense of belonging to their school.
 - Report that school is a welcoming place to learn.
- The third goal is that the ESL program will be student-centered and provide EL students with a variety of choices and opportunities to help students reach their goals. Specific objectives include having EL students:
 - Receive personalized learning opportunities.
 - Make informed decisions about college, employment, or military service.
 - Enroll in rigorous coursework in middle school and high school.
 - Enroll in academy and other specialized programs.
 - Demonstrate college- and career-readiness skills.
- The fourth goal is that EL students will attain English proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Specific objectives include having EL students:
 - Make adequate progress each year in English language development.
 - Achieve English proficiency within five years.

- Graduate from high school on time.
- The fifth goal is that the parents of EL students will be provided with supports and services to enable them to support and participate in their child's education. Specific objectives include having the parents of EL students:
 - Receive timely notice of their child's English language progress and status in a manner that they can understand.
 - Attend and express satisfaction with events, programs, and resources.
 - Receive school division communications in a manner that they can understand.

Recommendations and Rationale

Recommendation #1: Begin a three-year evaluation during 2018-2019 focused on evaluating the implementation of the ESL program with a year-one report presented to the School Board in the fall of 2019. (Responsible Group: Planning, Innovation, and Accountability – Office of Research and Evaluation)

Rationale: It is proposed that a three-year evaluation of the ESL program commence during 2018-2019. The evaluation will focus on the ESL program's implementation processes and answer questions about how the program operates, including documenting the various curricular models and instructional methods employed when delivering ESL services and supports. A review of evaluation literature during the evaluation readiness process indicated that the success of ESL programs tends to depend less on adhering to a particular model than on factors affecting program quality, including ESL teacher caseload, opportunity for collaboration among the ESL teacher and classroom teachers, and the degree to which division and school leaders make EL students a priority. While the evaluation in 2018-2019 will focus on implementation processes, data for program objectives focused on student outcomes will be collected for baseline purposes.

Recommendation #2: Continue the evaluation of the ESL program during 2019-2020 maintaining the focus on implementation with a year-two report presented to the School Board in the fall of 2020. (Responsible Group: Planning, Innovation, and Accountability – Office of Research and Evaluation)

Rationale: It is proposed that the evaluation of the ESL program continue to focus on program implementation processes during its second year. As part of the year-two evaluation, modifications or changes made to the program will be described, and baseline data for student outcome goals and objectives will be collected for a second year. A second year of focusing on program implementation processes will provide an opportunity to address any modifications or changes to the program that occur due to previously planned modifications, changes to federal and/or state regulations, or in response to the year-one evaluation recommendations. Two years of focusing mainly on program implementation will allow for a more complete examination and understanding of the extent and nature of the ESL program's components and processes at all school sites within the Virginia Beach school division. In addition, collecting more than one year of baseline student outcome data prior to evaluating program effectiveness for EL students will enable longitudinal analyses in addition to the cross-sectional analyses that provide "snapshots" at particular times.

Recommendation #3: Conduct the final evaluation of the ESL program during 2020-2021 shifting the focus from implementation to program effectiveness in terms of student outcomes with a year-three comprehensive evaluation report presented to the School Board in the fall of 2021. (Responsible Group: Planning, Innovation, and Accountability – Office of Research and Evaluation)

Rationale: Following the two years of focusing on program implementation processes, it is proposed that the evaluation during 2020-2021 shift its emphasis to the more summative purpose of measuring program effectiveness in terms of student outcomes and students' linguistic and academic growth, as well as on the degree to which the program met its goals and objectives. Based on the year-three results, additional evaluation update reports may be recommended to monitor certain outcomes or to provide information about possible adjustments to the ESL program due to changes in federal and/or state regulations or due to program evaluation recommendations. Because one of the student outcome objectives is longitudinal in nature, there may be longitudinal components of the evaluation which will need to be addressed beyond 2020-2021.

Background

Program Description and Purpose

Through its English as a Second Language (ESL) program, Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS) actively provided ESL services to 1,292 English learner (EL) students in grades K-12 during the 2017-2018 school year. Among them, they speak 59 different languages identified by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). The two most common non-English home languages, Spanish and Tagalog, were spoken by 56 percent of the EL students.

Philosophically, the ESL program is based on the premise that success in English language development is critical to success in all other curricular areas as well as future learning. The program's purpose is to prepare English learners to be college and career ready by developing their conversational and academic English language proficiency through integrated content-based language instruction so that the students will have access to the same educational opportunities as all students. The intent is to accomplish this as quickly as possible so that EL students can participate meaningfully in the division's educational program within a reasonable amount of time. The ESL program aligns with all four goals of *Compass to 2020*: (1) High Academic Expectations, (2) Multiple Pathways (Personalized Learning), (3) Social-Emotional Development, and (4) Culture of Growth and Excellence.

More specifically, the ESL program aims to develop the conversational and academic English language proficiency of EL students in listening, speaking, reading, and writing so that they can participate meaningfully in the division's educational program. However, the program's vision, documented on the ESL homepage on the VBCPS.com website, is broader.

Table 1: Belief Statement From ESL Homepage

WE

the Virginia Beach City Public Schools English as a second language teachers, believe in English learner student advocacy to ensure students are provided equal access to the same educational opportunities as all students.

WE

believe all English learner students must be held to the same high academic standards as their native English-speaking peers.

WE

believe instruction tailored to each learner's English proficiency level and adapted for individual learning needs and styles helps increase English language development and student achievement in core content areas.

WE

believe parents play a critical role in their child's academic and linguistic development by becoming active partners in the education of their child.

WE

believe the mastery of social and standard academic English and the understanding of social and cultural norms allow for access, equity, and social justice.

WE

believe English learner students learn effectively when there exists a confirmation and respect of their cultural richness and linguistic advantages; therefore, we employ teaching practices and instructional strategies that honor, respect, affirm, and build upon the language and culture of each child.

WE

believe in accelerating the acquisition of the English language by building on English learners' backgrounds, cultural experiences and personal goals through content, student-centered practices, community engagement and collaboration to become caring and contributing members of society.

The belief statements lead directly to a vision statement that at the bottom of the homepage states: "The vision of the Virginia Beach City Public Schools English as a Second Language Program is to empower English learners to master social and academic English; to achieve academic success; to accomplish personal goals focused on college and career readiness; and to navigate the diverse local and global communities."

Conceptually, the ESL program in VBCPS is based on the English Language Development (ELD) standards produced by the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium. The WIDA Consortium was originally formed in 2003. It consists of 39 U.S. states and territories, including Virginia. Upon joining WIDA in 2008, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) provided guidance that the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL), in conjunction with the WIDA English Language Development standards, should guide the development of a school division's language instruction educational program.¹

The WIDA Consortium also designs and implements proficiency standards and assessments for grades K-12 students who are English language learners, which must be used by school divisions in Virginia.² The three main assessments used in VBCPS are the Kindergarten WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (K-WAPT) and the WIDA Screener (grades 1 to 12) for identifying EL students and the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 for monitoring their English language development in the four domains of the English language: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Also, the WIDA Consortium provides professional learning to educators, and it conducts research on a variety of topics related to the teaching, learning, and assessment of EL students.

In addition to WIDA, a wide variety of EL-related regulations and policies set forth by both the federal government and VDOE also influence the design and implementation of the ESL program in VBCPS. For example, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) issued the following guidance in September 2016 to update previous language from the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act: “Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), states must annually assess the English language proficiency of ELs.”³ In turn, VDOE mandated that local education agencies, including VBCPS, would use the WIDA ACCESS for this purpose.⁴ In other words, the amount of local discretion that VBCPS can exercise with respect to assessment is limited by federal and Virginia policy, regulation, and guidance, as well as by WIDA philosophy, procedure, and practice. Nonetheless, VBCPS retains significant choice in how its ESL program is prioritized and implemented.

Instructionally, a blended model (“pull-out” and “push in”) was used at the elementary schools. Generally, a “pull-out” model was used with EL students who were newcomers and/or whose slower rate of English language progress indicated the advisability of providing focused and concentrated individual or small group instruction. At elementary schools, ESL teachers provided “sheltered” science instruction in small group settings when “pulling out” EL students. Sheltered instruction generally involved previewing the science material and academic vocabulary with students before the material was introduced in the classroom by the classroom teacher. When implementing a “push in” model with their EL students, the ESL teachers supported the classroom teachers’ instruction in the elementary content areas.

At the middle school level, the ESL teachers sheltered

English core instruction through an elective bell in a “pull out” model. Students in the high school ESL program received instruction on the *essential understandings* (big ideas) and *critical vocabulary* in English, reading, and social studies courses. At the high school level, the purpose of sheltered instruction in the content areas is to assist the EL students in transitioning to the actual credit-bearing courses.

The “pull out” approach tended to predominate in VBCPS during 2017-2018 at all three school levels. According to ESL program descriptions for the three levels, the “pull out” approach to providing sheltered instruction generally follows a formal model known as the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP).⁵

At the high school level, 196 students received ESL services. A total of 77 students were served in place at four high schools by two ESL teachers through a model intended to provide ESL instruction in home high schools. The other 119 high school students spent half of each school day attending English language classes at the ESL Student Center, located in the division’s Technical and Career Education Center (TCE). There, they received English language development instruction and support from one full-time ESL teacher as well as from another ESL teacher assigned to the TCE for part of the day. Students who attended the morning session were transported back to their home schools for the afternoon. Those students assigned to the afternoon session were transported home after school. Another 46 high school students did not receive ESL services during the 2017-2018 school year because their parents opted out of services. The decision to opt out of services was mainly related to parents wanting their children to graduate on time by accruing course credits in academic classes essential for high school graduation that could not be accrued at the TCE.⁶ In addition, students participating at the TCE would need to be away from their home high schools for half of each school day.⁷ This was part of the reason for implementing the model that provided ESL services at the four home high schools during 2016-2017 and 2017-2018.

During the 2017-2018 school year, the ESL program was staffed with 28 full-time and 2 part-time ESL teachers based on a staff assignment list from the Department of Teaching and Learning. Of the 30 teachers, 29 were itinerant – that is, they traveled between two or more schools. They were assigned to combinations of elementary, middle, and/or high school sites. Depending on their assignment, teachers

served from two schools to five schools, spending time at each location over the course of the week. Across the division, the caseloads of ESL teachers differed. These numbers were subject to continuous fluctuation throughout the year. In total, the ESL program served 1,292 EL students during the 2017-2018 school year.

Literature Review

To help prepare the proposal presented in this Evaluation Readiness Report, the Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) conducted a review of the literature. The review mainly covered (a) federal, state, and local policy guidance and documentation and (b) research studies and formal evaluations of EL programs elsewhere. It focused on several EL-related topics, including instructional models and methods for both English language development and content area instruction; procedures for identifying, assessing, and monitoring the linguistic, academic, and social needs and progress of English learners; and best practices for supporting special categories of English learners, such as newcomers, Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE), and Long-Term English Learners (LTEL). The literature review also examined local guidance provided on the ESL section of the VBCPS website - including the English Learner Team Handbooks, which set forth the provisions and procedures to be followed by VBCPS schools.⁸

The literature review yielded several findings. First, it confirmed that the broad scope of VBCPS's ESL program described in the previous section aligns with research into best practice. For example, based on a careful analysis of WIDA data, Cook, Boals, and Lundberg (2011) found that "Reaching language proficiency takes time and requires attention to students' linguistic, cultural, and academic needs."⁹ Similarly, an ESL handbook from Fairfax County notes that successful ESL programs deliver more than just English language instruction. Rather, they provide cohesive, sustained systems of support for English language development, academic achievement, and socio-emotional learning, as well as encouraging parental involvement at school.¹⁰

A second finding from the literature review was that a wide variety of critical factors might affect the success of an ESL program either positively or negatively.

- The success of ESL programs depends on the degree to which division and school leaders make EL students a priority.¹¹
- The ESL staffing levels, for example, tend to influence the effectiveness of an ESL program.¹²

- The ESL-related professional learning for not only ESL teachers but also general education teachers and school administrators is integral to the success of an ESL program, as are the quality and frequency of the professional learning.^{13,14}
- The degree to which ESL teachers plan and coordinate with other school staff is also critical to the success of ESL programs.¹⁵
- The degree to which ESL instruction and interventions are effective depends more on the quality of their implementation than on the choice of particular instruction and intervention models.¹⁶

A third important finding is that there is a gap between policy prescription and empirical reality. In practice, few public school districts meet expectations or engage fully in the best practices set forth in EL policy guidance by the federal government, their state education agency, or a variety of ESL-related professional organizations and advocacy groups. For example, *Education Week* reported in a 2016 article that researchers at Education Northwest found that only half of the EL students entering kindergarten in Washington state reached proficiency in 3.8 years, but, worse, 18 percent of the students still were not proficient within eight years.¹⁷ The study found that timelines varied significantly by the English level students had upon entering kindergarten, and also by their home language.¹⁸

A fourth important finding is that years of both empirical research and policy analysis have yielded little consensus with respect to whether particular curricular models and instructional methods are more effective than other models. Much of the research into best practices demonstrates that how well a model is implemented is more influential on the efficacy of an ESL program than the type of model chosen.¹⁹ Common elements of successful ESL programs include professional learning opportunities for both ESL and content-area teachers, as well as ample opportunity for ESL and classroom teachers to plan and collaborate within and across grade levels.

A fifth important finding is that it is essential for policy makers and all other ESL program stakeholders to distinguish Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) from Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). The term BICS refers mainly to social discourse, which involves listening and speaking. In contrast, CALP refers to academic language, which involves the more formal sentence structure and technical vocabulary important to classroom learning. Academic language is generally abstract, context

reduced, and specialized. In addition to acquiring academic language, many ELs need to develop effective study habits, as well as higher-order thinking skills such as comparing, classifying, analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating, and inferring. Linguistically and cognitively, CALP involves reading and writing skills at least as much as it involves listening and speaking. For most if not all EL students, acquiring BICS and attaining conversational and social proficiency occurs more easily and quickly than acquiring CALP.

Yet another important finding is that EL students attain proficiency in conversational and academic English at different rates. According to a study conducted by Hakuta, et al., (2000)²⁰ at Stanford University and corroborated by several subsequent studies (e.g., Cook, et al, 2008)²¹, the average EL student develops oral English proficiency for social purposes in three to five years and academic English proficiency in four to seven years. The general expectation is that EL students will progress, on average, about one WIDA ACCESS level per year. However, the average represents very few individual EL students. Some EL students attain conversational and academic proficiency in less time while others need more time. Three of the more prevalent factors that influence expected time to English language proficiency are age, starting point, and prior academic exposure. Younger elementary students tend to learn English more rapidly than high school students.²² Students who begin with at least some English tend to attain English proficiency faster than those who begin their U.S. schooling with no English whatsoever.²³ Similarly, students who regularly attended school before arriving in the U.S. tend to learn English more rapidly than students whose attendance in a VBCPS school is the first academic exposure that they have experienced.

A final finding arose from comparing the VDOE proficiency criteria with the criteria used in other WIDA states that use the ACCESS assessment. The English language proficiency criteria for several WIDA states, including Virginia, are set forth in Table 2.

Table 2: Comparison of English Language Proficiency ACCESS Criteria

State	Overall Composite Level*	Language Domain Level
Virginia	4.4	-
Minnesota	4.5	3 of 4 domain levels at or above 3.5
Georgia	4.3	All four domain levels at or above 4.3
Massachusetts	4.2	Literacy (Reading and Writing) at or above 3.9
District of Columbia	5.0	-
Maine	5.0	-
New Mexico	5.0	-
Illinois	4.8	-
Pennsylvania (Gr. 1-5)	4.6	Recommendation from the ESL teacher OR Recommendation from two content area teachers OR A writing sample that demonstrates proficiency at the Expanding level and speaking at the Bridging level
Pennsylvania (Gr. 6-8)	4.7	
Pennsylvania (Gr. 9-12)	4.8	
New Jersey	4.5	-

* Reflects ACCESS scores rescaled in 2017.

Table 2 indicates that Virginia's English language proficiency criteria are lower than several other WIDA states. To be considered proficient, a student in Virginia must reach an overall ACCESS performance level of 4.4 or higher, which is in the range of minimal proficiency. Fluency is represented by a performance level of 6.0.

The overall proficiency level represents a composite of each student's ACCESS listening, speaking, reading, and writing scores. As a consequence, the overall composite score is compensatory in nature. Without adjustment, a high listening level, for example, would raise the overall composite level, thus compensating for a low reading level. To adjust for this intrinsic issue when arriving at the overall performance level, the WIDA Consortium weights the relevant language

domains and then adds them together. The weighting scheme is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Contributions of Language Domains to Overall Score by Percent

Score	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Overall	15%	15%	35%	35%

Despite the weighting, the overall performance level may still allow for one or more of a student's domain levels to be below proficient. To further reduce disparities and ensure that students have an opportunity to succeed academically, some of the states in Table 2 have set additional exit criteria. Georgia, for example, requires that a student must at least be at level 4.3 in all four language domains. As another example, Pennsylvania requires a writing sample that demonstrates proficiency at WIDA's Expanding level, which is equivalent to an ACCESS performance level of at least 4.0. The WIDA performance levels for receptive language (a composite of listening and reading) are provided in Appendix A. The WIDA performance levels for expressive language (a composite of speaking and writing) are provided in Appendix B.

Exactly where the cut point is set for proficiency on the ACCESS test is an issue with consequences for schools and divisions, as well as for individual students. As pointed out by the federal government, "Exiting EL students either too soon or too late raises civil rights concerns. The EL students who are exited too soon are denied access to EL services while EL students who are exited too late may be denied access to parts of the general curriculum. Denied or delayed access to the general curriculum can impede academic growth and contribute to a higher risk of dropping out of school."²⁴ Further, reclassifying a student as English proficient changes several aspects of students' educational environment. Especially at the high school level, reclassification has the potential to enable students to follow educational pathways that give them access to resources that better prepare them for postsecondary education. On the other hand, exiting EL status often eliminates access to instructional accommodations and supports tailored to promote these students' success.²⁵ Because VDOE has the latitude to increase the rigor of the ESL exit criteria for Virginia, the issue is actionable, inasmuch as school divisions can individually or jointly lobby for the criteria to be revised.

Selection and Approval of Programs for Evaluation

The ESL program was selected and approved for the Program Evaluation Schedule based on criteria specified in School Board Policy 6-26, adopted by the School Board on September 5, 2007. The following excerpt is from School Board Policy 6-26:

Existing programs will be evaluated based on an annual Program Evaluation Schedule which will be developed by the Program Evaluation Committee and approved by the School Board annually....On a yearly basis, the Program Evaluation Committee will present a list of programs recommended for evaluation to the Superintendent and the School Board. This listing will include the rationale for each recommendation based on an approved set of criteria. All programs will be prioritized for evaluation based on the following factors:

1. Alignment with the school division's strategic plan and School Board goals;
2. Program cost;
3. Program scale;
4. Cross-departmental interest;
5. Community/stakeholder interest in the program;
6. Availability of information on the program's effectiveness; and
7. Date of most recent evaluation.

On July 13, 2017, members of the Program Evaluation Committee reviewed and ranked a list of existing educational programs based on the criteria above. Rankings were compiled and shared with the committee at the meeting, and programs to be recommended for evaluation were determined. The ESL program was recommended for inclusion on the Program Evaluation Schedule primarily due to its potential to have a large, positive impact on VBCPS reaching its goals, as well as to the lack of formal evaluation by the Office of Research and Evaluation. It was determined that the ESL program would be scheduled for an Evaluation Readiness Report in order to define measurable goals and objectives and to develop an evaluation plan. The proposed Program Evaluation Schedule was presented to the School Board on August 15, 2017. The School Board approved the 2017-2018 Program Evaluation Schedule on September 6, 2017.

Overview of Current Goals and Objectives

The ESL program's homepage on the division's Intranet site begins with seven belief statements and ends with a vision statement (see page 8 of this report for each statement). For example, the second belief statement reads: "We believe all English learner students must be held to the same high academic standards as their native English-speaking peers." While the belief statements highlighted general expectations for the program, no goals were explicitly articulated, and no measurable objectives were identified.

The next section of the report describes the process undertaken to articulate goals and specify measurable objectives for the ESL program. In formulating the goals and objectives, the intent was to honor the program's belief and vision statements on the webpage while also identifying critical program components and indicators of their effective implementation and successful outcomes.

Process for Developing Revised Goals and Objectives

According to School Board Policy 6-26, for programs selected for an Evaluation Readiness Report, ORE evaluators will "assist program staff in defining measurable goals and objectives, as well as linkages with activities and outcomes. An Evaluation Readiness Report focusing on the outcomes of this process and baseline data (if available) will be presented to the Superintendent and School Board..." The process to complete an Evaluation Readiness Report began during the 2017-2018 school year with a review of existing documentation about the ESL program (history, purpose, and available goals) by ORE evaluators. In addition, the best practices literature and other evaluations of ESL programs were reviewed.

An initial planning meeting was held on January 29, 2018 with the executive director of the Office of Elementary Teaching and Learning (T&L) and the ORE evaluators. The meeting involved discussion of the evaluation readiness process, the need for and composition of the Evaluation Readiness Committee, and the surveys that would be developed and administered during the evaluation readiness process to provide baseline measures. A second planning meeting, which included the ESL program coordinator, was held

on March 12, 2018. During the meeting, the T&L staff members mainly answered questions about the program and reviewed survey items. Another meeting between T&L and ORE was held on April 26, 2018 to discuss potential program goals and objectives in advance of the full ESL Evaluation Readiness Committee meeting.

The meeting of the Evaluation Readiness Committee convened at Laskin Road Annex on May 1, 2018. The committee was large, consisting of 22 ESL and classroom teachers, administrators and school counselors from schools with relatively large ESL populations, executive directors from the departments of Teaching and Learning and School Leadership, as well as the ESL program coordinator. Three staff members from ORE facilitated collaborative discussion at various times during the meeting. The committee members were spread around the room with no more than five members seated at a particular table.

At the start of the meeting, participants introduced themselves to the whole group, explaining how they were involved with the program. The committee members were then asked to review a summary of the available information regarding the ESL program's background and purpose. They then brainstormed with the other people at their table to identify additional program elements that would provide a more complete and accurate picture of the ESL program. During this and subsequent discussion periods, the three ORE evaluators visited tables to answer questions, as well as to acquire a sense of each discussion.

After ORE's director differentiated goals from objectives for the purposes of the discussion, the remainder of the meeting was devoted to identifying concepts to be included in the goals and measurable objectives for the ESL program. First, the committee members brainstormed responses to a goal-related question: "If the ESL program were successful, in general, what would success look like?" The committee members individually jotted ideas onto post-it notes, one idea per post-it note, and discussed their ideas with their groups. After approximately ten minutes, a spokesperson from each table shared the group's ideas with the larger group, whereupon one of the ORE evaluators served as a scribe, writing general concepts and goal areas onto large sheets of paper.

To define measurable objectives, a second question was then asked: "If the ESL program were successful, what specific outcomes would be expected?" The same process of brainstorming ideas onto separate post-it

notes was employed. After approximately ten minutes, a spokesperson from each table shared the group's ideas with the larger group, and an ORE scribe wrote the ideas onto the appropriate sheets of paper.

After the meeting, the ORE evaluators formulated 5 goals and 20 measurable objectives. The goals and objectives, as well as how each was worded, reflected not only the Evaluation Readiness Committee proceedings but also several related documents. These included the previously mentioned belief and vision statements on the ESL webpage, as well as guidance from the U.S. Department of Education, the Virginia Department of Education, and a variety of sources from other state and local education agencies.

Once formulated, a draft of the goals and objectives was distributed to members of the Evaluation Readiness Committee for review, including the ESL program coordinator, as well as to leadership in T&L and PIA. The feedback received led to minor wording changes and to an adjustment of one objective involving academic performance in content areas which was revised to become an evaluation question.

Revised Goals and Objectives

As a result of the evaluation readiness process, 5 goals and 20 objectives were developed. These focused on professional learning for staff; EL students' social and emotional development; choices and opportunities available to EL students; EL students' development of English language proficiency; and providing the parents of EL students with the supports and services they needed to participate in their child's education.

Goal 1: ESL teachers and classroom teachers participate in professional learning to understand the needs of English learners and collaborate to seek ways to best serve their EL students.

Objective 1: ESL teachers participate in professional learning to increase their instructional effectiveness with EL students and report that it was effective as measured by ESL teacher and administrator survey responses.

Objective 2: Classroom teachers participate in professional learning to increase their understanding of and capacity to teach EL students and report that it was effective as measured by teacher and administrator survey responses.

Objective 3: ESL teachers and classroom teachers collaborate to meet the needs of EL students as measured by staff survey responses.

Goal 2: The ESL program will foster EL students' social and emotional development to support students as they become confident learners who feel part of their school community.

Objective 1: EL students demonstrate confidence by participating in class and collaborating during group work as measured by student and staff survey responses.

Objective 2: EL students participate in athletics, clubs, and other extracurricular activities as measured by student survey responses.

Objective 3: EL students consistently attend school as measured by the percentage of students who are absent less than 10 percent of the school year (i.e., not chronically absent) and by the percentage who have fewer than six unexcused/unverified absences.

Objective 4: EL students report positive relationships with peers, teachers, and administrators as measured by student survey responses.

Objective 5: EL students report a sense of belonging to their school as measured by student survey responses.

Objective 6: EL students and their parents report that their school is a welcoming place to learn as measured by student and parent survey responses.

Goal 3: The ESL program will be student-centered and provide EL students with a variety of choices and opportunities to help students reach their goals.

Objective 1: EL students report that they were provided with personalized learning opportunities as measured by student survey responses.

Objective 2: EL students report that the academic/career planning process helped them to make informed decisions about college, employment, or military service as measured by student survey responses.

Objective 3: EL students in middle school and high school enroll in rigorous coursework as measured by

the percentage of students enrolled in advanced or honors courses.

Objective 4: EL students have opportunities to enroll in academy programs, the Advanced Technology Center, and the Technical and Career Education Center as measured by the percentage of EL students enrolled in each of these programs.

Objective 5: EL students will demonstrate college- and career-readiness skills as measured by the percentage of students who earn industry certification, the percentage who complete a technical and career education program, and the percentage meeting college-readiness benchmarks on the SAT.

Goal 4: EL students will attain English proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Objective 1: EL students will make adequate progress in English language development as measured by the percentage of students who demonstrate the required composite proficiency level gains on the ACCESS assessment as defined by the VDOE depending on the students’ previous year’s proficiency level and current grade level.²⁶

Objective 2: EL students achieve English proficiency within five years,²⁷ as measured by the percentage of students attaining an ACCESS composite proficiency level score of 4.4 or higher.²⁸

Objective 3: EL students will graduate from high school on time as measured by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) on-time graduation rate.

Goal 5: The parents of EL students will be provided with supports and services to enable them to support and participate in their child’s education.

Objective 1: The parents of EL students receive timely notice of their child’s English language and academic progress and status in a form and manner that they can understand as measured by parent and staff survey responses.

Objective 2: Parents of EL students attend and express satisfaction with events, programs, and resources provided for parents to support students as measured by parent survey responses.

Objective 3: Parents of EL students receive school division communications in a form and manner that they can understand as measured by parent survey responses.

The progress made toward meeting the goals and objectives based on student outcome data will involve looking at three groups of EL students where possible: those with and without limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE and non-SLIFE) and students who have exited the program after attaining English proficiency. The division as a whole and a matched group of similar non-EL students will serve as reference groups where feasible.

Baseline Data

Number of Students Served and Characteristics

While data for the program objectives and evaluation questions will be collected in 2018-2019 as part of the proposed evaluation, this section provides baseline data regarding the EL student population in VBCPS during the 2017-2018 school year. Where appropriate, VBCPS totals are provided as comparative reference. Table 4 displays the numbers and percentages of the EL students who received ESL services or were in monitoring status during 2017-2018 by school level.

Table 4: Number and Percentages of Students Receiving ESL Services or in Monitor Status

School Level	EL Number	EL Percent of All ELs	EL Percent of All VBCPS	VBCPS Student Total*
Elementary	879	68.0	2.7	32,150
Middle	217	16.8	1.3	16,447
High	196	15.2	0.9	21,527
Total	1,292	100.0	1.8	70,124

* Excludes Pre-K students who are not served in VBCPS.

Table 4 indicates that approximately 68 percent (879 of 1,292) of the 2017-2018 ELs receiving ESL services or in monitor status were elementary students. The remainder were about evenly distributed in middle school and high school. Overall, as a percentage of the entire VBCPS student population, all ELs accounted for less than 2 percent. The 1,292 EL students spoke 59 different languages or distinct dialects identified by VDOE. Table 5 displays the demographic characteristics of the students.

Table 5: Demographic Characteristics of EL Students in 2017-2018

Student Characteristic	Number of EL Students	Percent of EL Students (N=1,292)	Percent of VBCPS (N=70,124)
Female	578	44.7	48.6
Male	714	55.3	51.4
African American	41	3.2	23.9
American Indian/Alaskan Native	3	< 1.0	< 1.0
Asian	362	28.0	6.0
Caucasian	242	18.7	48.4
Hispanic	619	47.9	11.4
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	8	< 1.0	< 1.0
Two or More Races	17	1.3	9.5
Economically Disadvantaged	706	54.6	38.2
Special Education	88	6.8	10.6
Gifted	51	3.9	16.3
Military/Government Connected	210	16.3	23.4

Table 5 indicates that the EL student population in 2017-2018 consisted of considerably higher percentages of Asian, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged students than the division overall. Conversely, the EL population had considerably lower percentages of African American, Caucasian, and gifted students than the division as a whole.

Special Categories of EL Students

Under current federal and state accountability policy, English learners are placed into a single subgroup, with the implication that they are a homogeneous group with similar needs and rates of growth. However, as mentioned previously, the EL population is actually quite diverse, and the EL students in VBCPS are no exception. The EL students differ in age and demographics, as well as geographically, culturally, and linguistically. However, their experiences before entering a Virginia Beach school can also be quite different. For example, English learners who enter school with little to no formal schooling are known as SLIFE (Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education). They must not only learn English and adapt to local culture but also catch up as quickly as possible with respect to acclimating to school culture

and to acquiring academic content. Many SLIFE may have been refugees and thus may also need to overcome psychological trauma. As a consequence, SLIFE are more likely than non-SLIFE ELs to become LTELs (Long-Term English Learners).²⁹

Precise definitions for LTEL students vary across states and school districts. Generally, an LTEL is an EL who has been enrolled in a U.S. school for six years or more but has not yet been reclassified as proficient in English.³⁰ Not only are LTELs growing in number across the U.S., but they also tend to have the poorest academic outcomes. For example, a recent study of ELs in Arizona found that LTEL students had the lowest observed graduation rate at 49 percent, compared to new EL students at 52 percent, recently proficient former EL students at 67 percent, and never English learner students at 85 percent.³¹ In an article cited in the U.S. Department of Education's English Learner Tool Kit, Mencken, et al, argue that programming for LTELs, especially in high school, must be distinctive, and they offer policy and practice recommendations.³²

Under the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), the latest revision of the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, states and districts are required to report on the percentage of students who have been identified as LTEL students, as measured by students who have maintained the EL classification for five or more years (ESSA, Section 3121 (a) (6)).³³ States are also required to report on the academic progress of LTEL students.³⁴ These policies highlight the need to identify high-quality programs and practices that support LTEL students' academic progress and the need to provide educators with knowledge and training to effectively implement those programs and practices.

In addition to SLIFE, LTEL, and regular EL students, former EL students constitute another category of EL student. Former EL students are those students who have been classified as having attained or exceeded the proficient level of English language development according to their score on the WIDA ACCESS test. Given six WIDA performance levels, Virginia has set the proficiency cut point at 4.4.³⁵ An EL student who earns a score of 4.4 or higher is monitored informally for two years to ensure that his or her performance level remains above 4.4. During this period, depending on individual needs and circumstances, some EL students may continue to receive ESL services. Others are merely monitored to ensure that they continue to make progress. It is important to remember that the WIDA performance levels reflect only English

language development, not academic learning in the content areas.

Yet another special category of ELs consists of students who are eligible for ESL services but whose parents refuse them. Although they are relatively few in number, the 60 EL students (approximately 4%) who opted out of ESL services still require attention. Their academic progress must be formally monitored, which requires each student's regular teachers to complete a detailed form on a quarterly basis, which is a task that the ESL teacher assigned to a particular school coordinates. In addition, the ESL teacher must also administer the WIDA ACCESS test to opt-out students. Further, the opt-out students must be offered alternative services (i.e., PALS, study blocks supporting ELs in the content areas, READ 180, System 44, Effective Reading Skills, services with a reading/math specialist, etc.).³⁶ Although it is beyond the scope of this Evaluation Readiness Report to discuss the varied reasons why parents may refuse ESL services for their eligible students, EL opt-outs not receiving ESL services may serve as a comparison group against which to reference the status and progress of EL students who are receiving ESL services.

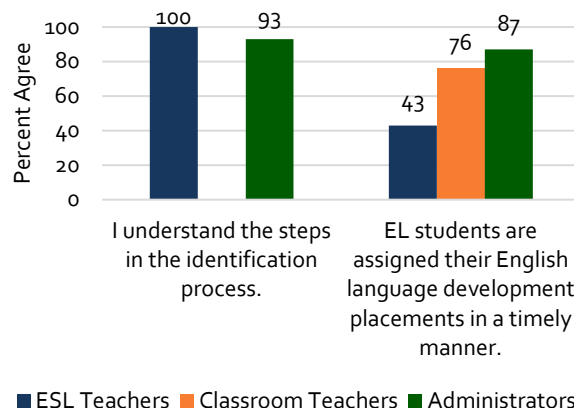
Baseline Survey Results

At the request of the Department of Teaching and Learning, of which the ESL program is a part, surveys regarding the ESL program were administered from April 30 to May 11, 2018 to ESL teachers, classroom teachers, and school administrators to collect baseline data for the evaluation process and to inform planning for program implementation during the 2018-2019 school year. Of those invited to participate in a survey, responses were received from 66 percent of the ESL teachers, 55 percent of the school administrators, and 28 percent of the classroom teachers. Selected survey results are included here to provide a baseline overview of how ESL personnel and school staff perceive the program in key areas of ESL program evaluations.

Identification of EL Students

When asked if they understood the steps in the identification process, high percentages of the ESL teachers and the administrators agreed that they did, as indicated in Figure 1. The classroom teachers were not asked to respond to this survey item.

Figure 1: Staff Perceptions of EL Identification and Placement

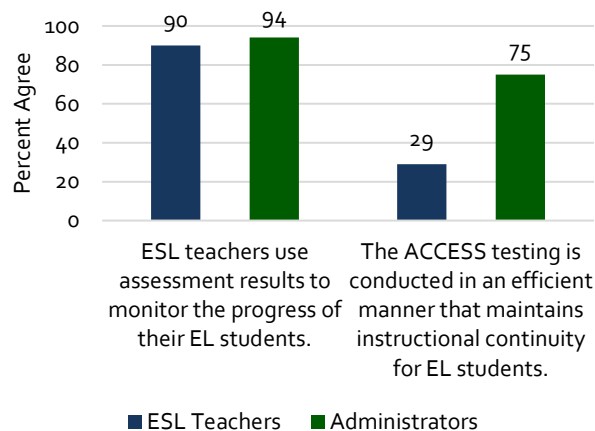


The survey respondents were also asked if EL students were assigned their English language development placements in a timely manner. The second set of bars in Figure 1 indicates that the agreement rate of the ESL teachers was markedly lower than those of the classroom teachers and the administrators.

Student Assessment and Status

The ESL teachers and administrators were asked about using assessment results to monitor the progress of EL students. As Figure 2 indicates, 90 percent or more of the respondents agreed that ESL teachers do this.

Figure 2: Staff Perceptions of EL Assessment Processes

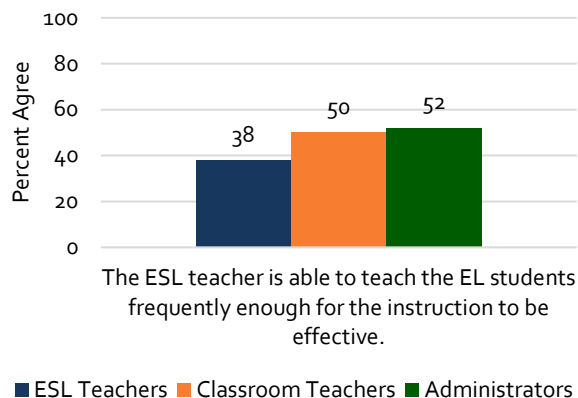


The ESL teachers and administrators were also asked if annual ACCESS testing was conducted in an efficient manner that maintains instructional continuity for the EL students. The second set of bars in Figure 2 shows a large disparity between the agreement rates of the ESL teachers and the administrators, with less than one third of ESL teachers agreeing that the ACCESS testing process maintains instructional continuity for students.

Frequency of ESL Instruction

All three respondent groups – the ESL teachers, the classroom teachers, and the administrators – were asked if the ESL teacher is able to teach the EL students frequently enough for the instruction to be effective. Figure 3 indicates that the agreement rates of the classroom teachers and administrators were higher than those of the ESL teachers.

Figure 3: Staff Perceptions of ESL Instructional Frequency



Whereas only 38 percent of the ESL teachers agreed that they are able to teach their EL students frequently enough for their instruction to be effective, 90 percent of the ESL teachers agreed that they provide instruction to EL students that effectively integrates listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English.

Professional Learning

The ESL teachers and classroom teachers were asked a series of questions regarding the professional learning that they had received over a three-year period ending in 2017-2018. More specifically, the survey item asked the degree to which they agreed that the professional learning had increased their capabilities in the four areas displayed in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Staff Perceptions of Professional Learning Focus Areas

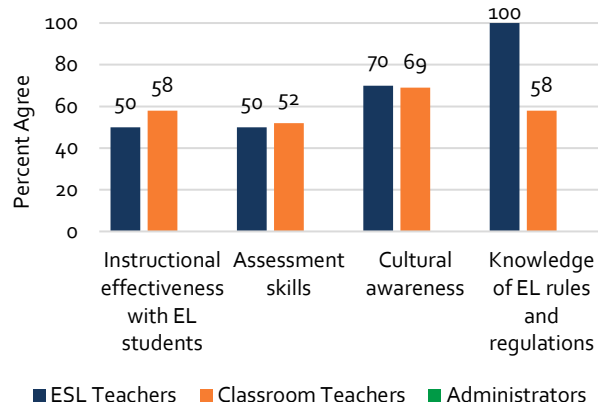


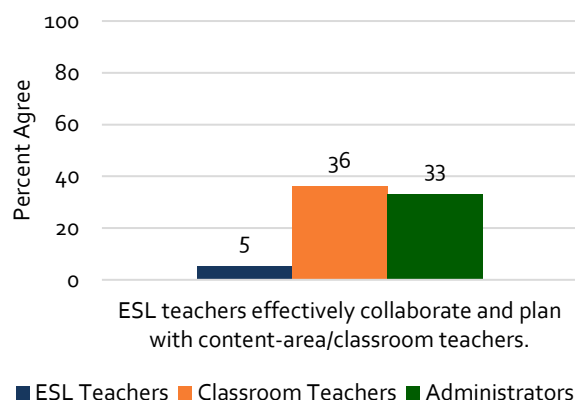
Figure 4 shows that the agreement rates of the classroom teachers ranged from a low of 52 percent regarding their agreement that professional learning had increased their assessment skills to 69 percent agreeing that professional learning had increased their cultural awareness. One half of the ESL teachers agreed that the professional learning increased their instructional effectiveness and assessment skills, and 70 percent agreed that it had increased their cultural awareness. In contrast, 100 percent of ESL teachers agreed that their professional learning had increased their knowledge of EL-related rules and regulations.

A summary survey item related to professional learning asked both the ESL teachers and the classroom teachers whether the professional learning they received over the last three years enabled them generally to meet the needs of their EL students. In response, 60 percent of the ESL teachers and 45 percent of the classroom teachers agreed that the professional learning had enabled them to meet the needs of their EL students.

Collaboration

All three groups of respondents were asked the degree to which ESL and content area/classroom teachers collaborate and plan together. Figure 5 shows the low rates of agreements among all three groups as well as the discrepancy between ESL teachers' perceptions and classroom teachers' and administrators' perceptions.

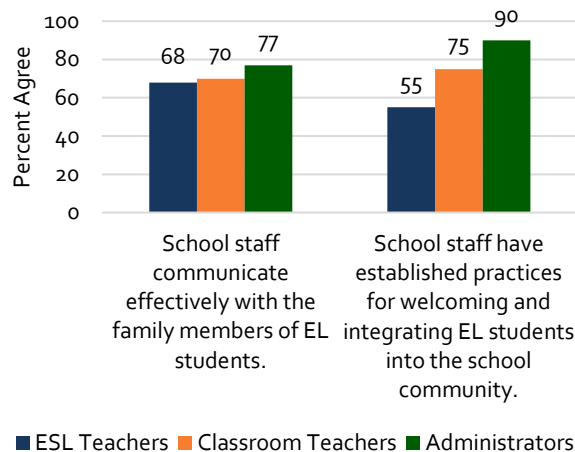
Figure 5: Staff Perceptions of Effective Collaboration and Planning Between ESL and Classroom Teachers



Communication With EL Families

All three respondent groups were asked a series of questions regarding communication with EL families and their integration into the school community. Figure 6 shows that similar to the patterns shown in several of the other figures, ESL teachers had the lowest rates of agreement and the administrators had the highest rates of agreement.

Figure 6: Staff Perceptions of Communication With EL Families and Integration of EL Students

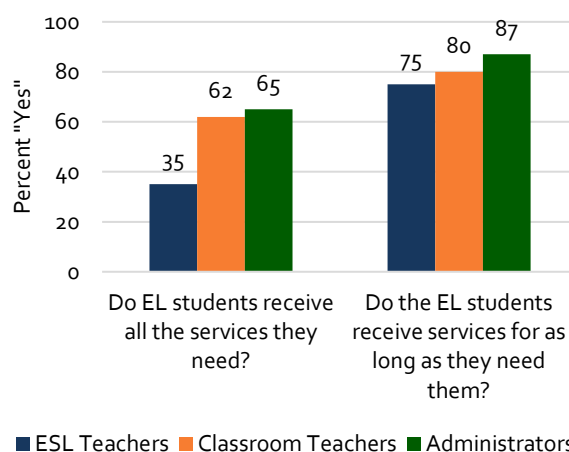


From 68 to 77 percent of respondent groups agreed that the school staff communicated effectively with the family members of EL students. Agreement that the school staff had practices for welcoming and integrating EL students varied by up to 35 percentage points, with 55 percent of ESL teachers agreeing, 75 percent of classroom teachers agreeing, and 90 percent of administrators agreeing that practices were in place.

General Perceptions

Figure 7 displays the results for two general questions regarding the sufficiency of ESL services provided to EL students. The response options of both survey items involved a “Yes” or “No” choice rather than a four-option scale ranging from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree.”

Figure 7: Staff Perceptions of ESL Services’ Adequacy and Duration



When asked if EL students receive all the services they need, 35 percent of the ESL teachers selected the “Yes” option compared with 62 percent of the classroom teachers and 65 percent of the administrators. When asked if the EL students receive services for as long as they need them, higher percentages of all three respondent groups indicated that they do. The “Yes” option was selected by 75 percent of the ESL teachers, 80 percent of the classroom teachers, and 87 percent of the administrators.

Satisfaction

The ESL teachers, classroom teachers, and administrators were asked to indicate how satisfied they were with their experience with the ESL program during 2017-2018. Figure 8 presents the percentages of respondents who felt “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied.”

Figure 8: Percent of Staff Members Indicating Satisfaction With the ESL Program

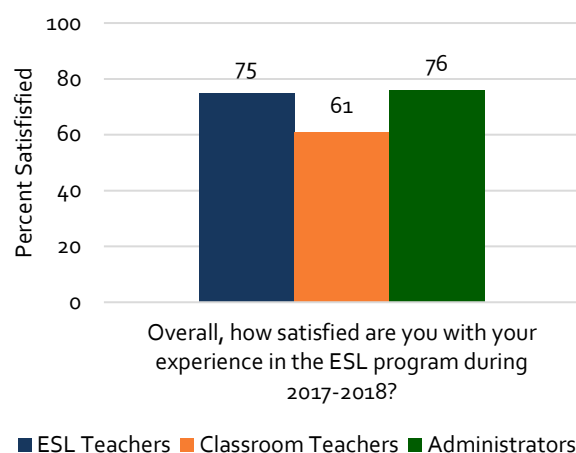


Figure 8 indicates that the percentage of ESL teachers (75%) and administrators (76%) who reported being satisfied were similar. The percentage of classroom teachers who reported being satisfied with the ESL program was somewhat lower at 61 percent.

In summary, the 2017-2018 baseline survey results begin to identify aspects of the program that appear to be strengths and those that warrant further attention. Rates of agreement were generally high that staff members understood the steps in the process for identifying EL students and that ESL teachers use assessment results to monitor the progress of their students. Rates of agreement were lower, for example, with respect to ESL instruction occurring with sufficient frequency to be effective, as well as with respect to ESL and classroom teachers effectively collaborating and planning together.

Evaluation Plan and Recommendation

According to School Board Policy 6-26, an Evaluation Readiness Report will focus on the outcomes of the evaluation readiness process and “will be presented to the Superintendent and School Board with a recommendation regarding future evaluation plans for the program.” In accordance with this policy, a three-year evaluation of the ESL program is recommended and the proposed plan of action for the evaluation is described in the next section.

Scope and Rationale of the Proposed Evaluation

In addition to conducting its own review of the literature related to ESL programs, ORE commissioned Hanover Research to produce a report for VBCPS entitled *Best Practices for ESL Program Evaluation*. The Hanover report provided detailed summaries of key performance indicators and data elements useful to evaluating ESL program impact. These were associated with focusing the evaluation on important program components, including student identification, student achievement and progress monitoring, and instructional services. The Hanover report also discussed a variety of evaluation designs and methods – for example, regression discontinuity design and propensity score matching methods. Further, the report included profiles of how three school districts had recently evaluated their own ESL programs. The information in the Hanover report provided external confirmation that ORE’s planned approach to designing and conducting the ESL comprehensive evaluation is aligned with best practices.

The ESL evaluation will initially be formative in nature, gathering information to inform program development and improvement. Accordingly, the first two years of the evaluation – 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 – will focus mainly on the ESL program’s implementation processes. This is advisable because of changes in federal and state requirements under ESSA, as well as operational changes in the program. For example, sheltered instruction focused on science in elementary pull-out sessions during 2017-2018. However, starting in 2018-2019, EL students are clustered in a teacher’s classroom on a grade level, and the ESL teacher will support the teacher’s instruction within that classroom. This will reduce the amount of sheltered pull-out instruction in 2018-2019. Another example of an operational change involves the assignment of ESL teachers to different schools within a school level rather than across school levels. For example, an ESL teacher who was assigned in 2017-2018 to one elementary school and one middle school is assigned in 2018-2019 to three other elementary schools and no middle schools. Therefore, during the first two years of the evaluation, data collection and analyses will focus on implementation processes. Student outcome data will also be collected and analyzed but will be presented as baseline data. In its third year, the evaluation will continue to address the program’s implementation but will also introduce the more summative purpose of determining the effectiveness of the program in

relation to meeting its student outcome goals and objectives.

More specifically, each year the evaluation will provide information on five areas related to the ESL program.

1. Program Components and Operational Processes

- Rationale: It is standard practice within an evaluation framework to examine issues related to components and operational processes related to the program, especially changes to the program during the evaluation period.

2. Characteristics of ESL participants

- Rationale: Identifying characteristics of ESL program participants will enable better understanding of the program's implementation and effects.

3. Meeting Goals and Objectives

- Rationale: Assessing progress made toward meeting the program-related goals and objectives will help to determine the extent to which the program is successful both in terms of implementation and student outcomes. Several comparisons between relevant groups will be made when assessing student outcomes to provide a clearer understanding of the program.

4. Stakeholder Perceptions

- Rationale: Surveying the perceptions of students and staff involved in the ESL program, as well as the perceptions of other stakeholders (school administrators, parents, etc.) will identify program strengths and possible areas for program improvement.

5. Cost

- Rationale: Determining the additional cost of the ESL program will provide information about the benefit of the program in relation to its overall cost.

Proposed Evaluation Method

In preparation for this Evaluation Readiness Report, the Hanover Research brief on best practices in evaluating ESL programs, as well as Chapter 9 in the

U.S. Department of Education's *English Learner Tool Kit*, served as resources for planning the evaluation.³⁷ The proposed evaluation will include mixed-methodologies in order to adequately address each of the evaluation questions, including the goals and objectives. The proposed evaluation will focus on both current and former EL students.

The majority of quantitative data will be extracted from the VBCPS data warehouse. To gather perception data, surveys will be administered to all key stakeholder groups, including the parents of EL students. The linguistic diversity of the EL population will need to be addressed in the survey process. Additional qualitative data will come from open-ended survey items, as well as from interviews and focus groups of ESL and classroom teachers when feasible. Further, information garnered from ESL program documentation and from the best practices research literature will also be utilized in the evaluation.

Evaluation Design and Questions

To the greatest extent possible, the evaluation methods that are proposed are aligned with information in the literature about best practices in the evaluation of ESL programs. The design of the evaluation will include both cross-sectional and longitudinal components. Cross-sectional designs, where data are examined based on a given point in time, provide a "snapshot" at one point in time, but allow for examination of data based on subgroup. Within a cross-section, two subgroups – for example, former EL students and a matched group of never-ELs – may be compared to assess equity of opportunity (e.g., enrollment in an academy program) or actual outcomes (e.g., on-time graduation rates). In contrast, the longitudinal components will examine EL progress over time and will compare the rate of progress with the rates of reference groups, when feasible. For example, the change in ACCESS performance levels of students receiving ESL services in grade 3 and grade 4 may be referenced against the ACCESS levels of ESL-eligible students who declined services.

The evaluation questions to be addressed in the evaluations are listed below. Evaluation questions only applicable to certain evaluation years are noted.

1. **What were the operational components of the ESL program?**
 - a. What were the criteria for identifying EL students?
 - b. What were the processes for assessing and placing the EL students according to their linguistic, academic, and other needs?
 - c. What were the instructional models and methods used to deliver language development and academic content to the EL students?
 - d. What were the processes for monitoring the participants' language development and academic progress until they met program exit criteria and through their period of post-program monitoring?
 - e. What was the process of staffing the ESL program, including job responsibilities and staff selection, ESL teacher assignments and caseloads, and staff characteristics?
 - f. What resources and professional learning activities were provided for ESL teachers and content area teachers to assist them in effectively meeting EL students' needs?
2. **What were the characteristics of the students who participated in the ESL program?**
 - a. What were the demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender, race/ethnicity) of the EL students?
 - b. What were the pathways that EL students planned to pursue (e.g., college, career, or military service)?

3. **How do former EL students (in and beyond monitor status) perform academically when compared with their similar non-EL peers with respect to course grades, SOL results, and other indicators of academic progress? (2020-2021 only)**
4. **What progress was made toward meeting the ESL program's goals and objectives?**
5. **What were the stakeholders' perceptions of the ESL program (i.e., EL students and their parents, ESL teachers, content area teachers, principals, and assistant principals)?**
6. **What was the additional cost of the ESL program to the school division?**
7. **What actions were taken regarding the recommendations from the ESL program evaluation? (2019-2020 and 2020-2021 only)**

Table 6 outlines the process of collecting data to address Evaluation Question 4 noted above. For reference, the goals and objectives can be found on pages 14 and 15.

Table 6: Data Collection Process for Program Objectives

Program Objective	Data Used to Evaluate Progress Toward Meeting Objectives	Measure	Data Source
Goal 1 Objective 1	Perceptions of ESL teachers and administrators regarding ESL teacher participation in professional learning and perceptions of effectiveness.	Percentage of ESL teachers who report participating and percentage who report it was effective. Percentage of administrators who report ESL teacher participation and percentage who report it was effective.	Survey
Goal 1 Objective 2	Perceptions of classroom teachers of EL students who participated in professional learning and who report that the professional learning was effective.	Percentage of classroom teachers who report participating and percentage who report it was effective. Percentage of administrators who report classroom teacher participation and percentage who report it was effective.	Survey

Program Objective	Data Used to Evaluate Progress Toward Meeting Objectives	Measure	Data Source
Goal 1 Objective 3	Perceptions of ESL teachers and classroom teachers of EL students regarding their collaboration.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey
Goal 2 Objective 1	Perceptions of EL students and school staff regarding EL student self-confidence through class participation and group collaboration.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey
Goal 2 Objective 2	Perceptions of EL students regarding EL students' participation in athletics, clubs, and other extracurricular activities.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey for EL students as part of Navigational Marker data collection
Goal 2 Objective 3	Data regarding the school attendance of EL students.	Percentage of EL students with 90 percent attendance. Percentage of EL students who have fewer than six unexcused/unverified absences.	VBCPS data warehouse as part of Navigational Marker data collection
Goal 2 Objective 4	Perceptions of EL students regarding positive relationships with peers, teachers, and administrators.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey for EL students as part of Navigational Marker data collection
Goal 2 Objective 5	Perceptions of EL students regarding EL students' sense of belonging to their school.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey for EL students as part of Navigational Marker data collection
Goal 2 Objective 6	Perceptions of EL students and their parents about their school being a welcoming place to learn.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey for EL students and parents as part of Navigational Marker data collection
Goal 3 Objective 1	Perceptions of EL students that they were provided with personalized learning opportunities.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey for EL students as part of Navigational Marker data collection
Goal 3 Objective 2	Perceptions of EL students that the academic/career planning process helped them to make informed decisions about college, employment, or military service.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey for EL students as part of Navigational Marker data collection
Goal 3 Objective 3	Data regarding EL students in middle school and high school who enrolled in advanced or honors courses.	Percentage of middle school and high school EL students enrolled.	VBCPS data warehouse as part of Navigational Marker data collection
Goal 3 Objective 4	Data regarding EL students enrolled in academy programs, the Advanced Technology Center, and the Technical and Career Education Center.	Percentage of EL high school students enrolled.	VBCPS data warehouse
Goal 3 Objective 5	Data regarding EL students who earn industry certification, complete a technical and career education (TCE) program, and meet college-readiness benchmarks on the SAT.	Percentage of EL high school students who earn certifications, complete TCE programs, and meet benchmarks.	VBCPS data warehouse as part of Navigational Marker data collection

Program Objective	Data Used to Evaluate Progress Toward Meeting Objectives	Measure	Data Source
Goal 4 Objective 1	Data regarding EL students who make adequate progress toward developing, attaining, and maintaining English language proficiency.	Percentage of EL students who make the requisite gains on ACCESS based on their prior proficiency level and grade level.	VBCPS data warehouse
Goal 4 Objective 2	Data regarding EL students who achieve English proficiency within five years.	Percentage of EL students who attain an ACCESS proficiency level of at least 4.4 within five years.	VBCPS data warehouse
Goal 4 Objective 3	Data regarding the number of EL students who graduate from high school on time.	The on-time graduation rate of EL students.	VBCPS data warehouse and VDOE
Goal 5 Objective 1	Data regarding parent and staff perceptions that the parents receive timely notice of their child's English language progress and status in a form and manner that they can understand.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey
Goal 5 Objective 2	Data demonstrating that the parents of EL students attend and express satisfaction with events, programs, and resources provided for parents to support their student.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey for EL parents as part of Navigational Marker data collection
Goal 5 Objective 3	Perceptions of parents of EL students that they receive school communications in a form and manner that they can understand.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey

Results of the Evaluation Readiness Process

- The ESL Evaluation Readiness Committee and staff from PIA's Office of Research and Evaluation met to discuss the evaluation process. Goals and measurable objectives were developed, along with a three-year program evaluation plan.
- The first goal is that ESL teachers and classroom teachers participate in professional learning to understand the needs of English learners and collaborate to seek ways to best serve their EL students. Specific objectives include:
 - Having ESL teachers participate in effective professional learning to increase their instructional effectiveness with EL students.
 - Having classroom teachers participate in effective professional learning to increase their understanding of and capacity to teach EL students.
 - Having ESL teachers and classroom teachers collaborate to meet EL students' needs.
- The second goal is that ESL program will foster EL students' social and emotional development to support students as they become confident learners who feel part of their school community. Specific objectives include having EL students:
 - Demonstrate confidence through class participation and group collaboration.
 - Participate in athletics, clubs, and other extracurricular activities.
 - Attend school regularly.
 - Report positive relationships with peers, teachers, and administrators.
 - Report a sense of belonging to their school.

- Report that school is a welcoming place to learn.
- The third goal is that the ESL program will be student-centered and provide EL students with a variety of choices and opportunities to help students reach their goals. Specific objectives include having EL students:
 - Receive personalized learning opportunities.
 - Make informed decisions about college, employment, or military service.
 - Enroll in rigorous coursework in middle school and high school.
 - Enroll in academy and other specialized programs.
 - Demonstrate college- and career-readiness skills.
- The fourth goal is that EL students will attain English proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Specific objectives include having EL students:
 - Make adequate progress each year in English language development.
 - Achieve English proficiency within five years.
 - Graduate from high school on time.
- The fifth goal is that the parents of EL students will be provided with supports and services to enable them to support and participate in their child's education. Specific objectives include having the parents of EL students:
 - Receive timely notice of their child's English language progress and status in a manner that they can understand.
 - Attend and express satisfaction with events, programs, and resources.
 - Receive school division communications in a manner that they can understand.

Recommendations and Rationale

Recommendation #1: Begin a three-year evaluation during 2018-2019 focused on evaluating the implementation of the ESL program with a year-one report presented to the School Board in the fall of 2019. (Responsible Group: Planning, Innovation, and Accountability – Office of Research and Evaluation)

Rationale: It is proposed that a three-year evaluation of the ESL program commence during 2018-2019. The evaluation will focus on the ESL program's implementation processes and answer questions about how the program operates, including documenting the various curricular models and instructional methods employed when delivering ESL services and supports. A review of evaluation literature during the evaluation readiness process indicated that the success of ESL programs tends to depend less on adhering to a particular model than on factors affecting program quality, including ESL teacher caseload, opportunity for collaboration among the ESL teacher and classroom teachers, and the degree to which division and school leaders make EL students a priority. While the evaluation in 2018-2019 will focus on implementation processes, data for program objectives focused on student outcomes will be collected for baseline purposes.

Recommendation #2: Continue the evaluation of the ESL program during 2019-2020 maintaining the focus on implementation with a year-two report presented to the School Board in the fall of 2020. (Responsible Group: Planning, Innovation, and Accountability – Office of Research and Evaluation)

Rationale: It is proposed that the evaluation of the ESL program continue to focus on program implementation processes during its second year. As part of the year-two evaluation, modifications or changes made to the program will be described, and baseline data for student outcome goals and objectives will be collected for a second year. A second year of focusing on program implementation processes will provide an opportunity to address any

modifications or changes to the program that occur due to previously planned modifications, changes to federal and/or state regulations, or in response to the year-one evaluation recommendations. Two years of focusing mainly on program implementation will allow for a more complete examination and understanding of the extent and nature of the ESL program's components and processes at all school sites within the Virginia Beach school division. In addition, collecting more than one year of baseline student outcome data prior to evaluating program effectiveness for EL students will enable longitudinal analyses in addition to the cross-sectional analyses that provide "snapshots" at particular times.

Recommendation #3: Conduct the final evaluation of the ESL program during 2020-2021 shifting the focus from implementation to program effectiveness in terms of student outcomes with a year-three comprehensive evaluation report presented to the School Board in the fall of 2021. (Responsible Group: Planning, Innovation, and Accountability – Office of Research and Evaluation)

Rationale: Following the two years of focusing on program implementation processes, it is proposed that the evaluation during 2020-2021 shift its emphasis to the more summative purpose of measuring program effectiveness in terms of student outcomes and students' linguistic and academic growth, as well as on the degree to which the program met its goals and objectives. Based on the year-three results, additional evaluation update reports may be recommended to monitor certain outcomes or to provide information about possible adjustments to the ESL program due to changes in federal and/or state regulations or due to program evaluation recommendations. Because one of the student outcome objectives is longitudinal in nature, there may be longitudinal components of the evaluation which will need to be addressed beyond 2020-2021.

Appendices

Appendix A: WIDA Performance Levels Definitions for the Receptive Language Domain (Processing by Listening and Reading) – K-12

At each grade, toward the end of a given level of English language proficiency, and with instructional support, English language learners will process...

Level	Discourse Dimension Linguistic Complexity	Sentence Dimension Language Forms and Conventions	Word/Phrase Dimension Vocabulary Usage
Level 1 Entering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single statements or questions An idea within words, phrases, or chunks of language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple grammatical constructions (e.g., commands, Wh- questions, declaratives) Common social and instructional forms and patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General content-related words Everyday social, instructional and some content-related words and phrases
Level 2 Emerging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple related simple sentences An idea with details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compound grammatical structures Repetitive phrasal and sentence patterns across content areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General content words and expressions, including cognates Social and instructional words and expressions across content areas
Level 3 Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discourse with a series of extended sentences Related ideas specific to particular content areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compound and some complex grammatical constructions Sentence patterns across content areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific content-area language and expressions Words and expressions with common collocations and idioms across content areas
Level 4 Expanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connected discourse with a variety of sentences Expanded related ideas characteristic of particular content areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex grammatical structures A broad range of sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific and some technical content-area language Words or expressions with multiple meanings across content areas
Level 5 Bridging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rich descriptive discourse with complex sentences Cohesive and organized, related ideas across content areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A variety of complex grammatical structures Sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical and abstract content-area language Words and expressions with shades of meaning across content areas
Level 6 Reading	English language learners will process a range of grade-appropriate oral or written language for a variety of academic purposes and audiences. Automaticity in language processing is reflected in the ability to identify and act on significant information from a variety of genres and registers. English language learners' strategic competence in processing academic language facilitates their access to content area concepts and ideas.		

Source: <https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/Performance-Definitions-Receptive-Domains.pdf>. Reformatted for accessibility.

Appendix B: WIDA Performance Levels Definitions for the Expressive Language Domain (Using via Speaking and Writing) – K-12

At each grade, toward the end of a given level of English language proficiency, and with instructional support, English language learners will produce...

Level	Discourse Dimension Linguistic Complexity	Sentence Dimension Language Forms and Conventions	Word/Phrase Dimension Vocabulary Usage
Level 1 Entering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Words, phrases, or chunks of language Single words used to represent ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phrase-level grammatical structures Phrasal patterns associated with familiar social and instructional situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General content-related words Everyday social and instructional words and expressions
Level 2 Emerging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phrases or short sentences Emerging expression of ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formulaic grammatical structures Repetitive phrasal and sentence patterns across content areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General content words and expressions Social and instructional words and expressions across content areas
Level 3 Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short and some expanded sentences with emerging complexity Expanded expression of one idea or emerging expression of multiple related ideas across content areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple and compound grammatical structures with occasional variation Sentence patterns across content areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific content language, including cognates and expressions Words or expressions with multiple meanings used across content areas
Level 4 Expanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short, expanded, and some complex sentences Organized expression of ideas with emerging cohesion characteristic of particular content areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compound and complex grammatical structures Sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific and some technical content-area language Words and expressions with expressive meaning through use of collocations and idioms across content areas
Level 5 Bridging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple, complex sentences Organized, cohesive, and coherent expression of ideas characteristic of particular content areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A variety of complex grammatical structures matched to purpose A broad range of sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical and abstract content-area language, including content-specific collocations Words and expressions with precise meaning across content areas
Level 6 Reaching	English language learners will use a range of grade-appropriate language for a variety of academic purposes and audiences. Agility in academic language use is reflected in oral fluency and automaticity in response, flexibility in adjusting to different registers and skillfulness in interpersonal interaction. English language learners' strategic competence in academic language use facilitates their ability to relate information and ideas with precision and sophistication for each content area.		

Source: <https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/Performance-Definitions-Expressive-Domains.pdf>. Reformatted for accessibility.

Endnotes

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- ²⁴ Source: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap8.pdf>, p. 2.
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- ²⁹ Although the exact number of SLIFE in VBCPS in 2017-2018 is unclear because the identification criteria differed across schools, a more standardized SLIFE definition will be introduced in 2018-2019, which will provide more accurate data for the comprehensive evaluation being proposed.
- ³⁰ Source: <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essatitleiiiguidenglishlearners92016.pdf> (See p. 39, especially)
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