English as a Second Language Program (K-12): *Evaluation Update*

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Program Overview

The Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS) English as a Second Language (ESL) program's vision 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."[1] 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 several goals of the division's strategic framework, *Compass to 2025*: (1) Educational Excellence, (2) Student Well-being, (3) Student Ownership of Learning, (4) An Exemplary, Diversified Workforce, and (5) Mutually Supportive Partnerships.

Through the ESL program, VBCPS provided ESL services to 2,082 English learner (EL) students in grades K-12 during the 2021-2022 school year. Among them, they speak 72 different languages. The most common home language of these students was Spanish, which was spoken by 54 percent of the EL students. The next most common home languages were Tagalog, spoken by 6 percent of EL students, and Chinese (i.e., Mandarin) and Vietnamese, each spoken by 5 percent of EL students. French was spoken by approximately 4 percent of EL students. The remaining languages had 3 percent or less of EL students speaking each language. In addition, through the ESL program, 730 students were monitored due to being former EL students, and 234 students were monitored due to opting out of receiving ESL services.

Specific aspects of the ESL program in VBCPS are aligned with standards provided by the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium. The WIDA Consortium was originally formed in 2003 and consists of 41 U.S. states, territories, and federal agencies, including Virginia.[2] 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 (ELD) standards, should guide the development of a school division's language instruction educational program (LIEP). The federal government and VDOE have established requirements for ESL programs through EL-related regulations and policies. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, students must be screened as part of initial enrollment in education and those who are identified as potential EL students must be assessed for proficiency in the English language.[3] Also under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, students must be provided with instruction that is educationally sound and proven successful.[4] In addition, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) issued guidance in September 2016 that "under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), states must annually assess the English language proficiency of ELs."[5] For the purpose of annually assessing EL students, VDOE selected the WIDA Consortium's Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs) test to be used by school divisions.[6] The VDOE has also indicated that divisions must use a WIDA screening assessment for screening purposes and has established English proficiency criteria for scores on these various WIDA assessments.[7] Within the Virginia ESSA State Plan, there were requirements for EL students' growth in their ELP (as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs) based on their proficiency and grade level.[8] An additional requirement under ESSA includes annual parent notification regarding their child's proficiency and program placement.[9]

Assistance from the federal government for ESL programs is provided through a federal grant program detailed in Title III of ESSA, known as the English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act.[10] The purpose of Title III is to ensure that EL students achieve English proficiency and academic achievement, especially with regards to meeting state academic standards expected of all children.[11] Funds are provided to individual states and then distributed through subgrants to divisions. Within Virginia,

divisions must apply for Title III grant funding annually and funds are awarded based on the previous year's reported number of EL students.[12] To receive funding, states and divisions must comply with requirements set by the EL-related regulations and policies outlined previously. To monitor compliance with requirements of ESSA, divisions upload relevant data to VDOE through the Student Record Collection (SRC) system.[13] VBCPS receives funding through Title III and uploads data for monitoring through this system.

The ESL Program in VBCPS has been evaluated recently by the VBCPS Office of Research and Evaluation. After being selected for evaluation by the Program Evaluation Committee, the School Board approved the ESL program for an evaluation readiness report on September 6, 2017. During the 2017-2018 school year, the evaluation plan was developed with the program managers, including the goals and objectives that would be assessed. The recommendation from the evaluation readiness report that was approved by the School Board was that the ESL program undergo a three-year evaluation, with a focus on implementation of the program in 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 and on student outcomes in 2020-2021. Following each year of the evaluation, results and recommendations were presented to the School Board with the School Board subsequently approving the recommendations.[14] Recommendations over the years focused on developing a plan to provide translation and interpretation services; implementing new strategies to improve communication and collaboration between ESL and classroom teachers; enhancing professional learning related to ESL instruction, including for classroom teachers of EL students; expanding the availability of ESL instructional materials and resources; encouraging EL students to participate in a variety of curricular options; ensuring EL students are clustered in classrooms at the elementary and middle school levels; and reviewing the high school model.

The final comprehensive evaluation was presented to the School Board on February 22, 2022. The recommendations focused on continuing to work on clustering EL students in classrooms at the elementary school and middle school levels, communication and collaboration between ESL and classroom teachers, and professional learning for classroom teachers of EL students. An additional recommendation was to conduct an evaluation update in 2021-2022.[15]

As recommended and approved by the School Board, this evaluation update provides information about the operation of the ESL program during 2021-2022 with a focus on the progress of EL student English language development, academic performance of former EL students compared to non-EL peers, and progress related to the final comprehensive evaluation recommendations.

Data Collection and Methodology

The evaluation update included mixed methodologies to address each of the focus areas. Qualitative data were collected through discussions with the program managers and document reviews. Quantitative data were gathered through the VBCPS data warehouse where needed and through closed-ended survey questions. The Office of Research and Evaluation used the following data collection methods:

➢ Communicated with the ESL coordinator and director of the Office of K-12 and Gifted Programs to gather program-related information.
➢ Reviewed VBCPS ESL program documentation.
➢ Reviewed federal and state regulations and guidelines related to the ESL program.
➢ Administered surveys to ESL teachers and classroom teachers who taught at least one EL student.
➢ Collected data from the VBCPS data warehouse related to student program-related information and student progress (e.g., English proficiency).
➢ Collected long-term EL student data from VDOE through the Single Sign-on for Web Systems (SSWS).

Surveys

As part of a larger survey effort, ESL teachers and classroom teachers received an email invitation to complete a survey about the ESL program. Classroom teachers and ESL teachers were asked to indicate whether they taught an EL student during the 2021-2022 school year. Teachers who indicated they taught an EL student were directed to additional survey items about the ESL program. Overall, staff response rates ranged from 25 percent for classroom teachers to 43 percent for ESL teachers (see Table 1). Response rates by level and overall number of respondents are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Staff Survey Response Rates by School Level and Overall Number of Respondents

Group	ES	MS	HS	Overall Rate	Overall Number of Respondents
ESL Teachers	56%	33%	43%	43%	20
Classroom Teachers	21%	31%	26%	25%	621

Note: Six ESL teachers were not designated at a school level; therefore, the teacher is included in the total but not at a school level.

Survey agreement percentages reported in the evaluation update are based on those who answered the survey item (i.e., missing responses were excluded from the percentages). Survey results from 2021-2022 were compared to survey results from previous surveys, and information about trends over the years is provided where notable.

EL Student Information From Data Warehouse

To comply with reporting requirements of ESSA, as well as for the purposes of monitoring EL students and determining allocations for Title III, Part A funding, divisions must submit EL student information to VDOE through the Student Record Collection (SRC) system. The EL-related data collection for the SRC occurs in the fall, spring, and at the end of the year.[16] After data are collected through the SRC system, VDOE prepares reports that tabulate the information. Within the EL portion of the SRC reports, totals of EL students (in kindergarten through grade 12) within certain categories are reported. The categories include students who are identified as receiving ESL services, identified but opted out of services, and former EL students. For the SRC, students who opted out of services at any point during the year are included in the category of having opted out of services, while former students include students who have reached English proficiency within the past four years.

For this evaluation update, the identification of EL students in each of these categories followed the rules used for the end-of-year VDOE SRC with slight modifications as described below. The end-of-year VDOE SRC report included only students who were considered active (i.e., enrolled in VBCPS) as of the end of the school year. For the purposes of this evaluation update, EL students who were enrolled at any point throughout the school year were included to obtain a cumulative count of students.

As reported in the end-of-year VDOE SRC, there were 1,916 EL students identified as receiving ESL services and considered active students (i.e., enrolled in VBCPS) as of the end of the year.[17] Additionally, 119 students were considered EL students and as having received ESL services but were not active students as of the end of the year. An additional 4 students were considered EL students in the fall but were not considered EL students as of the end of year; therefore, these students were included in the category of EL students for this evaluation update. A final group of 43 students were considered EL students and received ESL services from records pulled from the VBCPS data warehouse, but they were not included in any SRC because their VBCPS enrollment dates did not coincide with the dates for the SRC or did not have a home language. This resulted in a total of 2,082 EL students for the 2021-2022 school year.

Similar to the end-of-year SRC report, there were 218 students who opted out of EL services and 660 students were former EL students.[18] Based on similar rules and records from the data warehouse, an additional 16 students were determined to be opt out EL students and 70 students were determined to be former EL students. This resulted in a total of 234 students who opted out of EL services and 730 former EL students. As shown in Table 2, in comparison to 2020-2021, there was an increase of 314 EL students who received services during the school year in 2021-2022. There was also an increase of 77 students who opted out of EL services and a slight increase of 4 students who were former EL students. Over the four-year period during which the evaluation of the ESL Program has been conducted, there was a 35 percent increase in the number of students receiving EL services (increase of 537 students from 2018-2019 to 2021-2022).

Table 2: Numbers of EL Students by Group From 2018-2019 to 2021-2022

Group	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Receiving services	1,545	1,724	1,768	2,082
Opt-out students*	58	162	157	234
Former EL students	684	666	726	730

Note: *Much of the increase from 2018-2019 to 2019-2020 was due to a data coding change.
In 2020-2021, an additional 10 students were identified as presumptive EL students due to difficulty screening students in person as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this classification was no longer used in 2021-2022.

For the analyses in this report, an additional group of students who never received EL services was determined as a comparison group to former EL students.

Results

Progress Related to Recommendations

The first purpose of the evaluation update was to monitor the progress related to the comprehensive evaluation recommendations, including clustering EL students in classrooms at the elementary school and middle school levels, communication and collaboration between ESL teachers and classroom teachers, and professional learning for classroom teachers of EL students.

Clustering EL Students

During the 2021-2022 school year, at the elementary school and middle school levels, services were primarily provided through the push-in model, which involves ESL teachers supporting the classroom teachers' instruction. To help facilitate services offered through the push-in model at the elementary school and middle school levels, over the past few years, it has been recommended to principals that EL students be clustered in classrooms by grade level.[19] In general, at elementary schools, EL students were expected to be in one teacher's classroom in each grade level, while at middle schools, EL students were expected to be in the same content courses at each grade level. In addition, middle schools with A/B day schedules were expected to coordinate which day would be designated for ESL services with their ESL partner school to avoid a scheduling conflict for the ESL teacher.[20] Middle school ESL partnership schools were communicated to principals. This grade-level clustering was intended to allow ESL teachers to work in fewer classrooms per school.

In 2019-2020 and 2020-2021, when surveyed about clustering EL students within classrooms, low percentages of elementary school (from 35% to 43%) and middle school ESL teachers (from 17% to 38%) agreed that EL students were effectively clustered within teachers' classrooms at each grade level. Due to the low agreement percentages regarding effective clustering, a recommendation from the two prior evaluations focused on clustering of EL students to the greatest extent possible. The ESL coordinator indicated that actions taken regarding this recommendation during 2021-2022 included distributing principals' packet memos in April 2022

that communicated to elementary school and middle school principals the need to cluster EL students at each grade level for elementary and in content classes at each grade level for middle school with a note that the students should not exceed one-third of the class. In preparation for the 2022-2023 school year, in the memos, principals were asked to submit the names of the cluster classroom teachers in a Google form by August 1, 2022.

During 2021-2022, 71 percent of elementary school ESL teachers and 67 percent of middle school ESL teachers agreed that EL students were effectively clustered within teachers' classrooms at each grade level. These were notable increases in agreement percentages for ESL teachers in comparison to the previous years (see Table 3). For classroom teachers, agreement percentages regarding this item ranged from 77 to 81 percent for elementary school and middle school classroom teachers.

Table 3: Staff Agreement Regarding Effective Clustering Within Teachers' Classrooms by School Level

Group	2019-2020		2020-2021		2021-2022	
	ES	MS	ES	MS	ES	MS
ESL Teacher	35%	38%	43%	17%	71%	67%
Classroom Teacher	75%	69%	86%	73%	81%	77%

Note: Survey item was not included in 2018-2019.

Communication and Collaboration

A key component of providing instruction to EL students is collaboration between the content-area/classroom teachers and the ESL teachers. From 2018-2019 to 2020-2021, low percentages of ESL teachers (from 23% to 46%) and classroom teachers (from 39% to 54%) agreed that ESL teachers and content-area/classroom teachers collaborated with each other to meet the needs of EL students. Due to the low agreement percentages, a recommendation from the three prior evaluations focused on implementing new strategies to improve communication and collaboration between ESL and classroom teachers. The ESL coordinator indicated that actions taken during 2021-2022 regarding this recommendation included the approval of eight additional ESL teacher allocations and extending the contracts for ESL teachers from standard teaching contracts to 10-month extended contracts. This allowed for reduced ESL teacher caseloads and thus more time for communication and collaboration. The extended time in August allowed ESL teachers to not only complete administrative tasks but also to prepare a presentation for school staff based on a template provided by the Department of Teaching and Learning ESL staff. It has been recommended that schools provide time for ESL teachers to present to staff regarding EL instructional best practices. To support communication and collaboration and provide relevant data for planning purposes, classroom teachers of EL students, as well as ESL teachers and school administrators, will continue to have access to Ellevation, the software program that provides English language proficiency assessment data and houses EL classroom and testing accommodation plans.

When asked about ESL and content-area/classroom teachers collaborating with each other to meet the needs of EL students, agreement percentages of ESL teachers increased notably from 46% in 2020-2021 to 60% in 2021-2022, while there was a slight increase for classroom teachers from 54% to 56% (see Table 4).

Table 4: Staff Agreement Regarding ESL and Classroom Teachers Collaborating to Meet Students' Needs

Group	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
ESL Teacher	33%	23%	46%	60%
Classroom Teacher	47%	39%	54%	56%

The ESL teachers were also surveyed about the information they communicated to classroom teachers, and classroom teachers were asked about receiving or knowing where to find various types of ESL-related

information. In 2021-2022, at least 80 percent of ESL teachers indicated they communicated with classroom teachers about EL students' English performance/proficiency levels, the instructional services they provided, assessment practices, and screening practices (see Table 5). There were notable increases from 2020-2021 in the percentages of ESL teachers who indicated they provided communication about screening practices (from 66% to 80%) and assessment practices (from 69% to 85%).

Table 5: Percentages of ESL Teachers Who Indicated They Communicated With Classroom Teachers

Survey Item	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
EL students' English performance/proficiency levels	100%	97%	95%
Instructional services provided to EL students	81%	97%	90%
Screening practices	62%	66%	80%
Assessment practices	62%	69%	85%
None of the above	0%	0%	5%

Approximately half of classroom teachers indicated they received or knew where to find information about their EL students' English performance/proficiency levels (52%) and the instructional services provided (49%). Lower percentages of classroom teachers indicated they received or knew where to find information about screening practices (22%) and assessment practices (25%). These percentages were relatively similar to percentages in previous years when classroom teachers were surveyed about knowing where to find information in these areas (see Table 6).

Table 6: Percentages of Classroom Teachers Who Indicated They Received Information About and Knew Where to Find EL-Related Information

Survey Item	2019-2020		2020-2021		2021-2022
	Receive information about	Know where to find information about	Receive information about	Know where to find information about	Receive or know where to find information about
EL students' English performance/proficiency levels	56%	41%	61%	52%	52%
Instructional services provided to EL students	40%	29%	50%	40%	49%
Screening practices	24%	16%	29%	24%	22%
Assessment practices	27%	17%	28%	25%	25%
None of the above	34%	55%	27%	41%	35%

Note: Staff were not provided this survey item in 2018-2019.

Professional Learning for Classroom Teachers

Due to low percentages of classroom teachers indicating they participated in EL-related professional learning in previous years (from 36% to 48%), a recommendation from the three prior evaluations focused on encouraging classroom teachers to participate in ESL-related professional learning. During the 2021-2022 school year, there was a hold placed on all professional learning sessions due to continuing COVID-19 pandemic challenges; therefore, there were no EL-related professional learning sessions offered to classroom teachers. The ESL coordinator indicated that actions taken regarding this recommendation for the upcoming 2022-2023 school year included offering a variety of after-school professional learning sessions for K-12 teachers across the division, which will be led by the ESL program and ESL teachers. In addition, the professional learning opportunities will be offered to the cluster teachers identified by the elementary school and middle school principals. A memo regarding professional learning sessions was provided September 15,

2022.[21] In the memo, schools were encouraged to share the session information with classroom teachers who worked with English learner students.

Progress of EL Student English Language Development

The second focus of the evaluation update was to monitor the progress of EL students' English language development through their attainment of English proficiency, including EL student progress on the ACCESS, reaching proficiency within five years, and high school graduation rates.

Students' progression in English language development was first examined based on students' scores on the ACCESS test. As part of Virginia's ESSA State Plan, VDOE provided required proficiency level gains on the ACCESS test depending on students' previous year's ACCESS proficiency level and current grade level (see Table 7). [22] Within the plan, VDOE provided targets for the percentages of EL students who should meet the required proficiency level gains by school year (see Appendix A).[23]

Table 7: Required Proficiency Level Gains on ACCESS

Proficiency Level (Previous ACCESS Score)	Required Proficiency Level Gains		
	Grades K – 2	Grades 3 – 5	Grades 6 – 12
1.0 – 2.4	1.0	0.7	0.4
2.5 – 3.4	0.4	0.4	0.2
3.5 – 4.4	0.2	0.2	0.1

The EL students who received EL services and had an ACCESS score from both 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 were included in this analysis (N=1,031). Overall, 53 percent of EL students who received services met the required proficiency level gains in 2021-2022 across all grade levels and proficiency levels. This nearly met the target set by VDOE for the 2021-2022 school year, which was 54 percent. The percentage of students who demonstrated the required proficiency level gains on the ACCESS test by grade level and prior proficiency level are shown in Table 8. In grades 3-5 at all proficiency levels and grades 6-12 at the middle proficiency level, a majority of students (58% to 71%) showed the required improvement. Lower percentages of students (33% to 48%) in grades K-2 at all proficiency levels and grades 6-12 at the lowest and highest proficiency levels showed improvement (see Table 8).
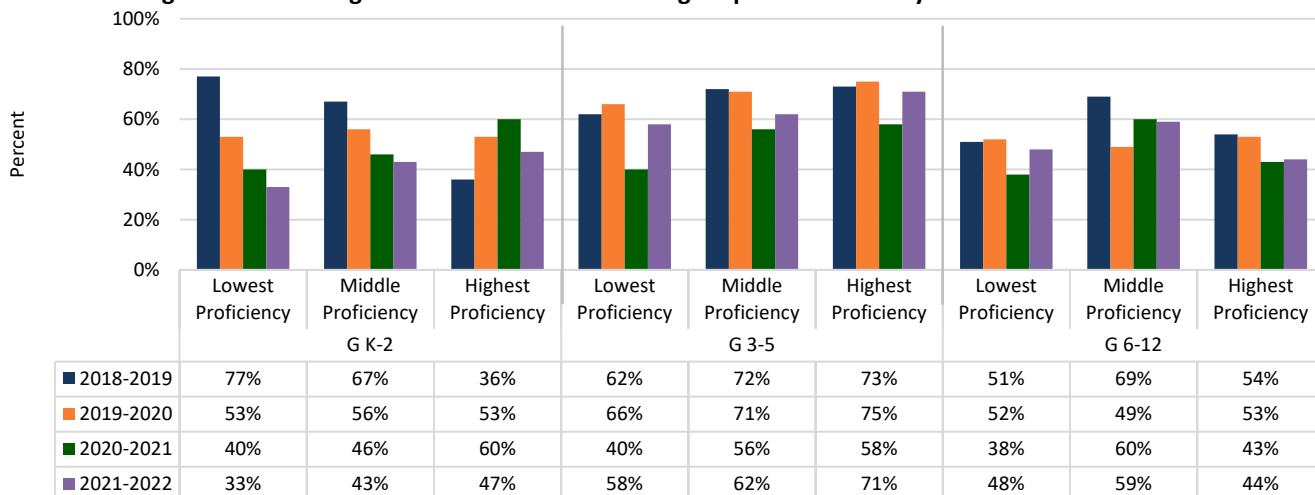
Table 8: Numbers and Percentages of Students Demonstrating Required Proficiency Level Gains in 2021-2022

Proficiency Level (ACCESS Score) in 2020-2021	Grades K – 2		Grades 3 – 5		Grades 6 – 12	
	N	% Meeting Level Gains	N	% Meeting Level Gains	N	% Meeting Level Gains
1.0 – 2.4	135	33%	76	58%	93	48%
2.5 – 3.4	102	43%	138	62%	124	59%
3.5 – 4.4	70	47%	176	71%	117	44%

There was an overall increase in the percentage of students who met the required proficiency level gains across grade levels and proficiency levels from 2020-2021 to 2021-2022 (53% vs. 50%). However, the overall percentage remained lower than in previous years (2019-2020: 60%, 2018-2019: 66%). Figure 1 shows the patterns of results for the last several years by grade level and proficiency level. Compared to 2020-2021, results were more favorable for grades 3 to 5 where there were increases in the percentages of students demonstrating required gains at all proficiency levels in 2021-2022. However, in kindergarten to second grade, the percentage of students demonstrating required proficiency gains continued to decline in 2021-2022 at each proficiency level. The results at the secondary level were mixed with an increase in the percentage of

students at the lowest proficiency level who made required gains, and little change for the students in the other proficiency levels.

Figure 1: Percentages of Students Demonstrating Required Proficiency Level Gains on ACCESS

	Lowest Proficiency	Middle Proficiency	Highest Proficiency	Lowest Proficiency	Middle Proficiency	Highest Proficiency	Lowest Proficiency	Middle Proficiency	Highest Proficiency
		G K-2			G 3-5			G 6-12	
2018-2019	77%	67%	36%	62%	72%	73%	51%	69%	54%
2019-2020	53%	56%	53%	66%	71%	75%	52%	49%	53%
2020-2021	40%	46%	60%	40%	56%	58%	38%	60%	43%
2021-2022	33%	43%	47%	58%	62%	71%	48%	59%	44%

To monitor the progress of EL student English language development, the percentage of students considered to be long-term EL students calculated by VDOE was also examined.[24] Long-term EL students are defined as those students receiving EL services for at least five years. In 2021-2022, 6 percent of EL students were considered to be long-term EL students, which was a slight increase in comparison to the previous year (from 4% in 2020-2021). However, the percentage of long-term EL students in VBCPS has consistently been notably lower than the state level since 2018-2019 (see Table 9).

Table 9: Percentages of EL Students Considered to Be Long-Term EL Students

Group	2018-2019	2020-2021	2021-2022
VBCPS	3%	4%	6%
Virginia	13%	17%	18%

Note: The percentage was not calculated by VDOE for the 2019-2020 school year.

Finally, the percentage of students who graduated from high school on time as measured by the VDOE on-time graduation rate was examined. Of the students who were identified as EL in 2021-2022 through the VDOE report, approximately 89 percent graduated on time, which was lower than the overall division percentage (95%). Of the students who were identified as EL at any time during high school, 88 percent graduated on time. There were decreases in the percentages of EL students who graduated on time in comparison to 2020-2021 (see Table 10).

Table 10: VDOE On-Time Graduation Rates

Student Group	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
EL Student in Current Year	90%	90%	91%	89%
EL Student Anytime in HS	85%	87%	92%	88%
Division	94%	94%	95%	95%

Former EL Student Academic Performance

The final focus of the evaluation update was to examine how former EL students performed academically when compared with their non-EL peers. Federal guidance states that school districts must monitor the academic progress of former EL students for at least two years "to ensure that students have not been

prematurely exited; any *academic* deficits incurred as a result of participating in the EL program have been remedied; and they are meaningfully participating in the standard program of instruction comparable to their never-EL peers" (i.e., peers who were never identified as EL students).[25] After exiting the program (i.e., scoring a 4.4 or above on the ACCESS), VBCPS students are monitored for two years. In addition, the number of former EL students are reported to the federal government for two additional years (i.e., four years after receiving EL services) through data loaded in the SRC. Throughout the initial two years of monitoring following the students' exit from the ESL program, ESL teachers complete a biannual review of these students' academic performance. The biannual reports include a review of students' grades, SOL performance, and end-of-course test scores. At each biannual review, the ESL teacher completes a progress report regarding whether the student is passing or failing, identifies whether the student has any areas of concern (e.g., attendance, participation, behavior), and makes a recommendation as needed. Recommendations may include the following: consult with general education teacher, consult with school counselor, refer to Student Response Team (SRT), or hold a follow-up SRT meeting if the student is already receiving an intervention. In addition, English Learner Team (ELT) meetings are held for these students who are monitored at the beginning of the school year. Although these students no longer receive instructional accommodations or instruction with the ESL teacher, they may still receive accommodations for testing (e.g., during SOLs) for the two years of monitoring, which is discussed at the ELT meetings. The former EL students included in the analyses below were students who were within four years of receiving EL services.

The total number of former EL students in 2021-2022 was 730 students, which was an increase from 726 students in 2020-2021 and 666 students in 2019-2020 (see Table 11). Approximately 63 percent of these students were within one to two years since attaining English proficiency and 37 percent were within three to four years since attaining English proficiency.[26] To examine how former EL students performed compared to their peers, EL students' academic performance was compared to students who had never receive EL services at any point in their academic career with VBCPS.

Table 11: Numbers and Percentages of Former EL Students

School Level	Total Former EL Students	Total Division Never EL Students
Elementary	248	28,260
Middle	340	14,849
High	142	20,002
Total	730	63,111

Demographics for former EL students in comparison to all never EL students are presented in Table 12 below.

Table 12: Characteristics of Former EL Students and Never EL Students

Student Demographic	ES		MS		HS	
	Former EL Students (N=248)	Division Never EL Students (N=28,260)	Former EL Students (N=340)	Division Never EL Students (N=14,849)	Former EL Students (N=142)	Division Never EL Students (N=20,002)
Female	55%	49%	42%	49%	48%	49%
Male	45%	51%	58%	51%	52%	51%
Asian	39%	5%	35%	5%	28%	5%
Black	3%	23%	2%	26%	4%	25%
Hispanic	27%	12%	42%	12%	39%	11%
Multiracial	6%	12%	3%	11%	1%	10%
White	24%	47%	18%	46%	27%	48%
Econ Disadv	44%	41%	60%	43%	49%	37%
Students with Disabilities	2%	12%	4%	12%	4%	11%
Gifted	38%	18%	16%	23%	4%	20%

A set of matched group analyses was also conducted to compare academic outcomes of former EL students to a matched group of never EL students. Demographic variables were used to construct the comparison group of never EL students, including gender, race/ethnicity, economic status, disability status, and gifted status. In addition, never EL students and former EL students were only matched if they both had data for the outcome measure of interest. If former EL students did not have outcome data for a measure or did not have an exact match from the never EL student group, then they were excluded from the analyses. There were no differences between demographic characteristics for the former EL students and the matched never EL comparison students included in the analyses below. For most matched group analyses, all former EL students were included in the analyses. At most, one former EL student was excluded from the analyses due to inability to match with a never EL student. The results reported for former EL students are based on the group of EL students who were matched with the never EL students.

Reading Inventory

The Reading Inventory is completed by all students in grades 2 through 9. Therefore, elementary school analyses included former EL and never EL students in grades 2 through 5, middle school analyses included former EL and never EL students in grades 6 through 8, and high school analyses included former EL and never EL students in grade 9. Students' highest score on the RI was used (either fall or spring). As shown in Table 13, at the elementary school level, a higher percentage of former EL students scored as reading on grade level on the RI (86%) than the matched group of never EL students (79%) and the never EL students across the division (67%). At the secondary levels, lower percentages of former EL students scored as reading on grade level than the matched group of never EL students and the never EL students across the division (see Table 13).

Table 13: Percentages of Students With Reading On Grade Level Score on Reading Inventory

School Level	Former EL Students	Matched Group Never EL Students	Division Never EL Students
Elementary (N=226)	86%	79%	67%
Middle (N=325)	63%	70%	68%
High (9th grade) (N=35)	54%	66%	70%

Standards of Learning (SOLs)

English SOL

Comparisons of performance on the English SOL included former EL and never EL students in grades 3 through 5 for elementary school analyses and former EL and never EL students in grades 6 through 8 for middle school analyses. At the high school level, the English SOL is completed in the eleventh-grade English course, which most high school students completed in the eleventh grade. Comparisons across groups focused on former EL and never EL students who completed the English SOL in grade 11.

At the elementary school level, a higher percentage of former EL students passed the English SOL than the matched group of never EL students, as well as never EL students across the division (see Table 14). The percentages were similar across the two matched groups of El and never EL students at the middle school level (88% for each group), with former EL students having a higher pass rate than the never EL students across the division. At the high school level, a lower percentage of former EL eleventh-grade students passed the English SOL than the matched group of never EL eleventh-grade students, but the percentage of former EL students passing the assessment (94%) was the same as the never EL students across the division.

Table 14: Percentages of Students With Passing Score on English SOL

School Level	Former EL Students	Matched Group Never EL Students	Division Never EL Students
Elementary (N=197)	96%	89%	82%
Middle (N=319)	88%	88%	84%
High (Grade 11) (N=18)	94%	100%	94%

Math SOL

Comparisons of performance on the math SOL included former EL and never EL students in grades 3 through 5 for elementary school analyses. At the middle school and high school levels, students could take math courses based on different paths. For example, an advanced level of coursework could include a sixth-grade student taking grade 8 math. Due to the students completing different math SOL tests within a grade, analyses were conducted separately by grade level and math SOL test (see Table 15). Analyses for this evaluation update were limited to math tests that were completed by at least 10 former EL students in the grade level. At the high school level, the analysis was limited to ninth-grade students who took the Algebra I math test.

As shown in Table 15, matched group analyses showed that a slightly higher percentage of elementary school former EL students (88%) passed the math SOL compared to the matched group of never EL students (87%). At the middle school level, higher percentages of former EL students who took grade 6 math, grade 7 math, and Algebra I passed the SOL than the matched group of never EL students and similar percentages who took Geometry passed the SOL (see Table 15). There were lower percentages of former EL students in all grades who took grade 8 math and passed the SOL than the matched group of never EL students. A higher percentage of former EL ninth-grade students (100%) passed the Algebra I SOL than the matched group of never EL students (83%).

In comparison to the never EL students across the division, at the elementary school level, a higher percentage of former EL students passed the math SOL than never EL students across the division (see Table 15). At the middle school level, the majority of analyses showed that higher percentages of former EL students passed the math SOL than never EL students, with the exception of sixth-grade students (96% vs. 98%) and seventh-grade students (81% vs. 86%) taking grade 8 math. At the high school level, all former EL ninth-grade students passed the Algebra I SOL, whereas 88 percent of never EL students passed.

Table 15: Percentages of Students With Passing Score on Math SOL

School Level	Former EL Students	Matched Group Never EL Students	Division Never EL Students
Elementary (N=197)	88%	87%	78%
Middle			
Grade 6 – Grade 6 Math (N=113)	81%	76%	68%
Grade 6 – Grade 8 Math (N=25)	96%	100%	98%
Grade 7 – Grade 7 Math (N=36)	69%	66%	46%
Grade 7 – Grade 8 Math (N=42)	81%	93%	86%
Grade 7 – Algebra I (N=24)	100%	96%	99%
Grade 8 – Grade 8 Math (N=35)	66%	69%	55%
Grade 8 – Algebra I (N=31)	97%	94%	95%
Grade 8 – Geometry (N=11)	100%	100%	98%
High (Grade 9 Algebra I) (N=24)	100%	83%	88%

Summary

The purpose of the VBCPS ESL program is to prepare EL students 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 program is aligned with standards provided by the WIDA Consortium and follows EL-related federal and state regulations and policies. The ESL program evaluation was a three-year process with a focus on implementation for the first two years (2018-2019 and 2019-2020) and student outcomes for the final year (2020-2021). This evaluation update focused on the steps taken regarding the recommendations from the final 2020-2021 comprehensive evaluation as well as the progress of EL students' English language development and academic performance of former EL students compared to non-EL peers.

At the elementary and middle school levels, ESL teachers predominantly provided ESL services through a "push-in" model, which involved supporting instruction provided by classroom teachers. To facilitate push-in services, EL students should be clustered within classrooms by grade level. A recommendation from the comprehensive evaluation was focused on ensuring EL students are clustered in classrooms at the elementary and middle school levels to the greatest extent possible. During 2021-2022, 71 percent of elementary school ESL teachers and 67 percent of middle school ESL teachers agreed that EL students were effectively clustered within teachers' classrooms at each grade level, which were notable increases in agreement percentages in comparison to the previous years of the evaluation.

A key component of providing instruction to EL students is collaboration between content-area/classroom teachers and the ESL teachers. Another recommendation from the comprehensive evaluation was focused on implementing new strategies to improve communication and collaboration between ESL and classroom teachers. When surveyed about ESL and content-area/classroom teachers collaborating with each other to meet the needs of EL students, agreement percentages of ESL teachers increased notably from 46 percent in 2020-2021 to 60 percent in 2021-2022, while there was a slight increase for classroom teachers from 54 to 56 percent.

A final recommendation from the comprehensive evaluation focused on encouraging classroom teachers of EL students to participate in ESL-related professional learning. For the upcoming 2022-2023 school year, a variety of after-school professional learning sessions will be offered for K-12 teachers across the division, which will be led by the ESL program and ESL teachers. These professional learning opportunities will be offered specifically to the cluster teachers identified by the elementary school and middle school principals.

Examining students' progression in the English language showed that, in comparison to 2020-2021, there was an increase in the overall percentage of EL students who met the required proficiency level gains as defined by VDOE (from 50% to 53%). However, the overall percentage remained lower than in previous years (66% in 2018-2019 and 60% in 2019-2020). Compared to 2020-2021, results were more favorable for grades 3 to 5 where there were increases in the percentages of students demonstrating required gains at all proficiency levels in 2021-2022. However, in kindergarten to second grade, the percentage of students demonstrating required proficiency gains continued to decline in 2021-2022 at each proficiency level. The results at the secondary level were mixed. In addition, although the percentage of EL students receiving EL services for at least five years increased from 4 percent in 2020-2021 to 6 percent in 2021-2022, the percentage remained notably lower than the state level (18% in 2021-2022).

Analyses of the academic performance of former EL students compared to never EL students showed that elementary school former EL students outperformed never EL students on the RI, English SOL, and math SOL through comparisons at the division level and with a matched group. At the secondary levels, former EL students did not perform as well on the RI or English SOL as never EL students but were within 7 percentage points of the never EL group, with the exception of the RI for grade 9 students (within 17 percentage points of never EL students). In addition, former EL students outperformed never EL students in multiple grades and math SOL tests through comparisons at the division level and with matched groups. Overall, former EL students performed favorably academically when compared to their never EL peers.

Appendix

Appendix A: English Learner Progress Targets Accountability Years 2018-2019 through 2024-2025

Category	Baseline	Year 1 Targets	Year 2 Targets	Year 3 Targets	Year 4 Targets	Year 5 Targets – Current Year	Year 6 Targets	Year 7 Targets – Long Term Goal
Assessment Year	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Accountability Year	-	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
English Learner Progress Target	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58

Endnotes

[1] English as a Second Language Virginia Beach City Public Schools SharePoint site.

[2] https://wida.wisc.edu/memberships/consortium

[3] Virginia Compliance with Title III Requirements document. Obtained from https://www.doe.virginia.gov/programs-services/federal-programs/essa/title-iii

[4] Virginia Compliance with Title III Requirements document. Obtained from https://www.doe.virginia.gov/programs-services/federal-programs/essa/title-iii

[5] https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essatitleiiiguidenglishlearners92016.pdf (See p. 30).

[6] https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/student-assessment/virginia-english-language-proficiency-assessments

[7] https://www.doe.virginia.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/4290/638005124566073609 and https://www.doe.virginia.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/4342/638005125216868975

[8] Virginia Department of Education (April 24, 2018). Revised State Template for the Consolidated State Plan The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act. Richmond, VA; p. 19.

[9] Virginia Compliance with Title III Requirements document. Obtained from https://www.doe.virginia.gov/programs-services/federal-programs/essa/title-iii

[10] https://www.doe.virginia.gov/programs-services/federal-programs/essa/title-iii

[11] https://www2.ed.gov/documents/essa-act-of-1965.pdf

[12] https://www.doe.virginia.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/35310/638054889077037885

[13] https://www.doe.virginia.gov/programs-services/federal-programs/essa/title-iii

[14] The School Board approved the recommendations from the year-one evaluation on February 25, 2020 and the year-two evaluation on November 10, 2020.

[15] The School Board approved the final comprehensive evaluation recommendations on March 8, 2022.

[16] https://www.doe.virginia.gov/programs-services/federal-programs/essa/title-iii

[17] Twenty-one students who were included in the EOY SRC count for EL students receiving services were not included in this evaluation report due to not being included in the data from the data warehouse.

[18] Thirteen students who were included in the EOY SRC as former EL students were not included in this report due to not being included in the data from the data warehouse. Seven additional students who were identified in the EOY SRC as opt-out students were not included in this report due to not being included in the data from the data warehouse.

[19] 2020-2021 Elementary Grade Level Clustering of English Learners (ELs). VBCPS Principals Packet Memo. April 30, 2020. 2020-2021 Middle Grade Level Clustering of English Learners (ELs). VBCPS Principals Packet Memo. April 30, 2020.

[20] 2020-2021 Elementary Grade Level Clustering of English Learners (ELs). VBCPS Principals Packet Memo. April 30, 2020. 2020-2021 Middle Grade Level Clustering of English Learners (ELs). VBCPS Principals Packet Memo. April 30, 2020.

[21] English as a Second Language (ESL) Professional Learning Opportunities for Teachers and Staff 2022-2022 SY. Principals Packet Memo. September 15, 2022.

[22] Virginia Department of Education (April 24, 2018). Revised State Template for the Consolidated State Plan The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act. Richmond, VA; p. 19.

[23] The data provided here do not reflect data used by VDOE for ESSA accountability calculations due to sample restrictions, such as only including EL students who received services.

[24] Both the U.S. Department of Education and the Virginia Department of Education require local school divisions that are receiving Title III subgrants to biannually report the number and percentage of ELs who have not yet attained English proficiency within five years of initial classification as an EL and first enrollment in the LEA. Sources: U.S. Department of Education: Non-Regulatory Guidance: English Learners and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds ACT (ESSA). Washington, DC, September 23, 2016 and Virginia Department of Education: Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015: Title III Changes and Additions. Richmond, VA.

[25] https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap8.pdf

[26] There was a total of 461 former EL students within one to two years of receiving services (ES: 202, MS: 176, HS: 83). There was a total of 269 former EL students within three to four years of receiving services (ES: 46, MS: 164, HS: 59).

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