POLICY

Board of Trustees
Douglas County School District   **PROGRAM**

<u>English Learners</u>

The Douglas County School Board of Trustees is committed to ensuring all students graduate college-and career-ready, through the consistent application of high-quality instruction, balanced assessment, and a rigorous accountability system. The Board of Trustees is further committed to closing the achievement gap by implementing culturally responsive practices throughout the district, as well as engaging families and the community. The following policy, guiding principles, and practices support these commitments.

The Board of Trustees, consistent with the District Strategic Plan, recognizes that explicit emphasis on language and literacy instruction is an integral part of effective teaching and learning for students that are English Learners (EL), and that the academic success of English Learners is a responsibility shared by students, educators, the family, and the community. It is important that strategic use of native language be considered an important factor of ELs success in school. It is vital for ELs to receive rigorous, explicit, high-quality language instruction while being held to high expectations and standards in order to access content areas.

The Board recognizes that the Department of Education Services will guide schools in implementing and monitoring programs and instruction for English Learners. It is the intent of Douglas County School District to provide explicit, high-quality language and literacy instruction to pupils who are English Learners. Effective and dynamic instruction is essential in engaging students in both linguistic and academic learning to accomplish the goal of providing quality programs for ELs, resulting in increased academic achievement. The Douglas County School District has committed to develop English and home language proficiency as well as high levels of academic mastery across the curriculum.

Guiding Principles

   a. All pupils are provided high quality instruction that enables those pupils to attain proficiency in the English language as soon as possible and improve their overall academic and linguistic achievement and proficiency.

   b. The Douglas County School District supports the use of research-based strategies and a set of core principles for effective English Learner programs to

ensure achievement and sustainability and builds bilingualism, biliteracy, and multiculturalism.

 c. The Douglas County School District systematically uses English Learners' cultures, languages, and experiences as the foundation for success across all curricula for 21st Century learning.

 d. The Douglas County School District has implemented a concept of data-driven accountability for all schools.

 e. Each individual child has a different pace and style of learning. There are many different approaches to instructing English Learners in both content literacy, and English language acquisition that can result in mastery of the subjects, depending on the needs and abilities of a particular student. Children who are English learners benefit from instruction that is designed to address the academic and linguistic needs of those children.

 f. Douglas County School District promotes access to educational opportunities, programs, and high-quality instruction for all students, their families and staff. The District ensures meaningful engagement between parents, the community, and schools to provide families with the tools to become advocates for the educational rights of students.

Guiding Practices

 a. Ensure the proper identification and placement of English learners and that all students will have access to effective programs and pathways to succeed academically.

 b. Promote the simultaneous delivery of language and literacy development and academic content instruction that closes the access, opportunity, and achievement gaps, builds 21st Century skills and capacities, and achieves high levels of parent satisfaction and support.

 c. Ensure that English Learners develop full proficiencies in academic and socio-cultural English in the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, consistent with expectations for all students.

d. Evaluate English Learners with appropriate and valid data-driven assessments that are aligned with federal, state, and local standards in order to improve academic, linguistic, and sociocultural outcomes for English Learners.

e. Provide professional development at all levels of the District, giving all teachers and leaders the skills and knowledge they need to address language acquisition in English learners and support biliteracy and bilingualism.

f. Build a culture of collaboration in which staff from different departments work together to meet the needs of EL students.

g. Offer targeted support services and strong partnerships that ensure families of EL students are welcomed as full members of the educational community and in the educational decision-making process for students. In addition, the District decisions reflect the voices of ethnically and linguistically diverse parents.

h. Ensure teachers use a balanced assessment system including diagnostic, formative, interim, and summative language, literacy, and content area assessments provided by the state and the District.

Definitions

1.. EL (English Learner): The term is employed by Title III as a student age 3 - 21 enrolled in school whose primary or home language is not English and who does not meet proficiency on a state approved language proficiency assessment.

2. Short-term EL's: Students who are new to the country or have attended U.S. schools for six years or less. Short-term EL's are typically Limited English Proficient in comprehension/speaking as well as in reading/writing.

3. Long-term EL's: Students who have had six years or more of formal education in the U.S. Students approach oral fluency criteria in English, but they are not yet proficient in all four domains (reading, writing, speaking, and listening). There may be several factors that may influence an EL student in becoming a Long-term EL (transiency, interruption in schooling, ineffective teachers). As a result, Long-term EL's generally have low academic skills resulting in poor academic performance. For many Long-term EL's, English is the dominant language.

4. Newcomer (EL): A new arrival to the country whose primary or home language is not English and who does not meet proficiency criteria on a state approved language proficiency assessment.

5. Incoming (EL): An out of state student transferring into the district as an EL. It may also be a student incoming to middle school from elementary school or incoming to high school from middle school.

6. In program (EL): A student working toward proficiency in English and assessed annually.

7. Exited (EL): A student who has demonstrated proficiency in English on the English Language Proficiency Assessment.

8. Monitor Status: A student who has demonstrated proficiency in English on the English Language Proficiency Assessment and whose academic success is monitored by the English Learner Specialist for four years following exit.

9. English language proficiency: Mastery of reading, writing, speaking and listening in English as demonstrated on the English Language Proficiency Assessment.

Desired Outcomes

1. Current English Learners acquire full proficiency in English as rapidly and effectively as possible.

2. Current and exited English Learners meet state standards for academic and language achievement.

3. Increase graduation rates of current and exited English Learners.

4. Every current and exited English Learner graduates from high school prepared for the option of enrolling in a two- or four-year college or university and/or ready to pursue a successful career.

5. Award the State Seal of Biliteracy to eligible graduates.

Reference: NRS 389.520; NRS 388.134; NRS 388.407; 388.600-388.655

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