POLICIES TO CLOSE OREGON’S ELL ACHIEVEMENT GAP

ELL Taskforce Recommendations
Approved by State Strategy Team
September 2011
Stand for Children
OREGON’S DEMOGRAPHICS ARE CHANGING

In 1998, fewer than one in ten students in Oregon was Hispanic. By 2010, one in five students was Hispanic.
Spanish is the most commonly spoken language other than English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Languages</th>
<th># of students who speak them</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>50,954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>2,801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>2,012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1,955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>999</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**WE ARE SPENDING MONEY ON ESL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditures on English as a Second Language in Oregon, 2008-09</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding per Learner</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>K12 ESL</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adult ESL</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School districts receive 50% extra funding for ELL students.
But we are graduating barely half of the students.

Cohort Graduation Rate, Oregon 2008-09

- Limited English Proficient (LEP): 51%
- Not Limited English Proficient: 68%
The results aren't better with our state's assessment.

Percent of English Language Learners Meeting or Exceeding OAKS Standards, Oregon 2009-10
When looking at NAEP scores, the results for LEP students in Oregon and the U.S. in 2009 are as follows:

### 4th Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Oregon</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overall, 77% for Oregon, 71% for the U.S.**

### 8th Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Oregon</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overall, 76% for Oregon, 75% for the U.S.**
Some districts are doing much better than others

Four-year Graduation Rates 2009-10

- Portland SD 1J
- Reynolds SD 7
- Salem-Keizer SD 24J
- Tigard-Tualatin SD 23J
- Woodburn SD 103
- Hillsboro SD L1

- Total Students
- LEP Students
But no district is doing great.
So what can we do?
THE TASKFORCE DEVELOPED THESE THREE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Students who speak more than one language are an asset to our community.
2. All children can learn and must be held to high expectations.
3. Strong state, district, principal, and educator leadership, along with family engagement, is needed to move ELL students to higher levels of achievement.
AND RECOMMENDS POLICY CHANGES IN THESE 5 AREAS

1. Leadership
2. Instruction
3. Teacher Preparation and Professional Development
4. Assessments
5. Accountability
**FIVE CRITICAL LEADERSHIP CHANGES**

School districts must:

1. Be able to clearly articulate how well ELL students are doing in their district, and have a comprehensive plan to address what they find.
2. Have an experienced & successful ESL Director with real authority, in the Superintendent’s cabinet (when more than 10% of a school district’s students are ELL’s).
3. Create a culture in which ELL students are ‘everyone’s students’ (see appendix).
4. Create a welcoming environment for non-English speakers at schools & a family engagement plan (see appendix).
5. Allow principals to hire qualified teachers and then hold principals accountable to ELL achievement.
INSTRUCTIONAL BEST PRACTICE IS BILINGUAL INSTRUCTION

- The common practice of removing ELL students from their home classroom for English instruction (‘pull-outs’) has been proven not to work.
  - Students miss out on critical content, and fall further behind
- Strong bilingual (or dual language programs) have been proven to close the achievement gap for an individual student within 6-8 years.
  - ‘Push in’ programs where ESL teachers come into the student’s classroom get better results than pull outs, but not as good as bilingual.
- Primary language support, even in classes held by teachers who don’t speak the students’ native language, is critical to test content and not language.
**Teacher preparation and professional development**

- Oregon must graduate more bilingual and/or ESOL certified teachers.
  - In Oregon, fewer than 13% of teachers have an ESOL endorsement, but 41% have ELLs in their classroom.
- Districts must protect those teachers during layoffs.
- Teachers should receive ongoing professional development focused on differentiated instruction, sheltered instruction, using student assessment data, and supporting new language acquisition (see appendix).
ASSESSMENTS

- **School districts must:**
  - Develop a system to track ELL’s progress on multiple measures and review that data regularly.
  - Use a variety of assessments including formative classroom assessments, # of ELL students enrolled in advanced classes, and graduation rates.

- **The state must:**
  - Allow standardized testing to be done in a student’s native language.
    - Need to end the ‘height test for short people’
  - Implement the NW ELL’s Collaborative recommendations on AMAO (see appendix).
    - These are best practice recommendations by our state’s leading ESL educators. Use them.
ACCOUNTABILITY

- The state’s accountability system should make it easy for parents and the community to figure out how ELL students are doing.
  - A district that is failing a majority of its ELL students should not be classified as "Outstanding".
- If a school district is chronically failing their ELL population, there must be real consequences.
  - Struggling districts should first be given real support and technical assistance from the state.
  - If they do not improve, innovation should be allowed.
    - In Massachusetts, new governance structures (superintendents, boards) are put in place when districts fail to improve over a period of 5+ years.
So what can you do locally?
ACTION PLAN

- Get informed:
  - Share this information with other parents, principals, school board members, and school district administrators.
  - Find out which of these policies your district has in place and which ones they don’t
    - Have they clearly communicated of the size of the achievement gap and the plan to close it?
    - Is dual language instruction available?
    - What are they doing to hire and retain ESOL certified teachers & bilingual classified staff?
    - Do they offer high quality professional development around language acquisition?

- Advocate:
  - For 1-2 policies that would move the needle for ELL students.

- Build:
  - Oregon would benefit from a school that proves what ELL kids can do under the best circumstances. In other states, this is provided by high-quality dual-language charter schools.
Our work will be done when

ELL students graduate from HS prepared to enter & succeed in college at the same rate as native English speakers.
MEMBERS OF THE TASKFORCE

- Eduardo Angulo, Salem Keizer Coalition for Equality
- Adriana Canas, Hillsboro School Board Member
- Aimee Boswell, Salem Keizer Teacher
- Caroline Fenn, Portland Chapter Chair
- Ellen Keithley, Salem Keizer Chapter Chair
- Kathy Keese, Una Voz, Medford
- Kris Kibbee, Bethel Principal
- Paul Hampton, Medford Teacher
- Marlene Yesquen, Medford School Board
- Steve Larson, Salem Keizer SD
- Marta Guembes, Community Advocate
- Kim Nguyen, APANO
- Stand Staff
PRESENTERS

- Sherrilynn Rawson, Nellie Muir Principal, Woodburn SD
- Steve Larson, Salem Keizer SD
- Esperanza De La Vega, PSU Professor, Bilingual Pathways Program
- Maria Dantas-Whitney, Western OR University Professor
- David Bautista, Superintendent Woodburn SD
- Leonard Terrible, ELD Coordinator, Forest Grove HS, Forest Grove SD
APPENDIX

Terminology

- ELL—English Language Learner
- LEP—Limited English Proficiency
- Push-ins—when an ESL teacher comes to the ELL student’s classroom.
- Pull-outs—when the ELL student leaves their home classroom to meet with the ESL teacher, usually the focus is on learning English.
- Differentiated instruction--involves providing students with different avenues to acquiring content; so that all students within a classroom can learn effectively, regardless of differences in ability (in this case language skills).
- Sheltered instruction—provides ELL or LEP students access to mainstream, grade-level content, at the same time promoting the development of English language proficiency.

Woodburn & Salem Keizer’s Strategic Plans are two good examples. They can be found here:

APPENDIX

See the article *Involving Immigrant and Refugee Families in Their Children’s Schools* for a complete list. Some critical activities include:

- Translate written materials from the school whenever possible. Especially school wide newsletters & letters from the principal.
- When a school deems an item “must read” then best practice is to place a telephone icon on the top of the page and a phone number for parents to call. Parents who call receive a brief oral summary of the written notice.
- Must have interpretation at school meetings where oral communication is essential. This includes parent-teacher conferences. If the school can’t provide an interpreter, then let the parents know in advance to bring an adult interpreter (not their children).
- School front office staff who speaks predominant language at the school.
- School signs in multiple languages.

ELL students are everyone’s students when:

- All professional development begins through the lens of ELL students.
- There is a higher representation of ELL students in advanced classes.
- ELL students are graduating at the same rates as their native English speaking peers.
- There is a collaborative, integrated approach among ELL teachers, content-area teachers, & central district ELL staff.
APPENDIX

- AMAO stands for Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives. These are benchmarks set by state for school districts and their ELL students. The NW Collaborative’s AMAO recommendations and application of the AMAOs should be implemented. Those recommendations are as follows:

  - **AMAO #1 recommendations:**
    - Perform validation study to determine appropriateness of ELPA RIT Benchmarks
    - Based on validation study, consider a growth model format for AMAO 1 using proficiency level, grade band, and years in program.

  - **AMAO #2 recommendation:**
    - Organize data by cohorts representing years in program, percentage of students exiting program, and percentage of students achieving expected growth

  - **AMAO #3 recommendations:**
    - The committee recommends that ODE lobby for a policy change at the federal level.
    - Recommend L1 testing option
WORKS CITED


