

The School District of Philadelphia

The Office of Research and Evaluation

Y.S. Stipulation

Internal Evaluation, 2013-2014

July 29, 2014

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Internal Evaluation 2013-2014

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July 29, 2014

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Ensuring access to high quality, rigorous educational opportunities for English Language Learner (ELL) students is a key objective in the School District of Philadelphia (SDP or the District). The provision of ELL programming and services has encountered obstacles in the past, such as instability and inconsistency in critical areas including instruction, assessment, support services, community engagement and parent outreach. Since the 1985 class action lawsuit, concluding in the Y.S. Stipulation, major reform efforts and initiatives have been enacted to strengthen the District's ELL programs.¹ Specifically, effort begun in 2010 to ensure student success by narrowing the achievement gap between native English speakers and ELL students were continued in 2013-2014. Key initiatives included: (1) Enrollment Centers to help families access services; (2) Newcomer Learning Academies (NLAs) to provide high school-aged students with short-term academic and social opportunities to improve their English language skills in a nurturing environment; (3) school-based, highly-structured Transitional Bilingual Education (TVE) programs for elementary school students; and (4) targeted and focused professional development for school-based staff around strategies for teaching ELL students. To achieve these goals and elevate the profile of ELL programming, the District's Office of Multilingual Curriculum and Programs (OMCP) was created in August 2010. Lucy Feria, a veteran District administrator, was appointed as Deputy. She remained in the position until Summer 2012. From Summer 2012 to Summer 2013, Deborah Wei served as Deputy, and since June 2013 Allison Still, Acting Director, has assumed the Deputy responsibilities.

In recent years, the District also provided many targeted and focused professional development opportunities for school-based staff around strategies for teaching ELL students. These professional developments were held at a variety of locations and some of the topics included, "ESOL 101 for Teachers and Administrators," "ELL Tutoring Strategies for the Mainstream Classroom," "Managing the Cultural Needs of ELLs," "Understanding Your ELLs," "English Language Proficiency Standards," "Getting Started with English Language Learners," "English Language Learners and Special Education," "Collaboration and Co-Teaching," and "Bilingual Education Institute." For those teachers who could not attend in person, webinars, PowerPoint presentations and other materials were available on the OMCP website. It was expected that these professional development opportunities would permeate all aspects of ESOL programming across the District.

As part of the Y.S. Stipulation, the District conducts an annual internal evaluation to assess its progress in providing high quality instruction and support to ELL students and their families; every three years, an external evaluation is conducted to explore additional areas of improvement in the District and to provide technical assistance where needed. The current report serves as the internal evaluation for the 2013-2014 academic year.

¹ In 1985, a civil rights class action law suit was filed by the *Education Law Center* against SDP on behalf of Asian ELL students; the suit is known as the Y.S. vs School District of Philadelphia. In 2001, a new Y.S. stipulation required an annual internal SDP evaluation of ELL instruction and support services; and a triennial external evaluation to examine implementation and outcomes of ELL programming.

Evaluation Design and Methodology

As in past years, the 2013-2014 internal evaluation was planned in close collaboration with the *Education Law Center*, which is responsible for monitoring District compliance with the Stipulation. According to the internal evaluation from 2012, ELL students in grades 6-8 exhibited the least amount of yearly progress in their English proficiency levels compared to students in other grades; thus, these findings illustrate a need to examine this population of students in more depth.² In collaboration with the *Education Law Center*, the Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) and OMCP developed the following set of analytical strategies to guide the internal evaluation:

Strategy 1: A quantitative analysis of ACCESS growth data for ELL students in grades 6-8 to identify schools in the District where ACCESS growth data is strong.

Strategy 2: A quantitative and qualitative analysis of schools with strong ACCESS data to identify best practices that can be replicated in District schools that serve grades 6-8.

The following evaluation methods were used to inform the analytical strategies (Strategy 1 and 2) described above:

	Evaluation Method	Participants
Strategy 1	ACCESS level scores ³	1,241 students in grade 6-8 with three consecutive years of data (Time 1, 2010-2011 to Time 3, 2012-2013)
Strategy 2	Classroom Observations	22 classrooms
	Teacher Surveys	30 teachers
	Interviews	4 Multilingual Managers ⁴

Note. Classroom Observations, Teacher Surveys, and Interviews were conducted with personnel at four schools with the strongest ACCESS data, as determined by Strategy 1: McCall, Southwark, Baldi, and Woodrow Wilson.

Key Findings

Strategy 1: A quantitative analysis of ACCESS growth data for ELL students in grades 6-8 to identify schools in the District where ACCESS growth data is strong.

- ELL students, on average, show statistically significant improvements across time: 2010-2011 (Time 1) to 2012-2013 (Time 3).
- Developmentally, the score trajectories on ACCESS reveal the following patterns:
 - Students show gains (+) in English proficiency between 4th and 5th grades;
 - No change (0) or a slight decline (-) is evident between 5th and 6th grades;
 - No change (0) or a slight improvement (+) is evident between 6th and 7th grades; and
 - Students show gains (+) in proficiency between 7th and 8th grades.

² Wei, D., & Wolford, T. (Dec. 2012). *Y.S. Stipulation Internal Evaluation 2012*. School District of Philadelphia.

³ ACCESS (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State) is the Pennsylvania state-mandated assessment designed to measure English language proficiency of ELL students.

⁴ Multilingual managers work in collaboration with schools and District staff to support the acceleration of academic achievement of ELL students.

		Growth				
		4 th to 5 th	5 th to 6 th	6 th to 7 th	7 th to 8 th	
2012-2013	6 th	+	-			
	7 th		0	0 ⁺		
	8 th			+	+	

Note. +: Gain; -: Decline; 0: No change

- Overall, this suggests that as ELL students make the transition from elementary school grades (K-5) to middle school grades (6-8), their English proficiency levels may falter or stagnate. As they adapt to the demands of middle school, gains in English proficiency begin to materialize between 6th and 7th grades.
- ELL students who start out with lower English proficiency levels show more marked rates of improvement than ELL students with higher English proficiency levels.
- Overall, the top four schools with the strongest ACCESS growth data (high performing schools) from Time 1 to Time 3 were: McCall, Baldi, Southwark, and Woodrow Wilson. The bottom three schools where, on average, ELL students exhibit slight declines in English proficiency from Time 1 to Time 3 (low performing schools) were: Feltonville, Clemente, and Pepper.

Strategy 2: A quantitative and qualitative analysis of schools with strong ACCESS data to identify best practices that can be replicated in District schools that serve grades 6-8.

Data from classroom observations, teacher surveys, and Multilingual Manager interviews at the high performing schools—Baldi, Woodrow Wilson, McCall, Southwark— were triangulated to reveal the following best practices:

- *Warm, Inviting Climate*-Teachers at high performing schools utilize positive feedback, engage all students in one-on-one and whole-class discussions, encourage humor and creativity, and provide psychosocial encouragement (e.g., “You can do it.”).
- *Differentiated Instruction*-ELL students with limited English proficiency are paired with more proficient ELL students who speak the same home language. Teachers utilize visual tools such as films, maps, charts and SMARTBoards.
- *Clear Objectives*-ESOL programs have well defined goals and objectives.
- *Teacher Collaboration and PDs*-Teachers actively participate in trainings related to ESOL strategies (e.g., scaffolding), differentiating instruction, and assessments and ELL modifications. Teachers also engage in informal collaborations with one another.
- *Administrator Support*-staff meetings are frequently held by the principal; the principal articulates high standards of practice by setting goals and benchmarks.
- *Student and Teacher Engagement*-ELL students receive after-school homework help or participate in an after-school program. Likewise, there is little staff turnover as teachers and principals are satisfied with the school environment and feel prepared to effectively teach the ELL students in their classes.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, the report makes the following recommendations to further support ELL students in the District:

- 1. Develop and implement data review procedures to track the outcomes of ELL students.** The evaluation revealed that there are continued challenges in collecting timely and accurate data among ELL students. For example, ELL students in the SDP database with less than three years of ACCESS data were frequently marked as being in ELL programs for longer than three years. In other words, the length of time that students were in ELL programs did not always match the number of years that ACCESS scores were recorded. Schools should be encouraged to record timely and accurate data for ELL students. If an ELL student does not have ACCESS data for a particularly year, school monitors should record reasons for the missing data.
- 2. Put into practice resources and staff to support ELL students as they transition to middle school and to high school.** As the longitudinal ACCESS data suggests, ELL students who transition from 5th to 6th grades may be detrimentally impacted by the challenges associated with middle school (e.g. low self-esteem) and, thus, experience interruptions in their English acquisition skills. The lack of English proficiency gains during this transition may be addressed by providing socio-emotional supports to ELL students. Moreover, interviews with Multilingual Managers suggest that schools need to provide more supports to ELL students as they transition to high school. Additional research may be needed to explore best practices in supporting students during these transitional phases.
- 3. Disseminate best practices:** As a next step, the best practices uncovered in this report should be disseminated to all schools with ELL students. Multilingual Managers should be briefed on best practices and, in turn, relay the information to principals through discussions or briefs.

Strategy 1: A quantitative analysis of ACCESS growth data for ELL students in grades 6-8 to identify schools in the District where ACCESS growth data is strong.

The current section provides an exploratory analysis of Strategy 1: A quantitative analysis of ACCESS growth data for ELL students in grades 6-8 to identify schools in the District where ACCESS growth data is strong. Examining growth over time allows the District to study patterns of growth trajectories in ELL students. Specifically, the following questions organize this section:

- A. **English Proficiency Trajectories across Time:** Are ELL students showing statistically significant average gains across three academic years? What developmental trends emerge within cohorts?
- B. **Student Level Changes in Proficiency:** What percentage of ELL students show gains or declines in English proficiency from Time 1 to Time 3? How do ACCESS scores at Time 1 influence growth trajectories? That is, do ELL students at lower English proficiency levels at Time 1 exhibit different gains on the ACCESS exam than ELL students who display higher English proficiency levels at Time 1?
- C. **School Ranking:** Which schools showed the most growth, on average? Do different cohorts show differing degrees of growth at the same school? That is, do certain schools cater better to different cohorts?

Student achievement data derived from the District’s central database was extracted and analyzed. Achievement data included annual results on the ACCESS exam. ACCESS is administered annually to ELL students and is a standards-based proficiency test designed to measure social and academic proficiency in English. ACCESS meets the federal requirements that mandate states to evaluate ELL students in grades K through 12. Results for ACCESS are reported in four domains—speaking, listening, reading, and writing—as well as a composite score. Student’s performance is reported in terms of six language proficiency levels⁵:

1-Entering: Knows and uses minimal social language and minimal academic language with visual and graphic support.

2-Beginning: Knows and uses some social English and general academic language with visual and graphic support.

3-Developing: Knows and uses social English and some specific academic language with visual and graphic support.

4-Expanding: Knows and uses social English and some technical academic language.

5-Bridging: Knows and uses social English and academic language working with grade level material.

6- Reaching: Knows and uses social and academic language at the highest level measured by this test.

For the purposes of observing growth at the student level, composite proficiency level scores on ACCESS were used to track growth in language development.⁶ A brief literature review suggests that there is a great deal of variation in both the length of time needed for an ELL student to reach

⁵ For more information, refer to the complete interpretative guide for proficiency scores at www.wida.us.

⁶ It is important to note that calculated proficiency levels were used to assess growth over time; actual proficiency scores were not used to assess growth. Thus, caution should be used when interpreting the results. For example, a student may have grown in proficiency (as measured the actual proficiency score) but may not have moved up by one proficiency level.

proficiency (e.g., 6-Reaching), as well as their rate of growth per year. The limited research available suggests that it can take ELL students 3 to 10 years to achieve proficiency.^{7,8} Likewise, large scale studies in California and Texas suggest that annual growth in English proficiency ranged from no growth to one whole level of improvement.⁹ For instance, Oakeley, Urrabazo, and Yang (1998) tracked the growth rates in English language proficiency for ELL students in Texas. Over a 3-year period, none of the students reached proficiency.¹⁰ In fact, most students who started at levels 1 and 2 were not projected to reach proficiency levels by the end of 7 years. Given the variability in the findings, as well as the limited availability of research in this area, the current section provides an exploratory analysis of the data with no clear hypotheses projected.

Participants

In 2012-2013, there were 2,027 students in grades 6-8 who had scores on ACCESS: 8th n=684; 7th n=629; and 6th n=714. To assess students' longitudinal growth across time on ACCESS, historical data was obtained for each student. As shown in Table 1, only 37% of the total number of 6-8 grade ELL students had 5 years of consecutive ACCESS data; that is, 741 of 2,027 students had five years of longitudinal data. Less than 50% of students had four consecutive years of data and 61% of students had three consecutive years of data on ACCESS. To maximize the sample size and, at the same time, provide a comprehensive analysis of growth trajectories on ACCESS, the current report consisted of ELL students with at least three years of complete ACCESS testing data from 2010-2011 to 2012-2013.¹¹

Table 1. Longitudinal Data, Consecutive Years

Years	Consecutive Years	# of Students	Percentage of total
2012-2013	1 year	2,027	100%
2012-2013, 2011-2012	2 consecutive years	1,552	77%
2012-2013, 2011-2012, 2010-2011	3 consecutive years	1,241	61%
2012-2013, 2011-2012, 2010-2011, 2009-2010	4 consecutive years	1,007	50%
2012-2013, 2011-2012, 2010-2011, 2009-2010, 2008-2009	5 consecutive years	741	37%

Thus, the current section examines three years of growth data among 1,241 ELL students. The sample consists of three cohorts of students. Cohort 1 (n=413): 6th grade students with historical ACCESS data from 4th and 5th grades; Cohort 2 (n=394): 7th grade students with historical ACCESS data from 5th and 6th grades; and, Cohort 3 (n=434): 8th grade students with historical ACCESS data from 6th and 7th grades. See Table 2. This sequential cohort study design has several advantages

⁷ August, D., & Shanahan, T. (2006). *Developing Literature in Second-Language Learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

⁸ Hill, E.G. (2006). *Update 2002-2004: The progress of English learner students*. Sacramento: Legislative Analyst's Office.

⁹ Jepsen, C., & de Alth, S. (2005). *English learners in California schools*. San Francisco: Public Policy Institute of California.

¹⁰ Oakley, C., Urrabazo, T., & Yang, H. (1998). *When can LEP students exit a BE/ESL program: Predicting academic growth using a test that measures cognitive language proficiency*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.

¹¹ The number of years that students were enrolled in ELL programs could not be accurately assessed from the SDP's database as the data revealed inconsistencies and data discrepancies on this variable ("Length of time in LEP/ELL Program"). For example, the length of time variable did not match the number of years of ACCESS data for over 50% of students. This may suggest that record keeping may need to be improved for future academic years. Therefore, this report used 3 years of ACCESS scores as a proxy for the number of years in the ELL program.

over standard longitudinal designs.¹² For instance, sequential cohort designs can be used to determine the existence of common developmental trends. That is, a long-term longitudinal study could be approximated by combining the temporally overlapping short-term longitudinal studies of different cohorts. Therefore, with only 3 years of data, the three cohorts can be linked to form a common developmental trajectory spanning grades 4th-8th.

Table 2. Longitudinal Data, 3 Consecutive Years

2012-2013			Longitudinal Data by Grades				
	n	%	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th
6 th	413	33%	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013		
7 th	394	32%		2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	
8 th	434	35%			2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Total	1241	100%					

A. English Proficiency Trajectories across Time

The following analyses assess average growth in English proficiency across time. Overall growth trends are explored across all three cohorts; likewise, growth trends within cohorts are discussed. The guiding questions in this section include: Are ELL students showing statistically significant average gains in English proficiency across three academic years? What developmental trends emerge within cohorts?

Overall Analysis

Across all cohorts, the majority of 6-8 grade ELL students in 2012-2013 had moderate levels of English language proficiency, with 43% scoring at Level 3- Developing and 34% scoring at Level 4- Expanding. A few students demonstrated moderately high levels of English proficiency, with 5% scoring at Level 5-Bridging. Less than 18% had low levels of English proficiency, with 2% scoring at Level 1- Entering and the remaining at Level 2- Beginning. See Table 3 and Figure 1. Across academic years, ELL students show statistically significant improvements from 2010-2011 (Time 1) to 2012-2013 (Time 3) and from 2010-2011 (Time 1) to 2011-2012 (Time 2). See Table 4. This suggests that students made significant gains in their English proficiency levels from Time 1 to Time 2; however, no further significant gains were made from Time 2 to Time 3. From Time 1 to Time 3, the average gain was .10; this signifies a 3.16 average percent growth over a 3-year time period.¹³

¹² Duncan, S., Duncan, T., & Strycker, L. (2006). Alcohol use from ages 9-16: A cohort-sequential latent growth model. *Drug Alcohol Dependence, 81*, 71-81.

¹³ Average percentage gain was calculated as follows: (T3-T1)/T1 or (3.26-3.16)/3.16= .0316. It is important to underscore again the fact that growth was computed based on calculated proficiency levels; actual proficiency scores were not used to assess growth. Thus, caution should be used when interpreting the results. For example, a student may have grown in proficiency (as measured the actual proficiency score) but may not have moved up by one proficiency level.

Table 3. Overall Proficiency Levels across Years, 6-8 Grade Students at T3

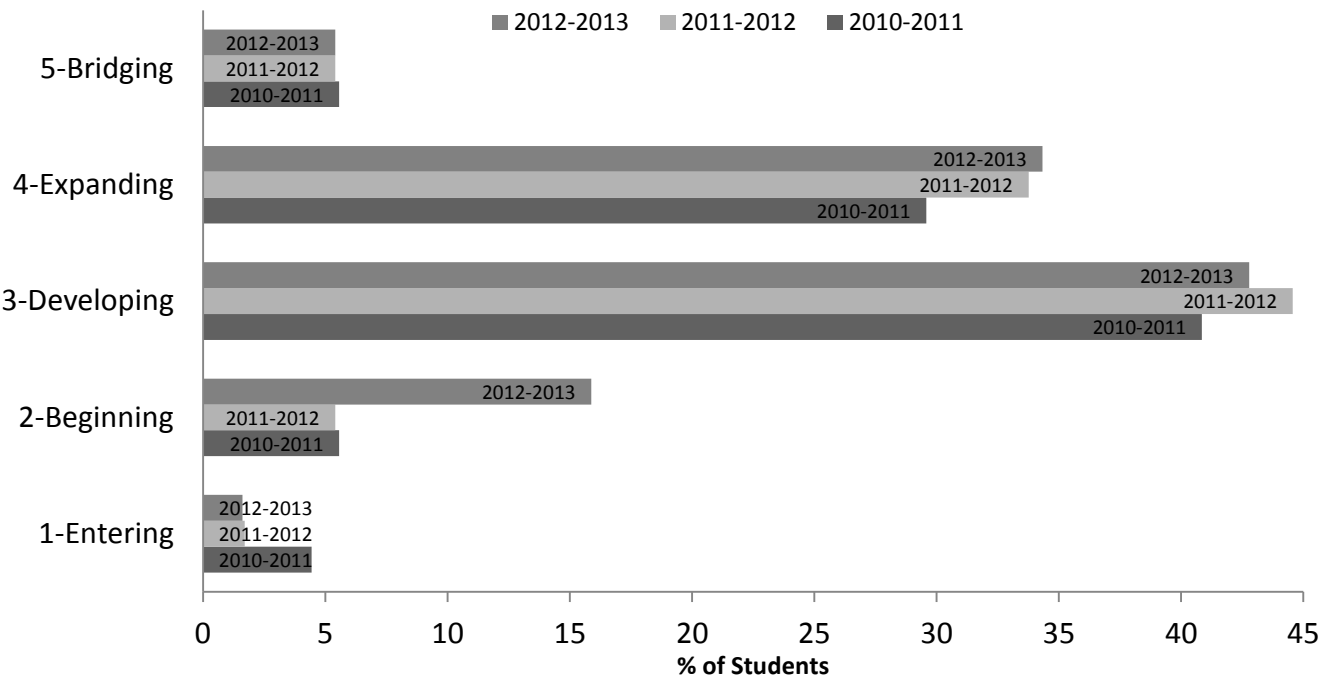
	2010-2011 (T1)		2011-2012 (T2)		2012-2013 (T3)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
1-Entering	55	4%	21	2%	20	2%
2-Beginning	232	19%	175	14%	197	16%
3-Developing	507	41%	553	45%	531	43%
4-Expanding	367	30%	419	34%	426	34%
5-Bridging	69	6%	67	5%	67	5%
6-Reaching	11	1%	6	0.48%	--	--
Total	1241	100%	1241	100%	1241	100%

Table 4. Significant differences in Proficiency Levels, Overall

		2010-2011 (T1)	2011-2012 (T2)	2012-2013 (T3)
Mean		3.16	3.29	3.26
Std. Dev.		.97	.85	.85
<i>Paired Comparisons</i>	T1 vs. T2	t(1240)=5.130, p<.01**		
	T2 vs. T3		t(1240)=1.173, ns	
	T1 vs. T3	t(1240)= 3.705, p<.01**		

Note. **p<.01, *p<.05, ns (not significant)

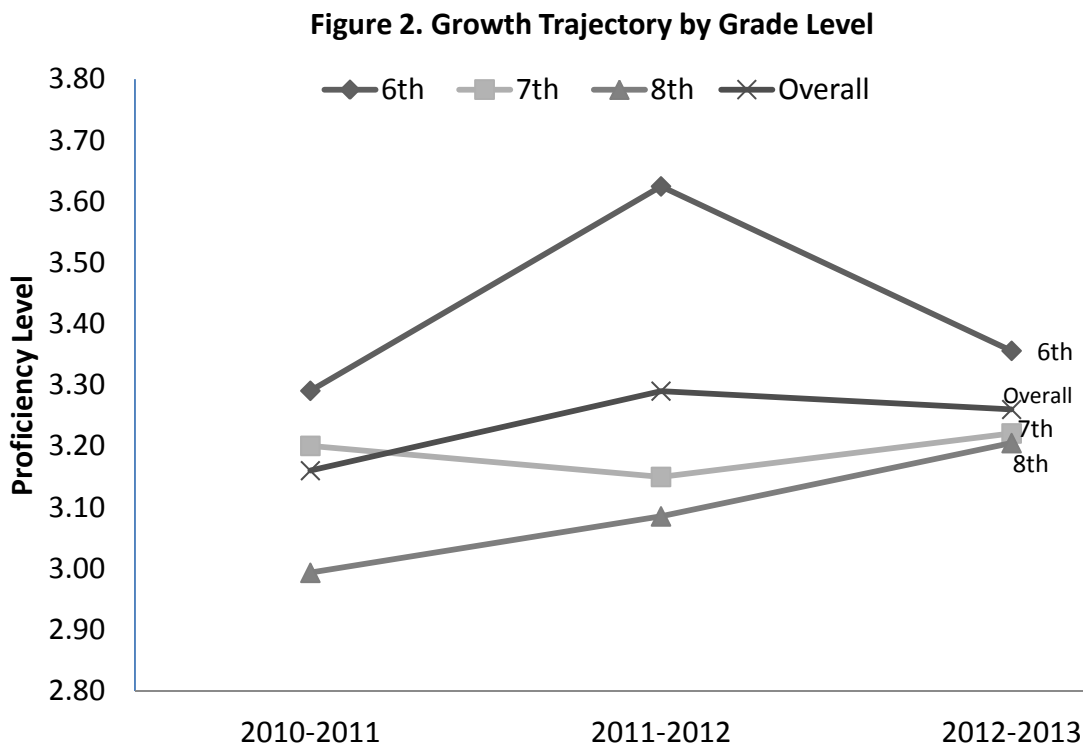
Figure 1. Proficiency Levels



Cohort Analysis

Examining proficiency levels by cohort (See Figure 2), the following growth trends were observed:

- **6th grade:** Students show significant gains from Time 1 to Time 2. That is, between 4th and 5th grades, students displayed the largest average gains in proficiency; however, between 5th and 6th grades, students show a significant drop in proficiency (Time 2 to Time 3) such that their proficiency levels at Time 3 are similar to that of Time 1. From Time 1 to Time 3, the average gain was .07; this signifies a 2.13 average percent growth over a 3-year time period.
- **7th grade:** No significant gains were observed across Time 1, Time 2, and Time 3. That is, from 5th to 7th grades, no significant improvements in English proficiency were observed. From Time 1 to Time 3, the average gain was .02; this signifies a .63 average percent growth over a 3-year time period.
- **8th grade:** A positive linear trend was observed across Time 1, Time 2, and Time 3. Students show significant gains between 6th and 7th grades and between 7th and 8th grades on ACCESS. From Time 1 to Time 3, the average gain was .22; this signifies a 7.36 average percent growth over a 3-year time period.



Together, the score trajectories on ACCESS for each cohort reveal the following patterns:

- Students show gains (+) in English proficiency between 4th and 5th grades;
- No change (0) or a slight decline (-) is evident between 5th and 6th grades;
- No change (0) or a slight improvement (+) is evident between 6th and 7th grades; and

- Students show gains (+) in proficiency between 7th and 8th grades.

		Growth			
		4 th to 5 th	5 th to 6 th	6 th to 7 th	7 th to 8 th
2012-2013	6 th	+	-		
	7 th		0 ⁻	0 ⁺	
	8 th			+	+

Note. +: Gain; -: Decline; 0: No change

Overall, this suggests that as ELL students make the transition from elementary school grades (K-5) to middle school grades (6-8), their English proficiency levels may falter or stagnate. As they adapt to the demands of middle school, gains in English proficiency begin to materialize between 6th and 7th grades. See Tables 5, 6, and 7 for additional information. Further research may be warranted to determine whether this trend is magnified among students who attend middle schools as opposed to K-8 elementary schools. Indeed, research has found that as students move to middle school, their academic achievement falls substantially in both math and English relative to that of their counterparts who continue to attend K-8 elementary schools. Developmental psychologists speculate that the middle school achievement gap may be the result of the challenges of educating a high concentration of middle school-aged students. Middle school-aged students commonly exhibit traits such as low self-esteem and limited emotional and cognitive self-regulation skills which may make them particularly difficult to educate in large groups.¹⁴ ELL students who transition to middle schools may, thus, be detrimentally impacted by these challenges faced by all students and, thus, experience interruptions in their English acquisition skills.

Table 5. Proficiency Levels, 6th Grade

6 th Grade	2010-2011 (T1)		2011-2012 (T2)		2012-2013 (T3)		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
1-Entering	16	4%	9	2%	3	1%	
2-Beginning	59	14%	26	6%	56	14%	
3-Developing	167	40%	137	33%	167	40%	
4-Expanding	138	33%	186	45%	165	40%	
5-Bridging	26	6%	49	12%	22	5%	
6-Reaching	7	2%	6	1%	--	--	
Total	413	100%	413	100%	413	100%	
Mean	3.29		3.62		3.36		
Std. Dev.	.98		.90		.81		
<i>Paired Comparisons</i>	T1 vs. T2	t(412)=7.454, p<.01**					
	T2 vs. T3	t(412)=7.052, p<.01**					
	T1 vs. T3	t(412)=1.330, ns					

Note. **p<.01, *p<.05, ns (not significant)

¹⁴ Rockoff, J., & Lockwood, B. (2010). Stuck in the middle: How and why middle schools harm student achievement. *Education Next*, 10, 68-74.

Table 6. Proficiency Levels, 7th Grade

7 th Grade		2010-2011 (T1)		2011-2012 (T2)		2012-2013 (T3)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
1-Entering		24	6%	6	2%	7	2%
2-Beginning		68	17%	70	18%	70	18%
3-Developing		146	37%	189	48%	173	44%
4-Expanding		120	30%	117	30%	117	30%
5-Bridging		33	8%	12	3%	27	7%
6-Reaching		3	.76%	--	--	--	--
Total		394	100%	394	100%	394	100%
Mean		3.20		3.15		3.22	
Std. Dev.		1.04		.80		.88	
<i>Paired Comparisons</i>	T1 vs. T2	t(393)=1.091, ns					
	T2 vs. T3	t(393)=1.868, ns					
	T1 vs. T3	t(393)=.384, ns					

Note. **p<.01, *p<.05, ns (not significant)

Table 7. Proficiency Levels, 8th Grade

8 th Grade		2010-2011 (T1)		2011-2012 (T2)		2012-2013 (T3)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
1-Entering		15	3%	6	1%	10	2%
2-Beginning		105	24%	79	18%	71	16%
3-Developing		194	45%	227	52%	191	44%
4-Expanding		109	25%	116	27%	144	33%
5-Bridging		10	2%	6	1%	18	4%
6-Reaching		1	.23%	--	--	--	--
Total		434	100%	434	100%	434	100%
Mean		2.99		3.09		3.21	
Std. Dev.		.86		.74		.84	
<i>Paired Comparisons</i>	T1 vs. T2	t(433)=2.577, p<.05*					
	T2 vs. T3	t(433)=3.770, p<.01**					
	T1 vs. T3	t(433)=5.133, p<.01**					

Note. **p<.01, *p<.05, ns (not significant)

B. Student Level Changes in Proficiency

In this section, changes in proficiency from Time 1 (2010-2011) to Time 3 (2012-2013) are explored at the student level for both the overall population of ELL students as well as within the three cohorts. The guiding questions in this section include: What percentage of ELL students shows gains or declines in English proficiency from Time 1 to Time 3? How do ACCESS scores at Time 1 influence growth trajectories? That is, do ELL students at lower English proficiency levels at Time 1 exhibit different gains on the ACCESS exam than ELL students who display higher English proficiency levels at Time 1?

Table 8 indicates that 31% of students made improvements by at least one proficiency level from 2010-2011 (Time 1) to 2012-2013 (Time 3); 45% of students show no change in proficiency levels; and, 24% show declines by at least 1 proficiency level. Together, the data suggests that across a three year period, 76% of ELL students experienced either no change or an improvement on the ACCESS exam, as measured by proficiency levels. At the margins, 7 ELL students show a 3 to 5 level *decline* in proficiency from Time 1 to Time 3. By contrast, 13 students show a 3 to 4 level *improvement* in proficiency from Time 1 to Time 3. These dramatic proficiency level changes within a three year period may reflect data entry and/or data collection inconsistencies. Additional research may be needed to explore ELL students who show improvements or declines on ACCESS that fall outside of the expected norm (e.g. +/- 3 standard deviations).

Table 8. Proficiency Level Changes, Overall

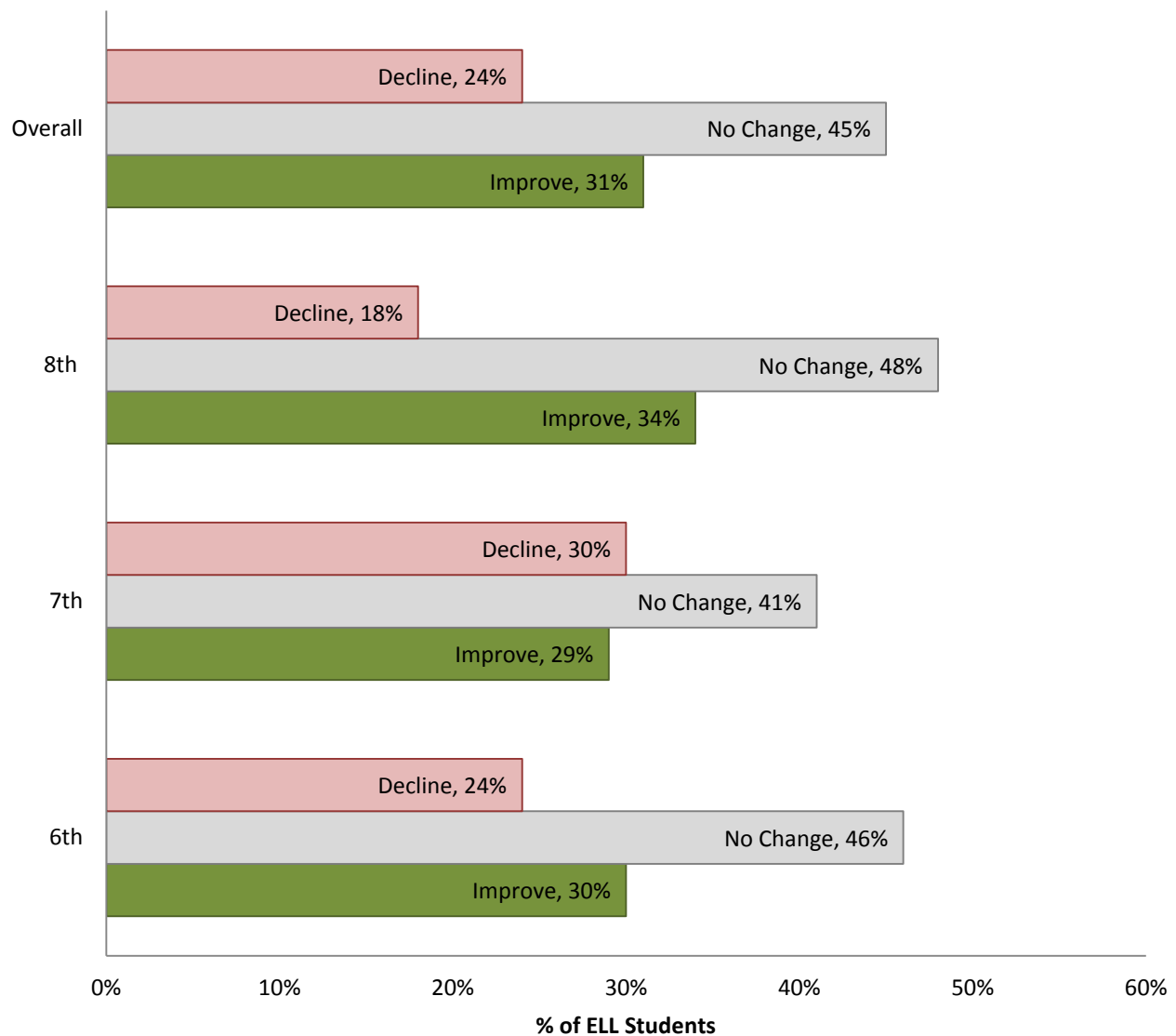
	Proficiency Level Change (+/-)	T1 to T3: 2010-2011 to 2012-2013		
		n	%	Total %
Improve (+)	+4	1	.08%	31%
	+3	12	1%	
	+2	67	5%	
	+1	306	25%	
No Change	0	558	45%	45%
Decline (-)	-1	250	20%	24%
	-2	40	3%	
	-3	6	.48%	
	-4	0	0%	
	-5	1	.08%	
Total		1241	100%	100%

Examining proficiency level changes by cohort, 8th grade students in 2012-2013 demonstrate the most gains in English proficiency from Time 1 (2010-2011) to Time 3 (2012-2013) as 34% show improvements in proficiency by at least one level on ACCESS. See Table 9. Importantly, across all cohorts, between 41 and 48% of all students show no change on ACCESS across a three year time period. See Figure 3.

Table 9. Proficiency Level Changes, by Cohort

		T1 to T3: 2010-2011 to 2012-2013								
		6th			7 th			8 th		
	Proficiency Level Change (+/-)	N	%	Total %	n	%	Total %	n	%	Total %
Improve	+4	0	0%	30%	1	.25%	29%	0	0%	34%
	+3	6	1%		5	1%		1	.23%	
	+2	18	4%		21	5%		28	6%	
	+1	100	24%		88	22%		118	27%	
No Change	0	189	46%	46%	161	41%	41%	208	48%	48%
Decline	-1	76	18%	24%	99	25%	30%	75	17%	18%
	-2	21	5%		17	4%		2	.46%	
	-3	3	0.73%		1	.25%		2	.46%	
	-4	0	0%		0	0%		0	0%	
	-5	0	0%		1	.25%		0	0%	
	Total	413	100%	100%	394	100%	100%	434	100%	100%

Figure 3. Change from T1 to T3: 2010-2011 to 2012-2013



One major confounding factor that may influence the degree to which ELL students grow in English proficiency may be starting proficiency levels at Time 1. According to previous research, students with lower levels of baseline English proficiency make more substantial gains within 1-2 years than their counterparts with higher levels of baseline English proficiency. That is, as language learners move to higher levels of proficiency, the rates at which language is acquired slows down. In many instances, language learning can fossilize or stabilize. Thus, English language learners at higher levels of English proficiency may require more time to master linguistic features than lower level language learners.^{15,16}

¹⁵ Long, M. (2003). Stabilization and fossilization in interlanguage. In C.J. Doughty & M.H. Long (Ed.) *The Handbook of Second Language Acquisition*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

¹⁶ Selinker, L. (1972). Interlanguage. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*. 10, 209-231.

Parsing the data by baseline proficiency levels (Time 1), Table 10 and Figure 4 show that ELL students who start out with lower English proficiency levels show the largest gains by Time 3. That is, 87% and 55% of students who scored a 1-Entering or a 2-Beginning on ACCESS at Time 1, respectively, exhibit gains on ACCESS by Time 3. By comparison, ELL students with higher English proficiency levels at Time 1 show lower gains by Time 3. For example, only 8% of students who initially scored a 4-Expanding on ACCESS showed gains by Time 3. These trends corroborate previous research which finds that ELL students with lower English proficiency levels show more marked rates of improvement than ELL students with higher English proficiency levels (Long, 2003).¹⁷

Table 10. Starting Proficiency Levels (T1) Impact Future Growth (T3), Overall

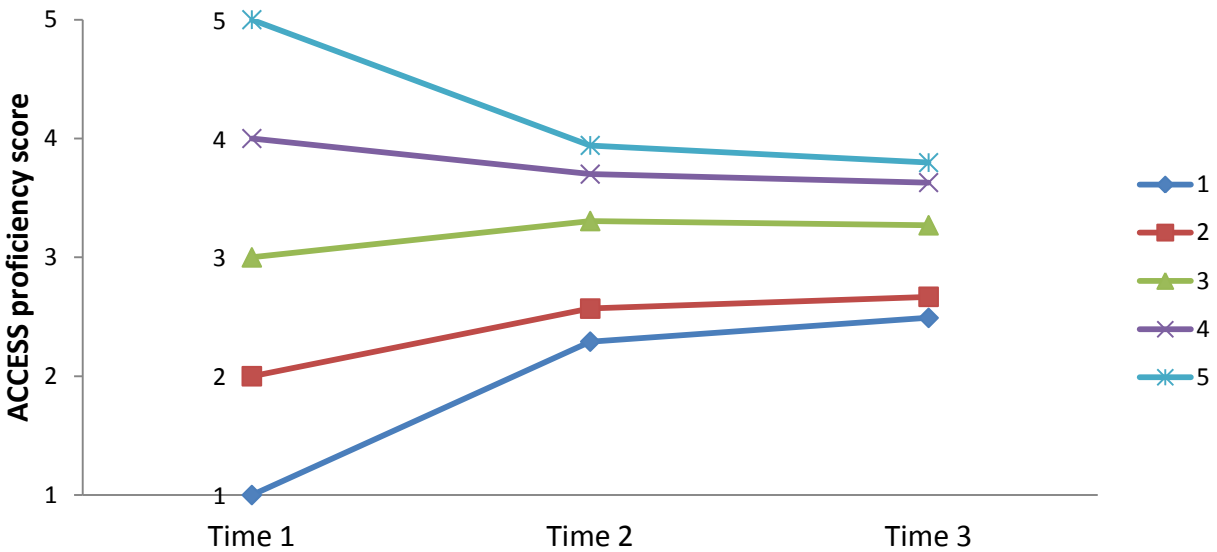
		2012-2013 (T3)					n	T1 to T3		
		1-Entering	2-Beginning	3-Developing	4-Expanding	5-Bridging		% improved by at least one level	% declined by at least one level	% stayed the same
2010-2011 (T1)	1-Entering	13%	44%	27%	15%	2%	55	87%	--	13%
	2-Beginning	3%	42%	41%	12%	2%	232	55%	3%	42%
	3-Developing	1%	12%	51%	31%	5%	507	36%	13%	51%
	4-Expanding	0%	3%	38%	51%	8%	367	8%	41%	51%
	5-Bridging	0%	1%	29%	58%	12%	69	--	88%	12%
	6-Reaching ¹	9%	0%	36%	45%	9%	11	--	100%	--

¹All students showed declines on ACCESS from Time 1 to Time 3.

Figure 4 examines the growth trajectories on ACCESS starting with proficiency levels at Time 1. Again, the data reinforces the general finding that ELL students who start out with lower proficiency levels experience larger gains in English proficiency than ELL students who start out with higher proficiency scores on ACCESS.

¹⁷ Long, M. (2003). Stabilization and fossilization in interlanguage. In C.J. Doughty & M.H. Long (Ed.) *The Handbook of Second Language Acquisition*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Figure 4. Trajectories by Starting Proficiency Levels at Time 1



Examining the data by cohorts, Table 11 indicates that ELL students who started at lower English proficiency levels at Time 1 were more likely to improve by Time 3; this trend was consistent across all three cohorts. For instance, among 6th grade students, 89% who scored a 1-Entering at Time 1 improved by at least one level by Time 3. Interestingly, among 8th grade students, only 33% who scored a 1-Entering at Time 1 improved by at least one level by Time 3. Together, the data suggests that 1) ELL students with lower baseline English proficiency make more substantial gains than students with higher levels of baseline proficiency, and 2) ELL students with low baseline English proficiency are more likely to show improvements between Time 1 and Time 3 if they are in lower grade levels. Elaborating on the second point, the data displayed in Table 11 indicates that students who have low levels of English proficiency in 4th (Cohort 1: 6th grade) and 5th (Cohort 2: 7th grade) grades are more likely to make gains on the ACCESS exam within 1-2 years than their counterparts in 6th grade (Cohort 3: 8th grade).

Table 11. Starting Proficiency Levels (T1) Impact Future Growth (T3), Cohorts

Cohort		2012-2013 (T3)					n	T1 to T3			
		1- Entering	2- Beginning	3- Developing	4- Expanding	5- Bridging		% improved by at least one level	% declined by at least one level	% stayed the same	
6 th	2010-2011 (T1)	1-Entering	11%	67%	11%	11%	0%	9	89%	--	11%
		2-Beginning	0%	50%	46%	4%	0%	26	50%	0%	50%
		3-Developing	1%	26%	57%	16%	0%	137	16%	27%	57%
		4-Expanding	0%	1%	37%	56%	6%	186	6%	38%	56%
		5-Bridging	0%	0%	12%	69%	18%	49	--	82%	18%
		6-Reaching	0%	0%	33%	50%	17%	6	--	100%	--
7 th	2010-2011 (T1)	1-Entering	17%	33%	33%	17%	0%	6	83%	--	17%
		2-Beginning	7%	66%	26%	1%	0%	70	27%	7%	66%
		3-Developing	0%	12%	58%	29%	2%	189	30%	12%	58%
		4-Expanding	0%	0%	35%	47%	18%	117	18%	35%	47%
		5-Bridging	8%	0%	17%	50%	25%	12	--	75%	25%
8 th	2010-2011 (T1)	1-Entering	67%	33%	0%	0%	0%	6	33%	--	67%
		2-Beginning	5%	62%	32%	1%	0%	79	33%	5%	62%
		3-Developing	1%	8%	61%	27%	3%	227	30%	9%	61%
		4-Expanding	0%	1%	24%	66%	9%	116	9%	25%	66%
		5-Bridging	0%	0%	0%	83%	17%	6	--	83%	17%

C. School Ranking

In the third section, a rank analysis was employed to identify schools in the District where ACCESS growth data among ELL students in grades 6-8 are strong. The rank analysis may also assist in identifying schools that are underperforming by comparison and are in need of additional support and resources. The rank analysis of schools was examined by calculating the average percent growth from Time 1 to Time 3 for each school; schools were then ranked from highest to lowest average percent growth. Schools with at least 20 ELL students were included in the rank analysis.¹⁸

Table 12 indicates that the top three schools with the strongest ACCESS growth data from Time 1 to Time 3 were: McCall, Baldi, and Woodrow Wilson. The bottom three schools where, on average, ELL students exhibit slight declines in English proficiency from Time 1 to Time 3 were: Feltonville, Clemente, and Pepper.

Table 12. School Rank Analysis by % Growth on ACCESS from Time 1 to Time 3, Overall

Schools (in order from most to least % growth)	n	Time 1 (2010- 2011)	Time 3 (2012- 2013)	Δ (T3-T1)	% growth ((T3- T1)/T1))
McCALL, GEN. GEORGE A. SCHOOL	21	2.62	3.43	0.81	31%
BALDI, C. C. A. MIDDLE SCHOOL	47	3.21	3.96	0.74	23%
WILSON, WOODROW MIDDLE SCHOOL	66	3.05	3.68	0.64	21%
SOUTHWARK SCHOOL	39	2.79	3.33	0.54	19%
KIRKBRIDE, ELIZA B. SCHOOL	30	3.10	3.63	0.53	17%
CARNELL, LAURA H. SCHOOL	34	2.88	3.12	0.24	8%
FARRELL, LOUIS H. SCHOOL	26	3.35	3.58	0.23	7%
JUNIATA PARK ACADEMY	44	3.32	3.55	0.23	7%
OLNEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	21	3.14	3.33	0.19	6%
SPRUANCE, GILBERT SCHOOL	29	3.21	3.38	0.17	5%
ALLEN, ETHAN SCHOOL	27	3.22	3.30	0.07	2%
FRANKLIN, BENJAMIN SCHOOL	27	3.33	3.37	0.04	1%
POTTER-THOMAS SCHOOL	20	2.75	2.75	0.00	0%
DE BURGOS, JULIA BILINGUAL	56	3.23	3.20	-0.04	-1%
MUNOZ MARIN, HON. LUIS SCHOOL	21	2.71	2.67	-0.05	-2%
WASHINGTON, GROVER JR. MIDDLE SCHOOL	41	3.41	3.34	-0.07	-2%
HARDING, WARREN G. MIDDLE SCHOOL	21	3.05	2.90	-0.14	-5%
MEEHAN, AUSTIN MIDDLE SCHOOL	31	3.65	3.42	-0.23	-6%
FELTONVILLE SCHL OF ARTS/SCIENCE	81	3.06	2.86	-0.20	-6%
CLEMENTE, ROBERTO MIDDLE SCHOOL	80	3.03	2.80	-0.23	-7%
PEPPER, GEORGE MIDDLE SCHOOL	24	3.38	3.00	-0.38	-11%

Note. Only schools with at least 20 ELL students are displayed.

¹⁸ This criterion was set for two reasons 1) to ensure student confidentiality and 2) to assess schools with comparatively large concentrations of ELL students. Related to the former point, approximately 42 schools in the district had between 1 and 5 ELL students assessed in the current report. To maintain confidentiality of student data, schools with at least 20 ELL students were included.

Given the variability in growth trajectories on ACCESS across grade levels, a school rank analysis was also conducted for each cohort using average percent growth from Time 1 to Time 3. Table 13 indicates that the top and bottom three schools with the highest and lowest percent growths, respectively, from Time 1 to Time 3 per cohort are:

	<u>Top (highest % growth)</u>	<u>Bottom (lowest % growth)</u>
Cohort 1 (6 th grade)	Baldi Potter-Thomas Woodrow Wilson	Pepper McCall Harding
Cohort 2 (7 th grade)	McCall Farrell Southwark	Grover Washington Munoz Marin Feltonville School of Arts/Science
Cohort 3 (8 th grade)	Kirkbride McCall Baldi	Carnell Harding Meehan

Because the transition from elementary school grade levels (K-5) to middle school grade levels (6-8) may be fraught with challenges (Long, 2003), it is important to consider high and low ranking schools for cohort 1 separately from that of cohorts 2 and 3. For instance, 6th grade students, on average, show declines from Time 1 to Time 3 at McCall; however, 7th and 8th grade students demonstrate the most gains from Time 1 to Time 3 at the same school. This may suggest that while 6th grade students may experience challenges transitioning to middle school-grade levels at McCall, by 7th grade, they may show significant gains in English proficiency. By contrast, 6th grade students at Baldi exhibit the most percent growth across time; 7th and 8th grade students continue to show exemplary growth at Baldi as well. Across all three cohorts, ELL students show consistently positive English proficiency growth on ACCESS at Baldi, Woodrow Wilson, and Southwark.

Table 13. School Rank Analysis by % Growth on ACCESS from Time 1 to Time 3, by Cohort

	Cohort 1: 6 th Grade				Cohort 2: 7 th Grade				Cohort 3: 8 th Grade			
	Time 1	Time 3	n	% growth	Time 1	Time 3	n	% growth	Time 1	Time 3	n	% growth
BALDI, C. C. A. MIDDLE SCHOOL	2.82	3.91	11	39%	3.44	4.00	18	16%	3.22	3.94	18	22%
POTTER-THOMAS SCHOOL	2.00	2.75	4	38%	2.89	2.67	9	-8%	3.00	2.86	7	-5%
WILSON, WOODROW MIDDLE	3.07	4.14	14	35%	2.95	3.50	22	18%	3.10	3.60	30	16%
CARNELL, LAURA H. SCHOOL	2.83	3.50	12	24%	2.78	2.83	18	2%	3.50	3.25	4	-7%
SOUTHWARK SCHOOL	3.29	3.79	14	15%	2.70	3.30	10	22%	2.40	2.93	15	22%
WASHINGTON, GROVER JR. MIDDLE SCHOOL	3.11	3.56	18	14%	3.67	2.83	12	-23%	3.64	3.55	11	-3%
KIRKBRIDE, ELIZA B. SCHOOL	3.56	3.89	9	9%	3.60	3.60	5	0%	2.69	3.50	16	30%
DE BURGOS, JULIA BILINGUAL	3.25	3.50	20	8%	3.30	3.10	20	-6%	3.13	2.94	16	-6%
OLNEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	3.43	3.57	7	4%	2.83	2.83	6	0%	3.13	3.50	8	12%

Note. Only schools with at total of at least 20 ELL students are displayed. Green gradient= highest percent growth; Red gradient=lowest percent growth.

Continued, Table 14. School Rank Analysis by % Growth on ACCESS from Time 1 to Time 3, by Cohort

	Cohort 1: 6 th Grade				Cohort 2: 7 th Grade				Cohort 3: 8 th Grade			
	Time 1	Time 3	n	% growth	Time 1	Time 3	n	% growth	Time 1	Time 3	n	% growth
SPRUANCE, GILBERT SCHOOL	3.22	3.33	9	3%	3.33	3.25	12	-3%	3.00	3.63	8	21%
FRANKLIN, BENJAMIN SCHOOL	3.91	3.91	11	0%	2.86	2.71	7	-5%	3.00	3.22	9	7%
MEEHAN, AUSTIN MIDDLE SCHOOL	4.00	4.00	1	0%	3.71	3.50	14	-6%	3.56	3.31	16	-7%
CLEMENTE, ROBERTO MIDDLE SCHOOL	2.93	2.86	14	-2%	3.07	2.63	30	-14%	3.03	2.92	36	-4%
ALLEN, ETHAN SCHOOL	3.20	3.10	10	-3%	3.40	3.40	10	0%	3.00	3.43	7	14%
FARRELL, LOUIS H. SCHOOL	3.22	3.11	9	-3%	3.29	4.14	7	26%	3.50	3.60	10	3%
MUNOZ MARIN, HON. LUIS SCHOOL	2.70	2.60	10	-4%	2.75	2.25	4	-18%	2.71	3.00	7	11%
JUNIATA PARK ACADEMY	3.75	3.56	16	-5%	3.45	4.09	11	18%	2.82	3.18	17	13%
FELTONVILLE SCHL OF ARTS/SCI	3.16	2.75	32	-13%	3.32	2.80	25	-16%	2.67	3.08	24	16%
HARDING, WARREN G. MIDDLE SCHOOL	4.00	3.33	3	-17%	3.00	3.13	8	4%	2.80	2.60	10	-7%
MC CALL, GEN. GEORGE A. SCHOOL	3.00	2.50	2	-17%	2.25	3.38	8	50%	2.82	3.64	11	29%
PEPPER, GEORGE MIDDLE SCHOOL	4.00	2.80	10	-30%	3.17	3.50	6	11%	2.75	2.88	8	5%

Note. Only schools with at total of at least 20 ELL students are displayed. Green gradient= highest percent growth; Red gradient=lowest percent growth.

Limitations

There are several notable limitations to conducting a rank analysis on schools in the District based on percent growth on ACCESS from Time 1 (2010-2011) to Time 3 (2012-2013). First, as corroborated by other researchers (e.g. Long, 2003), ELL students with lower baseline English proficiency levels achieve more substantial gains than ELL students with higher baseline proficiency levels. Therefore, schools with lower, average proficiency scores on ACCESS are more likely to show higher percent growth over time than schools with higher, average proficiency scores at baseline. For example, a school that moves from a '1-Entering' at Time 1 to a '2-Beginning' at Time 3 has grown by 100%; another school that moves from '3-Developing' at Time 1 to '4-Expanding' at Time 3 has only grown by 33%. Caution should, thus, be employed when considering the rank analyses displayed in Tables 12 and 13. Second, other important variables such as teachers and students' perceptions of ELL programs and services should be taken into account when examining schools with strong growth data. For instance, previous research has found that students' psychosocial attitudes towards school are more predictive of future academic success than achievement scores on standardized tests.¹⁹ Future evaluation efforts should consider assessing ELL students' psychosocial attitudes towards school as another avenue for identifying schools with effective ELL programs and supports.

¹⁹ Duckworth, A. L., Quinn, P., Tsukayama, E. (2012). What No Child Left Behind leaves behind: The roles of IQ and self-control in predicting standardized achievement test scores and report card grades. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 104*, 439-451.

Strategy 2: A quantitative and qualitative analysis of schools with strong ACCESS data to identify best practices that can be replicated in District schools that serve grades 6-8.

Based on the findings from the previous section, it was concluded that schools with the highest average English proficiency growth on ACCESS from Time 1 to Time 3 should be examined for best practices in curriculum and instruction. In an effort to extrapolate best practices, the current section examines the following questions organized by the following methodologies:

- A. **Classroom Observations:** To what extent do ELL students receive adequate instruction at high performing schools? How do instructional practices differ at high performing vs. the low performing schools?
- B. **ESOL teacher surveys:** What are teachers' perceptions of the curriculum and program at high performing schools? How do their perceptions differ from teachers at other schools?
- C. **Interviews with Multilingual Managers:** To what extent do ESOL programs at high performing schools serve students' needs?

The four schools with the highest average English proficiency growth rates on ACCESS were: Southwark, McCall, Baldi, and Woodrow Wilson. Classroom observations, teacher surveys, and interviews with Multilingual Managers were conducted in the aforementioned schools. To provide additional context, data was also obtained from Feltonville—a school with one of the lowest average English proficiency growth rates on ACCESS. Where applicable, data from the top performing schools—Southwark, McCall, Baldi, and Woodrow Wilson—were compared to that of the low performing school—Feltonville.

A. Classroom Observations: To what extent do ELL students receive adequate instruction? How do instructional practices differ at high performing vs. low performing schools?

Classroom observations were conducted in May 2014 to determine the extent to which students receive adequate instruction. Data from 22 different classrooms at five schools were collected: Baldi (4), McCall (3), Southwark (5), Woodrow Wilson (5), and Feltonville (5). The majority of classrooms (64%) visited were ESOL-friendly classrooms, where ELL and non-ELL students were being taught content together and the teachers employed specific strategies to differentiate instruction; 36% of classrooms observed were sheltered content classes in which all of the students were ESOL students. The observations captured lessons being delivered to 442 students in grades 6, 7, and 8. Teachers were not notified that the observations were occurring and most were unaware of the observation dates and times. The observations focused on the classroom environment along with three domains related to strategies and behaviors used and exhibited by teacher and students. That is, each domain included several specific strategies/ behaviors that were considered during the observations. See below:

Domain 1: Lesson Planning and Preparation

1. Academic objective is evident to students.
2. Materials are appropriate for lesson objective.

3. Academic language strategy utilized: Visuals, Explicit Vocabulary Instruction, Sentence Frames, Other.
4. Teacher differentiates instruction to make content comprehensible by providing:
 - a. Supplemental materials to reinforce concepts
 - b. Supplemental teacher made supports
 - c. Student Grouping
 - d. Learning Strategies (Mnemonic Devices)
 - e. Other

Domain 2: Classroom Environment

1. Classroom is reflective of student cultures.
2. Environment is risk free and student attempts are valued.
3. Positive interactions are evident between student and teacher.
4. Visual learning aids are displayed throughout the classroom.
5. All students have opportunities for oral language use and development.
6. ELLs are integrated with other students in the classroom.

Domain 3: Instruction

1. Expectations for learning and directions are clear to students
2. Scaffolding techniques are actively used.
3. Students are allowed time to practice.
4. Technology is successfully utilized to support learning.
5. When asking questions or creating oral language experiences, the teacher:
 - a. Asks ELLs for responses according to their English proficiency level.
 - b. Uses sentence starters or frames to assist students in formulating responses.
 - c. Provides adequate wait time for students to formulate responses.
 - d. Frequently uses cooperative strategies to allow all students to speak with peers.

In an attempt to quantify the presence of the strategy, a rubric was employed to capture the extent to which the strategy was implemented in the classroom. Items were rated on a five point scale: 1, Not observed; 2, Further Development; 3, Satisfactory; 4, Well Demonstrated; 5, Outstanding. To ensure inter-rater reliability, prior to the observations, experienced observers from OMCP went through an internal training process, at which time they reviewed the classroom observation protocol and discussed its implementation with an ORE researcher. Each classroom was observed by two OMCP observers. Ratings were then averaged between the two observers.

Results for the three domains are reported in Table 15. Average differences across items were compared between classrooms at the four high performing schools—Southwark, McCall, Baldi, and Woodrow Wilson—and classrooms at the low performing school—Feltonville.

Across classrooms at the four high performing schools, the following areas were rated the highest by observers as being at or above *satisfactory* (5-point likert scale 1 *not observed*; 2 *further development*; 3 *satisfactory*; 4 *well demonstrated*; 5 *outstanding*):

- **ELLs are integrated with other students in the classroom.**
 - In ESOL-friendly classrooms, ELL students were so well-integrated into the classroom environment that observers often noted that they could not differentiate between an ELL and a non-ELL student.

- **Teachers utilize other strategies to differentiate instruction.**
 - To differentiate instruction, teachers at high performing schools were observed utilizing films, maps, dictionaries, and visual charts. SMARTBoards were also noted as being an effective pedagogical tool.
- **Positive interactions are evident between student and teacher.**
 - Across most classrooms at high performing schools, observers indicated that there is a “very good” or “very strong” rapport between teachers and students. For instance, teachers promptly respond to students’ questions, quickly de-escalate conflicts in the classroom, and provide encouragement (e.g., “You can do it.”).
- **Environment is risk free and student attempts are valued.**
 - Teachers at high performing schools were observed doing the following to cultivate a supportive climate in the classroom: provide positive feedback, engage all students in whole-class discussions, and encourage humor and creativity.
- **Teachers utilize other academic language strategies.**
 - Teachers were observed using concept maps, repetition, and explicit modeling of new academic vocabulary.
- **Materials are appropriate for lesson objective.**
 - Across most classrooms at high performing schools, materials were both appropriate and effective in supporting the lesson objective. For instance, teachers used CDs to read aloud, REACH (Respecting Ethnic and Cultural Heritage) books and vocabulary cards, and SMARTBoards.
- **Expectations for learning and directions are clear to students.**
 - In all classrooms at high performing schools, directions were either orally explained or written on the chalkboard or SMARTBoard. Likewise, teachers were observed providing sample work or models for students to follow.
- **Scaffolding techniques are actively used.**
 - Gestures, expressive intonations, think-alouds, and modeling were utilized.

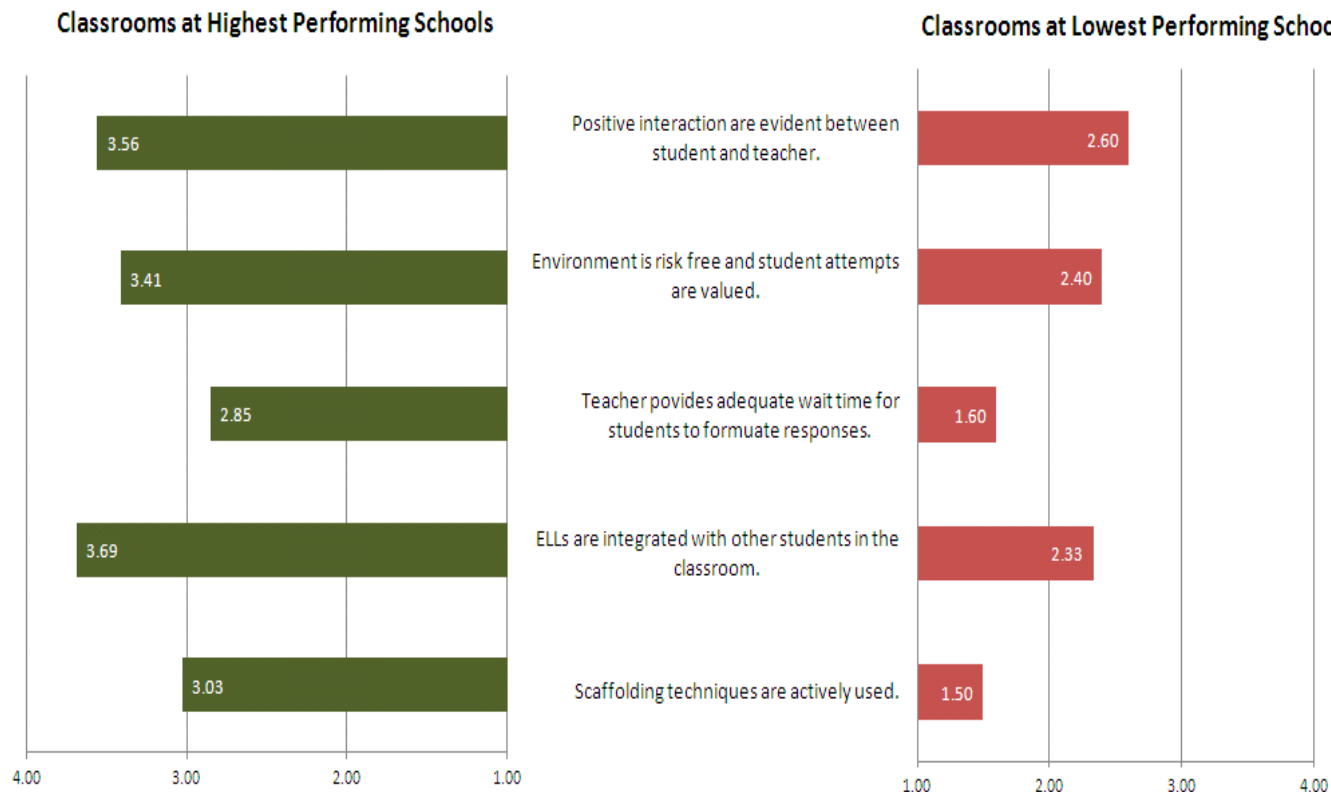
Table 15. Classroom Observations, Descriptive Statistics and Differences across high and low performing schools

	Classrooms at high performing schools (n=17)		Classrooms at low performing school (n=5)		Differences		
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Δ	Rank	
Domain 1: Lesson Planning and Preparation	1. Academic objective is evident to students.	2.66	0.91	2.10	0.74	0.56	17
	2. Materials are appropriate for lesson objective.	3.06	0.93	2.25	0.87	0.81	11
	3. Academic language strategies utilized:	2.59	1.18	2.00	1.00	0.59	16
	3a. Visuals						
	3b. Explicit vocabulary instruction	2.68	1.19	1.80	1.30	0.88	8
	3c. Sentence Frame	1.94	0.95	1.00	0.00	0.94	6
	3d. Student conversation	1.88	0.82	2.20	1.10	-0.32	24
	3e. Other	3.17	1.22	--	--	--	--
	4. Differentiates instruction to make content comprehensible by providing:	2.74	1.08	1.80	0.84	0.94	7
	4a. Supplemental materials to reinforce concepts						
	4b. Supplemental teacher made supports	2.22	1.15	1.40	0.89	0.82	10
	4c. Student Grouping	2.21	0.88	1.70	0.67	0.51	19
	4d. Learning strategies	1.70	0.90	1.60	0.89	0.10	22
4e. Other	3.60	0.55	--	--	--	--	
Domain 2: Classroom Environment	1. Classroom is reflective of student cultures.	1.91	1.20	1.60	0.55	0.31	20
	2. Environment is risk free and student attempts are valued.	3.41	0.51	2.40	1.14	1.01	4
	3. Positive interactions are evident between student and teacher.	3.56	0.58	2.60	1.34	0.96	5
	4. Visual learning aids are displayed throughout the classroom.	2.72	1.26	2.20	0.45	0.52	18
	5. All students have opportunities for oral language use and development.	2.47	0.89	2.40	1.14	0.07	23
	6. ELLs are integrated with other students.	3.69	0.48	2.33	1.15	1.36	2
Domain 3: Instruction	1. Expectations for learning and directions are clear to students.	3.03	0.91	2.40	0.96	0.63	15
	2. Scaffolding techniques are actively used.	3.03	0.72	1.50	0.87	1.53	1
	3. Students are allowed time to practice.	2.71	0.75	1.90	0.74	0.81	12
	4. Technology is successfully utilized to support learning.	2.64	1.18	1.80	1.10	0.84	9
	5. When asking questions or creating oral language experiences, the teacher:						
	5a. Asks ELLs for responses according to their English proficiency level.	2.65	0.72	1.90	0.89	0.75	14
	5b. Uses sentence starters or frames to assist students in formulating responses.	1.79	0.94	1.00	0.00	0.79	13
	5c. Provides adequate wait time for students to formulate responses.	2.85	0.66	1.60	0.89	1.25	3
	5d. Frequently uses cooperative strategies to allow all students to speak with peers.	1.94	0.81	1.80	0.84	0.14	21

Note. High performing schools= McCall, Baldi, Southwark, Woodrow Wilson; low performing school= Feltonville. Differences were computed as follows: Mean from high performing schools – Mean from low performing school. Red= smallest differences between high and low performing schools; Orange= mid-range differences; Green=largest differences between high and low performing schools. Scale: 1, *not observed* to 5, *outstanding*.

Examining differences between classrooms at high and low performing schools, it is evident from Table 15 that teachers at high performing schools are more likely to: utilize scaffolding techniques; integrate ELL students in the classroom; provide adequate wait time for students to formulate responses; cultivate a classroom environment that is risk free and values student attempts; and foster positive interactions between students and teachers. Figure 5 displays the top 5 largest differences between classrooms at high and low performing schools on observed strategies in the classroom.

Figure 5. Top 5 largest observed differences in instructional practices at high performing schools (McCall, Baldi, Southwark, Woodrow Wilson) and low performing school (Feltonville)



Note. Scale was truncated to enhance visual clarity. 5-point scale: 1, *not observed* to 5, *outstanding*.

Classroom Spotlight

To illustrate the differences in instructional practices between the high and low performing schools, two case studies were compared.²⁰ Case Study A is of an eighth grade math class at a high performing school; Case Study B is of a seventh grade math class at a low performing school. Table 16 compares the instructional practices between two math classes for each of the three instructional domains—1) Lesson Planning and Preparation, 2) Classroom Environment, and 3) Instruction.

In general, stark differences are evident between the two classrooms. The teacher for Case Study A utilized a panoply of materials and learning strategies to create a positive classroom environment where all students were actively engaged in learning. For example, to demonstrate graphing functions on a calculator, the teacher used a humorous voice and modeled best practices in graphing functions using both a SMARTBoard and a colorful poster. Furthermore, while students were working independently on problems, the teacher frequently circulated throughout the class and engaged most students in one-on-one discussions regarding the material. ELL students were seated together in a group to support one another: ELLs with minimal English language proficiency were supported by ELLs with stronger language proficiency and could explain math concepts in home or primary language if need be. That is, ELL students were encouraged to build their literacy and math skills in their home or primary language; this promoted a positive learning environment where ELL students felt safe to take risks and make mistakes. By contrast, the teacher for Case Study B provided minimal guidance and instruction. Students were instructed to work independently or in groups on a math worksheet. The objective of the in-class assignment was not posted or discussed by the teacher. Most students who worked in groups or pairs voiced confusion on a number of math concepts and procedures (i.e. multiplying negative fractions). However, the teacher was remiss in approaching groups to clarify and model concepts. As a result, most students disengaged from the assignment and tangential discussions regarding non-math related topics (i.e. clothes, friends, family) monopolized the instructional time. Figure 6 captures the best practices that can be extrapolated from Case Study A to enhance instruction across all ESOL-friendly classrooms.

²⁰ The case studies were randomly selected from classroom observations. Specifically, one classroom observation was randomly selected from among the high performing schools and another was randomly selected from the low performing school.

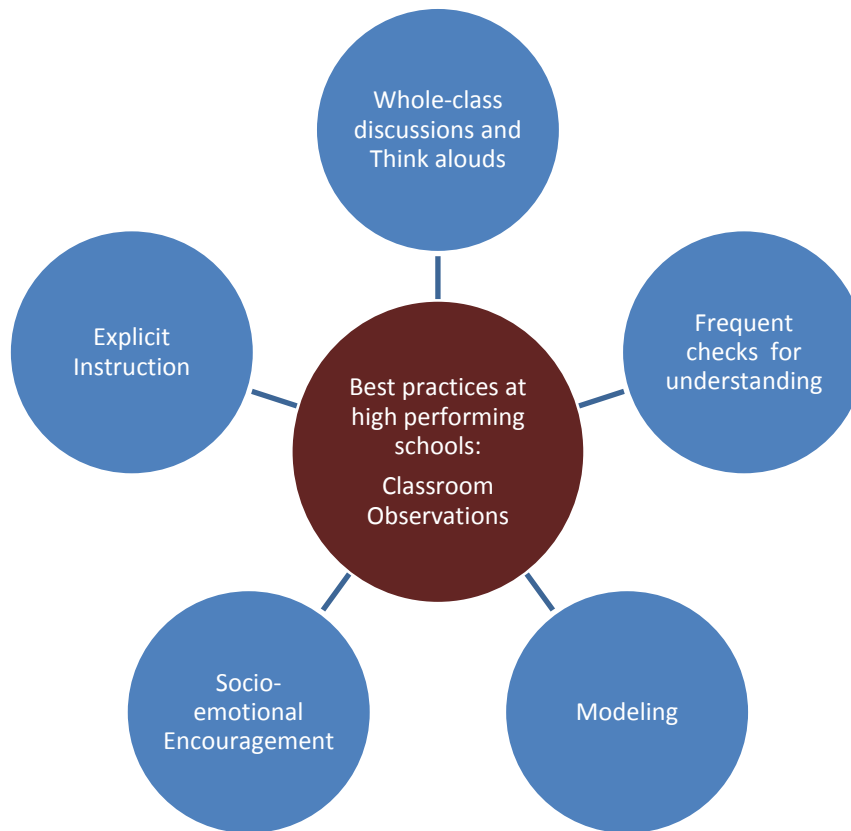
Table 16. Case studies of instructional practices at high (Case Study A) and low (Case Study B) performing schools.

	<i>Case Study A</i>	<i>Case Study B</i>
Domain 1: Lesson Planning and Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective was posted and reviewed orally at the beginning of the lesson. Calculators, posters, and a SMARTBoard were utilized to illustrate concepts. Teacher made good use of a motley of language strategies. He used visuals (book, SMARTBoard, posters), explicit vocabulary (simplified clear definitions of math terms), and sentence frames (fill-in-the-blanks). Student conversation was at a minimum. Teacher readily checked students' comprehension by asking whole class questions. Teacher differentiated instruction by utilizing supplemental materials, mnemonic devices, and student grouping. For example, he used interesting data visualization techniques via SMARTBoard to reinforce concepts. New vocabulary was illustrated via mnemonic devices; a poster was used to explain use of graphing functions on the calculator. Students were grouped together at a table to explain concepts to one another. Only one student was observed not following the lesson plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective was not posted or mentioned. Worksheets were utilized; however, there was a lack of clarity regarding the objective. Few, if any, language strategies were utilized. No visuals or explicit vocabulary instruction was observed. Students worked in groups and frequently talked off topic. All students appeared to be working on the same worksheet. Most students were working in groups or pairs yet discussing non-math related issues. No supplemental materials or specific learning strategies utilized to differentiate instruction to students.
Domain 2: Classroom Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chinese dragons were occasionally used to illustrate concepts; dragons were also displayed around the classroom. Teacher readily used humor and encouraged ELL students to share their answers with the class. Positive, encouraging tone was infused in teachers' speech; teacher de-escalated a potential conflict between students in an efficient manner. Many colorful posters demonstrating math concepts were displayed. Teacher readily referred to one or two posters for illustration. Teacher circulated the class and spoke to many students. A few student groups discussed math concepts, however, the majority of students worked individually on assignments with frequent teacher input and one-on-one instruction. ELLs were very well integrated. ELL students were seated together to support each other. ELLs with minimal English language skills were supported by ELLs who had greater proficiency and could explain math concepts in native language. Teacher encouraged ELLs to respond to questions and work together to clarify understanding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No culturally relevant materials were observed. Teacher interacted with students minimally. A few students approached the teacher when they needed additional assistance. No positive interactions were observed. A few posters reflecting math concepts were displayed. Students were frequently engaged in conversations regarding non-math topics (ie. family, clothes). Teacher made no attempt to mitigate tangential discussions. Integration of ELL students was not observed.

Continued, Table 16. Case studies of instructional practices at high (Case Study A) and low (Case Study B) performing schools.

<p>Domain 3: Instruction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directions were modeled using a calculator and other visual tools. Teacher demonstrated how to solve problems before students attempted them independently. • Teacher used “think alouds” whereby students were asked to explain how they arrived at an answer; humor was also effectively used to engage students in the graphic functions of a calculator. • Teacher modeled how to solve problems and provided ample time for students to practice independently. • Teacher used the SMARTBoard to introduce vocabulary and new concepts. The SMARTBoard was also used to model solving equations. • The class was fast-paced and the teacher used humorous banter to engage all students, including ELLs. Many, if not most, students participated in the class discussion by either volunteering answers or being called upon by the teacher. Teacher set a high standard for students to achieve and required all students to be on task. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directions were orally delivered. Students were unclear about multiplying negative numbers. • No scaffolding techniques were observed. • Students worked on their review sheets throughout the class period. • Both the projector and the SMARTBoard were turned on but not used during the class period. • No direct instruction was observed. Students spent the entire class period engaged in individual or group work with little or no input from the teacher. To receive individualized attention or guidance, students needed to approach the teacher who was seated behind a desk. • Minimal expectations for mastery were articulated.
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Figure 6. Best practices extrapolated from Classroom Observations



B. ESOL Teacher Surveys: What are teachers' perceptions of the curriculum and program at their schools?

Insights were gleaned from teachers at the four high performing schools through the Y.S. Stipulation Internal Evaluation Teacher Survey which was administered in May and June 2014. Thirty-five teachers at McCall, Bali, Woodrow Wilson, and Southwark were invited to complete the survey; a total of 30 teachers completed the online survey. This signifies an 83% response rate.²¹ On average, teachers had been at their schools for 7 years and had 15 years of teaching experience. The most common instructional configuration for these teachers when teaching ELL students was pull-outs and push-ins. About 40% of respondents reported using co-teaching. Just under 70% of respondents indicated that they either had their ESOL program specialist certification or were currently pursuing one.

To provide contextual information, teachers' responses were compared to other teachers' responses from previous surveys. Specifically, data gleaned from the 2012 Y.S. Stipulation Internal Evaluation Teacher Survey were used as comparison.²²

Teachers were asked if they felt prepared to teach the ELL students in their classes. The results suggest that 63% of teachers at high performing schools reported being prepared "to a large extent" compared to only 24% of teachers at comparison schools. See Table 17 and Figure 7.

Table 17. How prepared teachers felt to teach ELL students

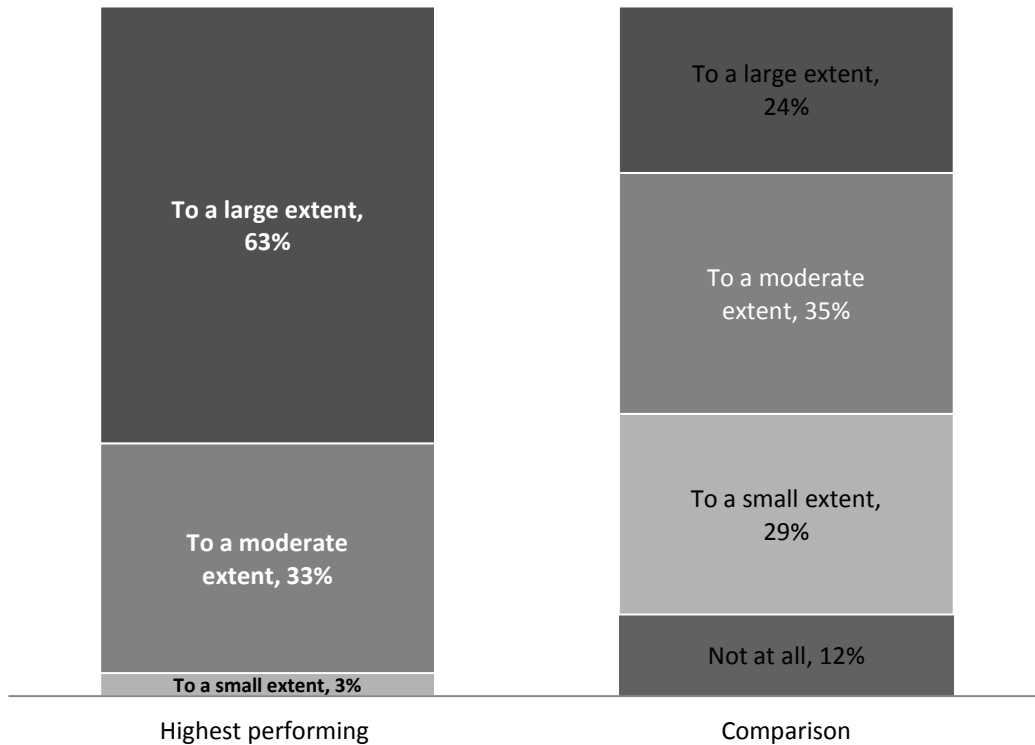
To what extent do you feel prepared to effectively teach the ELL students in your classes?	n	Mean	Assessment ¹	Not at all (1)	To a small extent (2)	To a moderate extent (3)	To a large extent (4)
High performing	30	3.60	Good 😊	0%	3%	33%	63%
Comparison	464	2.71	Action !	12%	29%	35%	24%

¹Assessment= Above 3.2=Good; 2.8 to 3.2= Attention; Below 2.8=Action. Note. High performing= 2014 Survey; Comparison=2012 Survey.

²¹ According to Hamilton (2003), a response rate above 60% is considered "very good" for an email/online survey. Hamilton, M.B. (2003). *Online survey response rates and times: Background and guidance for industry*. Technical document, Tercent, Inc.

²² Approximately 484 ESOL and ESOL-friendly teachers from 8 schools completed the survey in June 2012: Edison (42), Fels (35), Frankford (45), Furness (34), Lincoln (79), Northeast (138), South Philadelphia (30), and George Washington (81). It is important to note that the comparison schools consist of high schools (9-12). Thus, caution should be employed when interpreting the results.

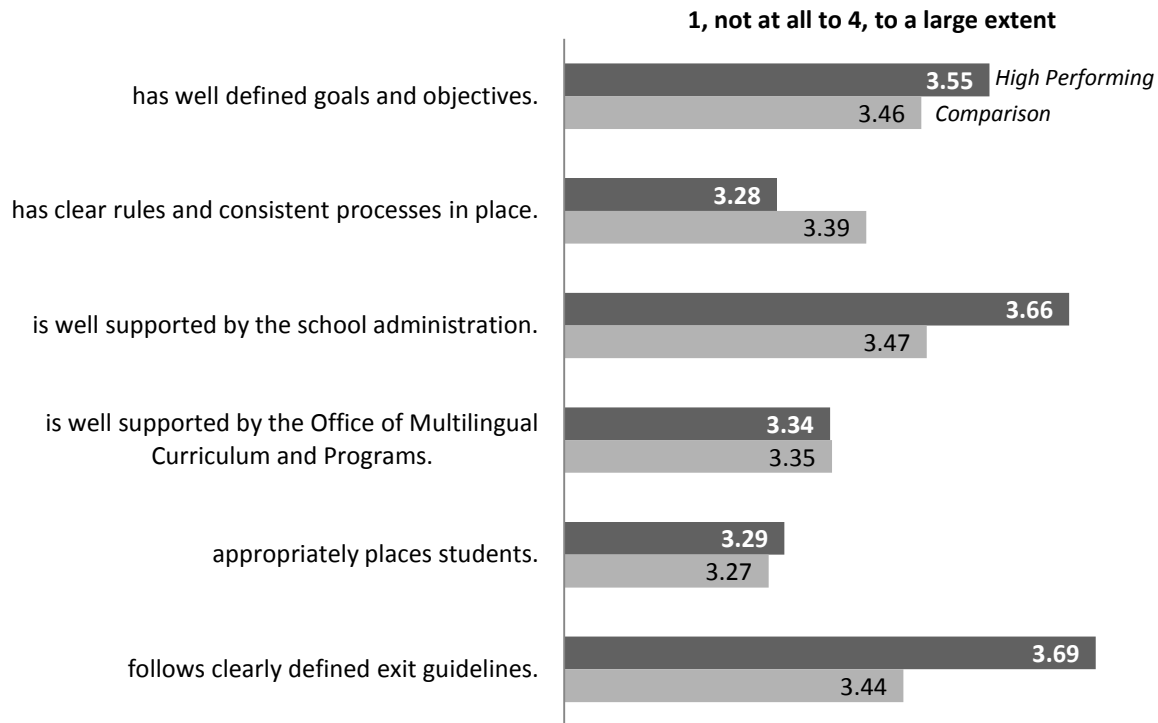
Figure 7. To what extent do you feel prepared to effectively teach the ELL students in your classes?



Note. High performing= 2014 Survey; Comparison=2012 Survey.

Additionally, when asked to rate their impressions of ELL programming at their schools, teachers at the high performing schools indicated that the programs had well defined goals and objectives, were well supported by the school administration, and followed clearly defined exit guidelines. Their ratings on these aspects of the ELL program were higher than the ratings provided by comparison teachers. However, the results were mixed with regards to consistency of processes, support from OMCP staff, and appropriate placement of students; teachers at both the high performing schools and comparison schools rated the aforementioned aspects of the program as needing additional attention. See Figure 8.

Figure 8. The ESOL program at my school...

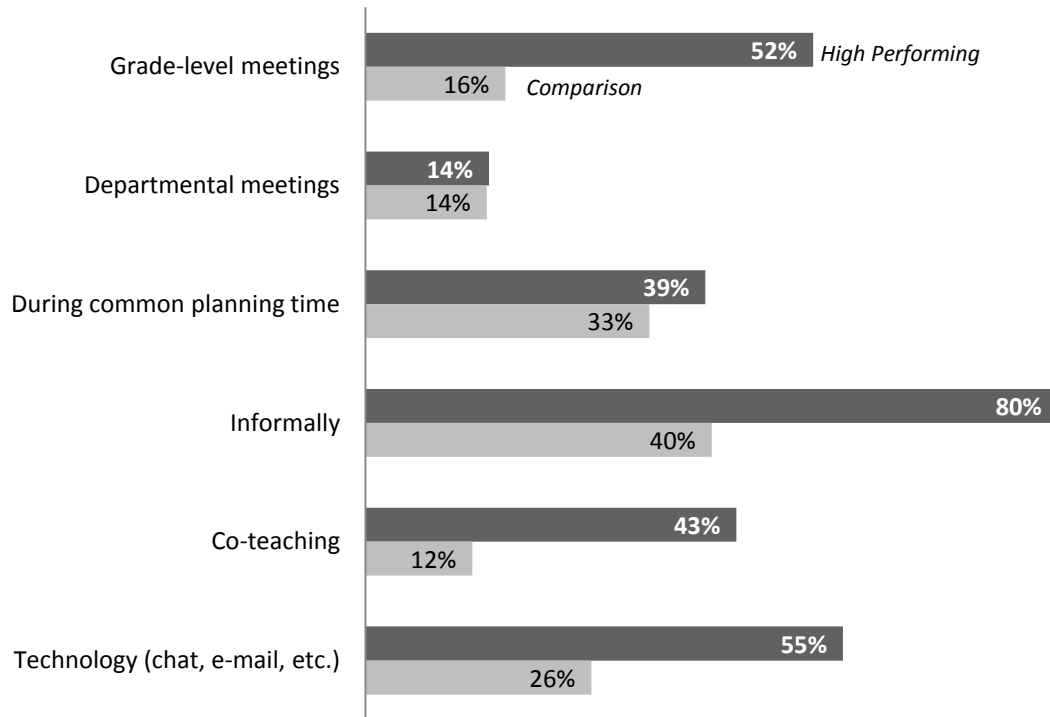


Note. High performing= 2014 Survey; Comparison=2012 Survey.

Figure 9 clearly suggests that teachers at high performing schools are more likely than teachers at comparison schools to collaborate with one another around ELL students and instruction. For example, over half (52%) of teachers at the high performing schools reported collaborating with other teachers at least 2 or 3 times per week via grade-level meetings compared to only 16% of teachers at comparison schools. Stark differences also exist between teachers at high performing and comparison schools when asked how frequently they collaborate informally or via technology (e.g. email). For instance 80% of teachers at high performing schools collaborate informally at least 2 or 3 times a week compared to 40% of teachers at comparison schools. Co-teaching opportunities also appear to be more prevalent at high performing schools as 43% of survey respondents indicated that they co-teach at least 2-3 times per week compared to only 12% at comparison schools. Together, this survey data suggest that teachers at high performing school may have more opportunities to work with one another and to share resources and materials. A small but growing body of evidence suggests a relationship between teacher collaboration and teacher satisfaction, as well as student achievement. For instance, Goddard, Goddard, and Taschannen-Moran (2007) found a statistically significant positive correlation between teacher collaboration and math and reading achievement. They conclude that promoting teacher collaboration around curriculum, instruction, and professional development leads to improvement in student achievement.²³

²³ Goddard, Y.L., Goddard, R.D., Tschannen-Moran, M. (2007). A theoretical and empirical investigation of teacher collaboration for school improvement and student achievement in public elementary schools. *Teachers College Record*, 109, 877-896.

Figure 9. Percentage of teachers who collaborate with other teachers at least 2 or 3 times a week via the following avenues...



Note. High performing=2014 Survey; Comparison=2012 Survey.

When asked to rate the impact that various trainings/professional developments (PDs) had on their classroom practice, teachers at high performing schools rated the following three trainings as having the most impact: Grading Guidelines, Listening Strategies, and Speaking Strategies. See Table 18. Trainings involving co-teaching, RtII for ELLs, and SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) were generally perceived as having minimal impact on classroom practices. Moreover, over 70% of respondents reported participating in trainings involving ESOL strategies, Differentiated Instruction, and Assessments and ELL Modifications; all three trainings were also given high marks for positively impacting classroom instruction. This suggests that teachers at high performing schools readily participate in PDs for instructing ELL students and find such strategies useful in the classroom.

Table 18. Teacher trainings/PDs

Have you participated in any trainings/PDs that covered the following topics? If yes, to what extent did they impact your classroom practice?	n ¹	Mean ²	Assessment ³	Rank
Grading Guidelines	15	3.80	Good 😊	1 (highest)
Listening Strategies	13	3.46	Good 😊	2
Speaking Strategies	14	3.43	Good 😊	3
ESOL strategies (e.g., scaffolding, differentiation, use of visual tools, Student conversation/engagement)	22	3.41	Good 😊	4
Writing Strategies	18	3.39	Good 😊	5
Differentiating Instruction	21	3.38	Good 😊	6
Can Do Descriptors	18	3.28	Good 😊	7
Assessments and ELL Modifications	22	3.27	Good 😊	8
Vocabulary Strategies	19	3.21	Good 😊	9
Collaborative Instruction	14	2.71	Action !	10
Support for HS application/Le Gare	11	2.64	Action !	11
Co-Teaching	12	2.42	Action !	12
RtII for ELLs	8	2.13	Action !	13
SIOP - Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol	9	1.89	Action !	14 (lowest)

¹n= number of survey respondents who participated in trainings/PDS out of 30 total respondents. ²Mean=1, not impact to 4, large impact. ³Assessment= Above 3.2=Good; 2.8 to 3.2= Attention; Below 2.8=Action. Comparison data was not available. Data displayed in the table reflects 2014 survey data only.

Teachers were also asked what the most important instructional strategy that content teachers working with ELL students should learn. The majority of respondents indicated that enhancing differentiated instruction is imperative to effectively working with ELL students. For example, one teacher said, “[Content teachers] need to be able to look at content material that is many grade levels above the reading comprehension of their ESOL students and know how to make it somewhat comprehensible.” Another teacher added that “modified assessments for ELL students” are among best practices used in the classroom. Importantly, respondents insinuated that on-going training is needed to master differentiated instruction. For instance, one teacher said, “It takes more than an occasional workshop to effectively master [differentiated instruction strategies for ESOL students].” Another teacher suggested that allowing sufficient time to collaborate with other teachers is vital. Combined with the data presented in Figure 8, this suggests that opportunities to engage in informal and formal training opportunities may be the best avenue for effectively meeting ELL students’ needs in the classroom. Respondents suggest the following to further improve ESOL instruction at their schools:

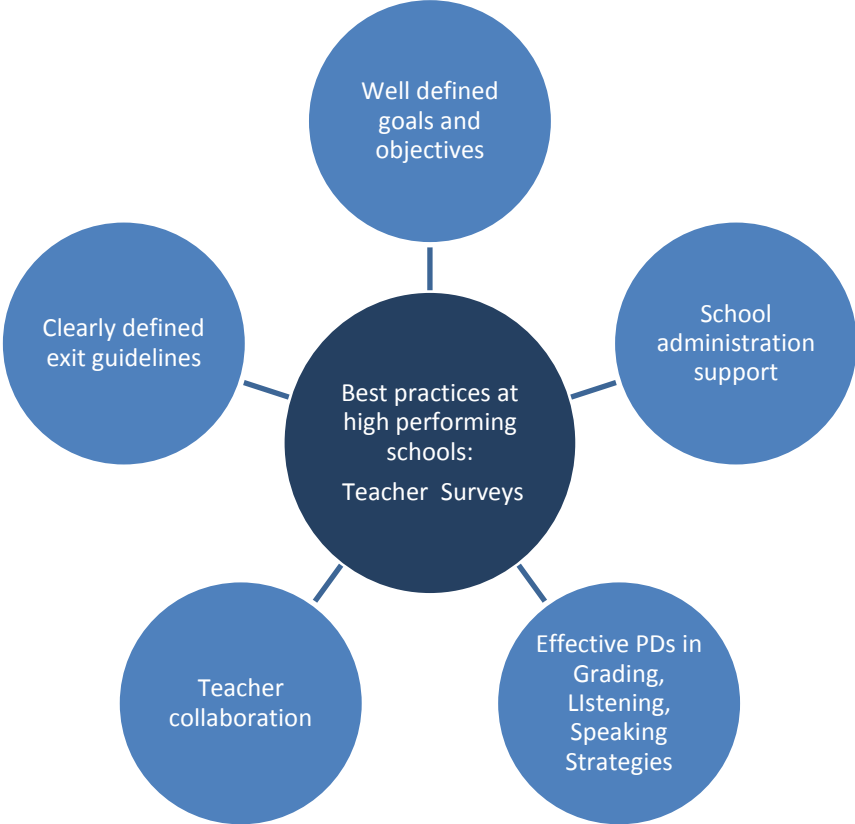
- More time for teacher collaboration
- Provide on-site or on-line REACH (Respecting Ethnic and Cultural Heritage) Training
- Prioritize co-teaching staff development
- Integrate technology into the curriculum for ELL students

Related to the issue of technology, one teacher described how his experiences using technology in a science class enhanced his ability to effectively instruct and assess the learning outcomes of ELL students:

“I know from teaching science to ELLs that there are online resources...that allow these students to interact with what would otherwise be an overwhelming discussion in a spoken language lesson. In addition, I had wonderful experiences of having a student who barely spoke English using complicated 3D modeling programs, which allowed me to assess his actual levels of comprehension way beyond a written pencil and paper test. In short, the use of thoughtful, well researched and quality designed technology-based instruction is crucial to the success of these students. From my perspective I just never had enough time to make it as good as it could have been.....maybe next year if I am lucky enough to collaborate with ELL teachers again.”

Overall, the findings from the teacher surveys can be used to extrapolate best practices for ELL student instruction. Figure 10 captures teachers’ perceptions of best practices in the classroom as gleaned from the teacher surveys.

Figure 10. Best practices extrapolated from Teacher Surveys



C. Multilingual Manager Interviews: To what extent do ESOL programs at high performing schools serve ELL students' needs?

In May 2014, ORE researchers met with the OMCP staff to share the results from the longitudinal analysis of ACCESS data (see Strategy 1). To further uncover best practices at high performing schools—McCall, Bali, Woodrow Wilson, and Southwark—four Multilingual Managers who provide ESOL program support to the aforementioned schools took part in in-depth, structured interviews. Multilingual Managers work in collaboration with schools and District staff to support the academic achievement of ELL students. Their tasks include the following:

- 1) Ensuring proper policies and practices are employed in each school in compliance with state and federal regulations,
- 2) Implementing professional development for all school and central personnel in meeting the needs of ELLs,
- 3) Ensuring consistency of practice and aligning ESOL and bilingual instruction to research-based methodologies that result in full access of ELLs to the District's core curriculum and all educational opportunities, and
- 4) Ensuring parental and community engagement in the educational access and attainment of ELLs.

The structured interviews with Multilingual Managers were conducted using a standard set of questions:²⁴

1. **Support Provided:** *Please rate the level of support that you provide this school. Briefly describe the type of support that you provide for this school.*
2. **ELL Program and Training/Professional Development in ELL instruction:** *Describe the program for ELL students in this school? How do ELL students receive services? Who is providing content instruction for ELL students? What type of training do the instructors have in ELL instruction? To what extent are teachers attending training/PD about ELL instruction?*
3. **Strengths of the Program:** *In your opinion, how effective is the program(s) at this school for ELLs? Please rate the effectiveness. What do you see as being the strengths of the program(s) at this school for ELLs? What are the 'best practices' at this school that you would recommend replicating in others schools?*
4. **Areas for Improvement:** *Describe 2 or 3 areas of improvement for this school? What are the barriers that ELL students at this school currently face?*

Multilingual Managers' responses were sorted into broad coding categories based on the above interview questions. The coding categories and themes were guided by the questions and also emerged iteratively from the data. Data analysis proceeded by moving back and forth between individual cases and a more general view across cases (Maxwell, 2004).²⁵

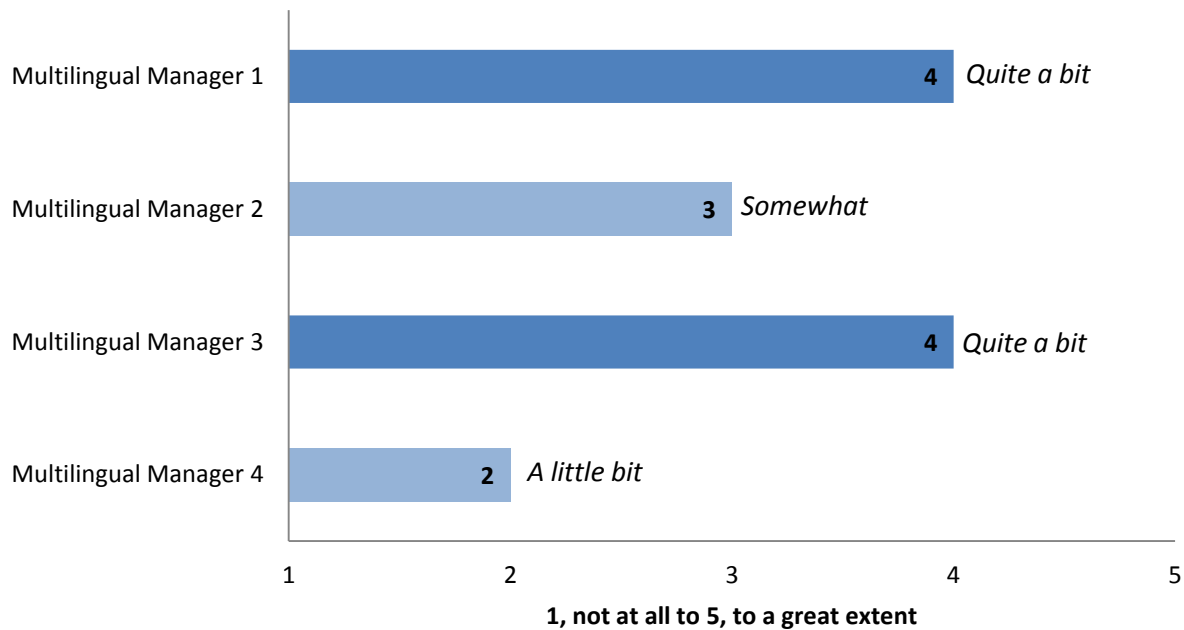
²⁴ A structured interview requires each Multilingual Manager to respond to each question as outlined. Structured interviews are generally utilized to reduce researcher bias. Taylor, S.T. & Bogdan, R. (1998). *Introduction to qualitative research methods 3rd edition*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

²⁵ Maxwell, J.A. (2004). *Qualitative Research Design: An Iterative Approach*. (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

1. Support Provided

When asked to rate the level of ESOL support provided to the schools, Multilingual Managers' responses varied. On a 5-point likert scale (1, *not at all* to 5, *to a great extent*), half of the Multilingual Managers interviewed indicated that they provide *quite a bit* (4) of support; the other half provide some support (3) or a *little bit* (2) of support. See Figure 11.

Figure 11. Level of support provided to schools by Multilingual Managers



When asked to expand upon the type of support that they provide, Multilingual Managers who rated their support as being *quite a bit* said that they offer schools the following:

- **Teacher Supports:** Model lessons for teachers; Discuss core curriculum implementation with teachers; Offer strategies for differentiated instruction.
- **ESOL Team Supports:** Discuss high school selection process; Make data-based decisions regarding ELL student support.
- **Testing Supports:** Provide administrative support for ACCESS testing; Pilot new online version of ACCESS.
- **Principal Supports:** Guide discussion regarding ELL student support, particularly for ELL student with limited formal schooling; Collaborate on rostering decisions.

Table 19 summarizes the level of support provided by Multilingual Managers in various areas. The results suggest that, across all managers, a high level of support is provided to schools in the form of 1) conferencing/meeting with principals and teachers and 2) supporting rostering.

Table 19. Level of support provided by Multilingual Managers in specific areas

(sorted highest to lowest)	Mean	Not at all (1)	A little bit (2)	Moderately (3)	Quite a bit (4)	Very much (5)
Meeting with Principals	3.75	--	25%	--	50%	25%
Support with Rostering	3.67	--	--	33%	67%	--
Meeting with Teachers	3.50	--	25%	--	75%	--
Facilitating Teacher PDs	3.50	--	25%	25%	25%	25%
HS Application	3.25	--	--	75%	25%	--
Classroom Visit/Observations	3.25	--	25%	25%	50%	--
Instructional Decision	3.00	--	33%	33%	33%	--
Student Meetings	2.25	25%	50%	--	25%	--

Note. Highest percentages are highlighted in grey. n=4

2. ELL Program and Training/Professional Development

When asked to describe the ESOL program, all Multilingual Managers indicated that ELL students received services tailored to their level of English proficiency. For example, for students who are at ‘entering’ and ‘beginning’ levels of language proficiency, ESOL teachers conduct ‘pull outs’ and utilize the REACH curriculum. For students at higher levels of language proficiency (e.g., students who are ‘developing’ or ‘expanding’), push-ins are used, particularly when there are cohorts of students in a classroom. It was noted by two Multilingual Managers that push-ins are less likely to be utilized due to limited ESOL personnel and lack of observed efficacy. For instance, one Multilingual Manager described how she discussed the issue of push-ins with the principal:

“Until this year, the ESOL teachers have done much more push-in instruction, but the principal and I agreed that this was not an effective use of ESOL personnel.”

Another Multilingual Manager explained that push-ins were not as commonly used due to the following reasons: (1) Classroom assistants who are proficient in various languages (e.g., Russian) provide support for students in the classroom, (2) Many content area teachers have taken advantage of the ELL certificate and are able to provide in-class support, (3) Several sheltered classrooms (i.e. a class with only ELLs) have been created to support a large number of ELL students in a particular grade level, and (4) Principal(s) ensures that all teachers gain the necessary skill set to serve their ELL populations. Related to the fourth reason described above, several managers noted that the program for ELL students is supported by “a proactive principal and staff” who are committed to obtaining the necessary training to address ELL students’ needs.

When asked to describe the type of training instructors at schools have in ELL instruction, most Multilingual Managers indicated that the instructors “take advantage” of free ESOL certificate courses provided through Penn State University and content training provided throughout the year at the District level and at the school level. One Multilingual Manager suggested that, in addition to more formal trainings, instructors are also provided with pedagogical supports “on the fly” by the Multilingual Manager herself. These “on the fly” trainings are tailored to “special requests/needs.” For example, the Multilingual Manager explained how a three-part professional development was developed:

“A three-part PD (professional development) was offered at the request of the principal [in response to teachers’ needs]. This training was done off-site in cooperation with special education. Teachers were awarded pay...and materials [were] provided through the office of specialized services.”

Moreover, three out of four Multilingual Managers noted that teacher attendance at training sessions is high. Despite the high turnout, most of the managers said that trainings that are conducted during the school day are more effective than those conducted after-school:

“We have great turnout for PDs...We used to be able to offer PDs during the school day, and this would be a more effective way of working with ELL-friendly teachers...Most teachers are not eager to stay after school.”

Overall, managers noted that ELL-friendly teachers are best supported through onsite training that is tailored to their needs; ESOL teachers, for the most part, are actively engaged in training—particularly when held during school hours—offered through OMCP and other District offices.

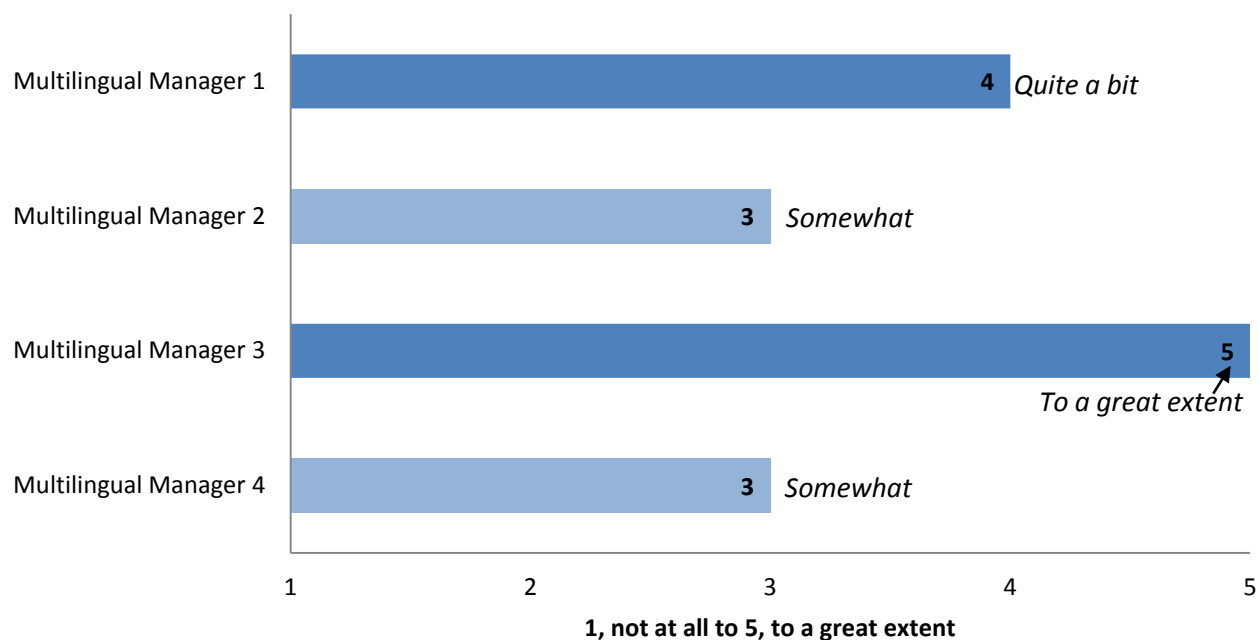
3. Strengths of the Program

When asked to rate the effectiveness of the program (1, *not at all*, to 5, *to a great extent*) at their respective schools, managers provided mixed ratings: half of the managers rated the programs as being effective *quite a bit* (4) or *to a great extent* (5); the other half rated the programs as being *somewhat* (3) effective. Among the former group (i.e. ratings at or above 4), managers praised the programs as providing both rigorous academics and a warm, welcoming environment for ELL students. One Multilingual Manager cogently captured the strengths of the school as follows:

“This school is overall a very strong school with rigorous academics, a remarkable level of acceptance/tolerance for students from diverse backgrounds, high teacher and parent expectations, many enrichment programs by community partners, a very engaged principal, and an orderly and businesslike learning environment.”

Another manager justified her high ratings of the program by pointing out the effective pedagogical approaches that teachers utilize in their classrooms. She recounted that teachers are able to effectively differentiate instruction to students by providing supplemental materials such as study guides and graphic organizers that are tailored to students’ needs. Likewise, teachers were described as using oral scaffolds, repetition, visual and oral sentence frames, and clear objectives. Teachers also were effective at integrating whole group and small group discussions to provide students with an opportunity to “dialogue in the content area classes.”

Figure 12. Effectiveness of Program



Among the two managers who rated the programs as being *somewhat* (3) effective, both interviewees commended the schools for creating a “warm and inviting environment” where ELL students and their parents are supported by staff at multiple levels. For example, one manager described the supportive milieu at one school as follows:

“There is bilingual support starting at the front door and in the main office. Teachers and [the principal] extend themselves with parents to share positive comments and to be culturally sensitive. Efforts are also made to involve parents when students fall behind. There is a warm and welcoming feeling in all classrooms visited.”

When asked to explain any school-related issues that prevented them from rating the program higher than a ‘3’ on a 5-point scale (1, *not at all*, to 5, *to a great extent*), the managers discussed concerns regarding 8th grade recommendations for high schools and lax instructional practices towards the end of the school year. Related to 8th grade recommendations, one manager indicated that “few letters of recommendation are sent out” and the high school essays are generally “weak;” she notes that this issue is prevalent across the district and is, thus, not unique to this specific school. Related to lax instructional practices, one manager described how the use of ESOL-related pedagogical techniques tappers off following standardized testing:

“The visual scaffolds, such as word walls and sentence frames [were in use] during the fall and winter months, but after PSSA and Keystone administration, [they] were hardly observable despite the fact that an entire month of instruction was left on the calendar.”

The manager goes on to add that maintaining a high quality of academic standards throughout the school year would greatly improve the effectiveness of the program for ELL students as they would be exposed to more instructional time.

Table 20 summarizes the ‘best practices’ reported by Multilingual Managers that are currently taking place at the high performing schools—McCall, Southwark, Baldi, and Woodrow Wilson. Specifically, managers were asked to describe best practices at the above-mentioned schools that they would recommend replicating in other schools. For example, all managers agreed that the ESOL programs are strongly supported by the principal and administrative staff at the schools. In practice, the principal at each school sets high standards of practice by clearly articulating goals and benchmarks to hold teachers and students accountable. All managers recommended replicating this practice across all schools.

Table 20. Best practices described by Multilingual Managers

	Best practices	Implementation	Evident at schools
<i>Administrator Support</i>	Regular staff meetings	Principal holds monthly/quarterly meetings with staff, including Multilingual Manager, to review cases, policies, and procedures	● ● ● ○
	High standards of practice and outcomes	Principal clearly articulates goals and benchmarks to hold teachers and students accountable	● ● ● ●
	General advocacy for ELL program	Principal considers it to be an honor to have ESOL friendly courses and publically praises and commends ESOL-friendly teachers	● ● ● ○
<i>Literacy Emphasis</i>	Focus on academic literacy	Every classroom emphasizes writing, reading, and vocabulary development	● ● ● ●
	Book clubs	Students participate in in-class and after-school literary discussions	● ● ○ ○
<i>Pedagogical approaches</i>	Visual Aids	Many visual aids (e.g. graphs, diagrams, videos) are used to illustrate concepts	● ● ● ●
	Project based learning	Students explore real-world problems and investigate issues that are personally meaningful	● ● ○ ○
<i>Differentiated Instruction</i>	Grouping	ELL students with limited English proficiency are grouped with more proficient ELL students who speak the same home language.	● ● ○ ○
	Data-driven instructional supports	Staff regularly review student data (e.g., ACCESS results, classroom grades, classroom assignments) and modify individualized learning plans accordingly	● ● ● ●
	Co-teaching and collaboration	Lessons are shared electronically with ESOL teachers; ESOL teachers provide suggestions to content area teachers and scaffolded supports are shared	● ● ● ○
<i>Additional Student Supports</i>	After-school programs	Many ELL students receive after-school homework help or participate in an after-school program	● ● ○ ○
<i>Climate</i>	Low staff turnover	There is continuity in vision and practice due to stable leadership and teaching staff	● ● ● ○

Note. Circles denote the number of high performing schools that were reported by Multilingual Managers as implementing best practices. Multilingual Managers were asked to describe best practices at high performing schools that they would recommend replicating in other schools.

4. Areas for Improvement

When asked to describe two or three areas in need of improvement for their schools, most Multilingual Managers said that the lack of common planning time in 2013-2014 has been a “significant barrier” and needs to be remedied. That is, without common planning time, ESOL teachers have limited time to collaborate with content area teachers in order to offer supports to achieve the maximum outcomes for ELL students. The lack of common planning time also limited opportunities for informal conversations among teachers. One manager summarized the importance of common planning time as follows:

“Teachers need time...to collaborate during the school day. They need time to share interventions. They need time to meet to discuss lesson plans. Common planning time is critical.”

In addition to advocating for more common planning time, the managers also emphasized the need for more technology in order to support the growing paradigm shift towards project-based learning. That is, students need access to technology (e.g., Chromebooks) that will enable them to research real world problems and collaborate with other students in a “meaningful and structured” online environment. Likewise, access to technology would provide teachers with yet another avenue to “reach” ELL students. For instance, online videos and tutorials could further differentiate instruction to ELL students.

Moreover, two out of four managers agreed that the use of visual supports (e.g., sentence frames, word walls) for vocabulary development can be strengthened or improved, particularly during the last few months of the academic year (e.g. May, June) when “instructional fatigue” sets in.

Importantly, one manager lamented the fact that despite the language proficiency gains and high academic standards, most 8th grade ELL students do not “understand the importance of attending a selective high school and going on to college.” She explains that the familial expectation among most ELL students at her school is to support the family business (e.g. restaurant, corner market) upon graduation from high school. Because of this cultural norm, she describes the impact on ELL students as follows:

“Because I see some of the graduates from [*name of high performing school*], I see the effects of this lack of forward thinking by the time these students reach high school. [When they get to high school], they disengage from school completely. Many of the [ELL students] are required to work in family businesses after school [which diminishes their ability to] complete homework or get adequate sleep.”

Emphasizing the importance of high school and college may be an area for future improvement. Likewise, providing additional supports (e.g. letters of recommendation; essay writing) to ensure that ELL students successfully transition to selective high schools may be needed. Future evaluation efforts should explore best practices in transitioning to high school and college among ELL students.

Conclusions

In an effort to extrapolate best practices for ELL students at the high performing schools—Baldi, Woodrow Wilson, McCall, Southwark—data from classroom observations, teacher surveys, and Multilingual Manager interviews were triangulated to reveal several overarching themes. That is, the following practices were common at the high performing schools:

- *Warm, inviting Climate*- Teachers at high performing schools utilize positive feedback, engage all students in one-on-one and whole-class discussions, encourage humor and creativity, and provide psychosocial encouragement (e.g., “You can do it.”).
- *Differentiated Instruction*- ELL students with limited English proficiency are paired with more proficient ELL students who speak the same home language. Teachers utilize visual tools such as films, maps, charts and SMARTBoards.
- *Clear Objectives*-ESOL programs have well defined goals and objectives.
- *Teacher Collaboration and PDs*- Teachers actively participate in trainings related to ESOL strategies (e.g., scaffolding), differentiating instruction, and assessments and ELL modifications. Teachers also engage in informal collaborations with one another.
- *Administrator Support*- Staff meetings are frequently held by the principal; the principal articulates high standards of practice by setting goals and benchmarks.
- *Student and Teacher Engagement*- ELL students receive after-school homework help or participate in an after-school program. Likewise, there is little staff turnover as teachers and principals are satisfied with the school environment and feel prepared to effectively teach the ELL students in their classes.

In addition to best practices, the classroom observations, teacher surveys, and interviews revealed the following suggestions to further maximize ELL students’ outcomes:

- Allocate more time for teacher collaboration and common planning.
- Provide more technology to support project-based learning and to enhance differentiated instruction (i.e. access to online videos and tutorials).
- Prioritize co-teaching staff development.
- Ensure that teachers use pedagogical skills and tools (e.g., sentence frames, word walls) throughout the academic year.
- Support ELL students as they transition to selective high schools and underscore the importance of matriculating to college.

As a next step, the best practices uncovered in this report should be disseminated to all schools with a relatively large population of ELL students. Multilingual Managers should be briefed on best practices and, in turn, relay the information to principals through discussions or briefs. The ESOL staff should also discuss strategies to address the challenges and impediments that high performing schools have encountered in 2013-2014.

Appendix A. Teacher Survey Results, May/June 2014

Table 21. Background Information

What classes do you teach? (Check all that apply)		
	n	%
ESOL	16	53%
Math	11	37%
English	8	27%
Science	10	33%
Social Studies	12	40%
Art	0	0%
Music	1	3%
Total	30	

Note. Highest n and percentage are highlighted in green.

Do you have an ESOL program specialist certification?		
	n	%
Yes	19	63%
No	10	33%
Currently Pursuing	1	3%
Total	30	100%

Note. Highest n and percentage are highlighted in green.

Table 22. Teaching Models

What models do you use when teaching ELL students? (Check all that apply)		
	n	%
Pull-out ESOL instruction	23	77%
Push-in ESOL instruction	22	73%
Co-teaching	12	40%
Bilingual ed	5	17%
Sheltered instruction/ESOL friendly	3	10%
Other (please specify)	2	7%
Total	30	

Note. Highest n and percentage are highlighted in green.

Table 23. Prepared to effectively teach ELL students

	n	Mean	Assessment ¹	Not at all (1)	To a small extent (2)	To a moderate extent (3)	To a large extent (4)
To what extent do you feel prepared to effectively teach the ELL students in your classes?	30	3.60	Good 😊	0%	3%	33%	63%

¹Assessment= Above 3.2=Good; 2.8 to 3.2= Attention; Below 2.8=Action

Table 24. ESOL program perspectives

To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the ESOL program in your school?	n	Mean	Assessment ¹	Not at all (1)	To a small extent (2)	To a moderate extent (3)	To a large extent (4)
The ESOL program at my school has well defined goals and objectives .	29	3.55	Good 😊	0%	7%	31%	62%
The ESOL program at my school has clear rules and consistent processes in place.	29	3.28	Good 😊	7%	14%	24%	55%
The ESOL program at my school is well supported by the school administration .	29	3.66	Good 😊	0%	3%	28%	69%
The ESOL program at my school is well supported by the Office of Multilingual Curriculum and Programs .	29	3.34	Good 😊	3%	3%	48%	45%
Students are appropriately placed in the ESOL classes.	28	3.29	Good 😊	4%	14%	32%	50%
My school follows clearly defined exit guidelines for the ESOL program.	29	3.69	Good 😊	0%	3%	24%	72%

¹Assessment= Above 3.2=Good; 2.8 to 3.2= Attention; Below 2.8=Action

Table 25. Core curriculum and materials

	n	Mean	Assessment ¹	Not at all (1)	To a small extent (2)	To a moderate extent (3)	To a large extent (4)
To what extent are you following the core curriculum with your ELL students?	29	3.48	Good 😊	3%	7%	28%	62%
To what extent do you feel that the available curricula and materials are appropriate and engaging for the ELL students in your classes?	29	2.83	Attention ✓	7%	24%	48%	21%

¹Assessment= Above 3.2=Good; 2.8 to 3.2= Attention; Below 2.8=Action

Table 26. Data sources and test accommodations

To what extent do you use data from each of the following sources to plan for instruction for your ELL students?	n	Mean	Assessment ¹	Not at all (1)	To a small extent (2)	To a moderate extent (3)	To a large extent (4)
W-APT	23	2.87	Attention ✓	26%	0%	35%	39%
ACCESS	28	3.32	Good 😊	7%	4%	39%	50%
PSSA	29	3.00	Attention ✓	3%	31%	28%	38%
Pre-made Formative assessments	26	2.81	Attention ✓	4%	27%	54%	15%
Self-made Formative assessments	29	3.48	Good 😊	0%	3%	45%	52%
Student portfolio	27	3.15	Attention ✓	7%	4%	56%	33%
To what extent are you familiar with test accommodations for ELL students?	30	3.83	Good 😊	0%	0%	17%	83%

¹Assessment= Above 3.2=Good; 2.8 to 3.2= Attention; Below 2.8=Action

Table 27. Learning areas

To what extent do you feel that ELL students in your classes are learning English in the following areas:	n	Mean	Assessment ¹	Not at all (1)	To a small extent (2)	To a moderate extent (3)	To a large extent (4)
Writing	30	3.53	Good 😊	0%	7%	33%	60%
Listening	30	3.77	Good 😊	0%	3%	17%	80%
Reading	30	3.67	Good 😊	0%	7%	20%	73%
Speaking	30	3.60	Good 😊	0%	10%	20%	70%
Comprehension	30	3.70	Good 😊	0%	0%	30%	70%

¹Assessment= Above 3.2=Good; 2.8 to 3.2= Attention; Below 2.8=Action

Table 28. PD impact

If you participated in the following professional developments (PDs), how did they impact your classroom?	n	Mean	Assessment ¹	No impact (1)	Slight impact (2)	Moderate impact (3)	Major impact (4)
Can Do Descriptors	18	3.28	Good 😊	0%	22%	28%	50%
Assessments and ELL modifications	22	3.27	Good 😊	0%	18%	36%	45%
Co-Teaching	12	2.42	Action !	33%	17%	25%	25%
Collaborative Instruction	14	2.71	Action !	14%	29%	29%	29%
Grading guidelines	15	3.80	Good 😊	0%	0%	20%	80%
Differentiating Instruction	21	3.38	Good 😊	0%	19%	24%	57%
ESOL strategies (e.g., scaffolding, differentiation, use of visual tools, Student conversation/engagement)	22	3.41	Good 😊	0%	14%	32%	55%
SIOP - Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol	9	1.89	Action !	67%	0%	11%	22%
Writing Strategies	18	3.39	Good 😊	0%	17%	28%	56%
Vocabulary Strategies	19	3.21	Good 😊	0%	32%	16%	53%
Listening Strategies	13	3.46	Good 😊	0%	23%	8%	69%
Speaking Strategies	14	3.43	Good 😊	0%	21%	14%	64%
Support for HS application/ Le Gare -	11	2.64	Action !	36%	9%	9%	45%
RTII for ELLs	8	2.13	Action !	38%	25%	25%	13%

¹Assessment= Above 3.2=Good; 2.8 to 3.2= Attention; Below 2.8=Action

Table 29. Frequency of collaboration

How often, if at all, do you collaborate with other teacher(s) around ELL students and instruction using the following avenues?	n	Never	A few times a year	Once a month	2-3 times a month	Weekly or more
Grade-level meetings	29	7%	24%	17%	21%	31%
Departmental meetings	28	25%	36%	25%	7%	7%
During common planning time	28	21%	25%	14%	29%	11%
Informally	30	0%	13%	7%	3%	77%
Co-teaching	28	43%	4%	11%	7%	36%
Technology (chat, e-mail, etc.)	29	0%	21%	24%	17%	38%

Note. Highest percentages are highlighted in green.

Table 30. Satisfaction with collaboration

How satisfied are you with your collaboration with other teacher(s)?	n	Mean	Assessment ¹	Not at all (1)	Somewhat (2)	Satisfied (3)	Very satisfied (4)
	30	2.97	Attention ✓	3%	27%	40%	30%

¹Assessment= Above 3.2=Good; 2.8 to 3.2= Attention; Below 2.8=Action

Table 31. Important strategies

What do you think are the most important instructional strategies that content teachers working with ELL students should learn?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a communicative classroom • Provide comprehensible input; make lessons as visual as possible; activate prior knowledge; provide direct instruction for new vocabulary including pronunciation; post key concepts; work in collaborative learning groups with mixed language abilities; provide modified and differentiated assessments for ELL students. • For the low level ESOL students, focus on terms, names and basic concepts. • How to better accommodate them; what modifications are necessary; better understanding of the can-do descriptors • Providing comprehensible input and academic vocabulary strategies • Modify, modify, modify. Some teachers think that means "dumbing down" any assignment. It just means making a rubric specific to that assignment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teachers need to be able to look at content material that is many grade levels above the reading comprehension of their ESOL students and know how to make it somewhat comprehensible. They need to know how to break it down into its most basic parts and build up. This may seem obvious, but it takes more than an occasional workshop to effectively master this strategy. • Learn to differentiate and not accommodate their lessons for ELL students. • Teachers should learn how to bridge the gap between social language and academic language. • Oral speaking, small group communication • Better study habits; test-taking strategies since they take so many vocabulary tests
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Table 32. Challenges or obstacles

What are the most important challenges or obstacles that you and/or other teachers at your school have experienced when teaching ELL students?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The large number of [ELL students] in each classroom, as well as the different languages. • Some students lack motivation and effort. Poor background knowledge; poor language skills in native language. • Accommodating the ELL students. Differentiating their instruction and providing support to them. • The lack of accommodations from non-ESOL teachers for ESOL students, especially in math. The assumption that math is a universal language is taken and the ESOL students should know how to do it on grade level. Can-do descriptors and grading guidelines are distributed numerous times and support is offered in helping accommodate for ELLs but it's just not there. • When you first get a student that has almost no English and their particular language is not spoken by other students in the room that is a very difficult couple of months. However, helping their language to emerge from seemingly nothing to words and then full sentences is a really delightful experience. ESOL students are a particularly sensitive population and so who exactly is in their classroom in terms of behavior is crucial. I strongly believe we need to make every effort we can to shelter these children from the disruptive and sometimes threatening behaviors that are common in classrooms. That first year is so delicate and it sets the stage for the rest of their experience. The class sizes should be kept small if possible but certainly stocked with the best examples of behavior. • Students need access to technology to support vocabulary development (Google images, Google translate) and research (essays, topical research programs.) I would like more input into choosing the appropriate materials for my students. I was told to use the Inside series and it was not effective for my students. It was also extremely frustrating for my low level 3 students to comprehend the Elements of Literature series and I would have preferred to read something that was more appropriate for their reading level and then scaffold them up. • Finding appropriate materials. • The lack of accommodations and modifications made for ELL students from some teachers (especially beginners). Even when the teachers have been given the can-do descriptors and grading guidelines and been offered support in modifying and accommodating the students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding the time to collaborate ...most teachers are very unfamiliar with accommodations for ESOL students. They have been trained with a few staff developments, but they really need an ESOL teacher in the room to show what it looks like in a real classroom setting. • Speaking skills in the upper grades. • In need of a variety of reading materials to differentiate instructions for different levels of ELL students. • Some teachers still confuse social language skills with academic language and do not make accommodations. • I think technology. We are limited with the use of it; more technology-based programs would be helpful. • Time constraints and scheduling. • Students think they can claim their ELL status as a reason to not complete modified projects (even though they are ELL in EH40 status only). Some students choose to be selective mutes in the classroom; when they are with friends, it's another story. We are bending over backwards for students who are not putting in any effort, which is frustrating to all who teach them. • Finding appropriate materials in the classroom, especially for science and social studies. Leveled readers for these topics would help. • Getting students to apply their academic knowledge. Answering higher order thinking questions. • We'd like more common planning time. • Writing. • Inappropriate placement of students in classes. Not given input opportunity for placement. Lack of space in classes. Too large numbers of levels 1 & 2 students in one class (up to 20!). • Improving speaking skills. • Once students are considered "too high" for pull out services, they are still a few years below grade level and it is a struggle for them. • Inappropriate placing of students in classrooms; no input prior to placing; lack of paperwork or slowness of receiving paperwork or WAP-T results
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