



THE PMSD ESL CONNECTION

EDUCATING ENGLISH LEARNERS

There are more than 61,000 English Learners (ELs) speaking more than 200 different languages in Pennsylvania. The education of students whose dominant language is not English and who are ELs is the responsibility of every Local Education Agency (LEA). Title 22, Chapter 4, Section 4.26 of the Curriculum Regulations requires the LEA to provide a program for every student who is an English learner (EL).

The goal of language instruction educational programs (LIEPs) is to facilitate the development and attainment of English proficiency and academic achievement of students whose native or first language is not English. Without instruction in social and academic English and appropriate support for learning academic content, these students are at risk of losing the educational opportunities provided to non-EL students

DEFINITION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT (ELD)

ELD is a required component of all language instruction educational programs (LIEPs). ELD takes place daily throughout the day for ELs and is delivered by both ESL teachers and non-ESL teachers.

ELD DELIVERED BY ESL TEACHERS

English language development instruction, otherwise known as English as a second language, delivered by a licensed ESL teacher is its own content area. ELD in this context is driven by language, but it draws from general education content as a vehicle for instruction in order to contextualize language learning. It must be codified in a dedicated and planned curriculum specifically designed to develop the English language proficiency of ELs so that they are able to use English in social and academic settings and access challenging academic standards. ELD instruction provides systematic, explicit, and sustained language instruction designed to prepare students for the general academic program by focusing, in meaningful and contextualized circumstances, on the academic language structures that underpin social and academic constructs. It can be taught as a stand-alone class or course but may also be embedded within other courses with the direct support of an ESL program specialist as appropriate based on the program design and needs of the students.

ELD DELIVERED BY NON-ESL TEACHERS

ELD must be incorporated into all classes taught by non-ESL licensed teachers in which ELs are enrolled. These teachers are responsible for deliberately planning for and incorporating language instruction as well as supports, modifications, and accommodations needed to allow ELs to access the standards to which the course is aligned.

GUIDANCE FOR PARENT RIGHT TO REFUSE THE LIEP

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has maintained a policy that the parents of English Learners (ELs) may only refuse English language development services for their children for religious reasons. Recently, a number of cases have compelled the PDE to rescind that policy in order to comply with existing federal law. The following guidance describes that change was necessitated because of these circumstances. Although PDE would customarily introduce this type of change at the most convenient time for districts to prepare and implement local procedural changes (i.e., the end of the school year), for legal reasons it was not possible to delay the change in this case.

The Department recognizes that direct instruction in language acquisition skills is of value, and it is our responsibility as educators to educate all children in Pennsylvania. We are confident that will continue in response to these federal changes. PDE will support districts in any way possible to accommodate this policy shift and ensure a smooth implementation within districts.

PARENTAL RIGHT TO REFUSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Refusal of English Language Development (ELD) programs and/or services indicates an informed, voluntary decision by the parent to not have the child placed in any separate, specialized ELD service or instructional program. A "waiver" indicates a desire by the parent to waive the child from participation in all or some of the ELD programs or services offered by the school.

LEA OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE PARENT REFUSAL OF ELD PROGRAM SCENARIO

Specialized services or instruction are those only provided for English Learners (ELs), for example ELD pull-out classes, English as a Second Language (ESL) tutoring, after school English tutoring for ELs or content classes consisting only of ELs. This does not include a class composed of ELs and non-ELs in which ELD is supported through content instruction.

If you need further information or clarifications, please contact your child's building ESL teacher

