

District 97's English as a Second Language (ESL) Program

This is a Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI) following the Illinois State Board of Education guidelines. The ESL program has an average yearly enrollment of about 100 students from over 20 different countries. There is no concentration or majority from any one language group. These students are enrolled in District 97's ten schools: eight K-5 schools and two middle schools.

The district employs three full-time ESL teachers, who service all ten schools, offering a Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI) to Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. They work collaboratively to assure the success of the students in the program by developing curriculum and monitoring the overall TPI program. Each year ESL teachers attend relevant workshops, seminars, classes, and conferences in order to continue their professional development. In addition, they work with classroom and special area teachers, administrators, and parents to fully integrate LEP students into the school community.

ESL Program Objectives

- To teach the English language, including oral language (receptive and expressive), literacy (reading/writing), and skills for content area achievement, to enable the student to function effectively in the school community.
- To facilitate the process of acculturation and promote growth in self-esteem.
- To aid the classroom teacher in assessing the student's ability, modifying the instructional approach, planning classroom activities, issuing progress reports, and participating in parent-teacher conferences.

Placement Procedures for English Language Learners (ELLs)

1. Parents or legal guardians of all District 97 students will fill out a Home Language Survey during initial registration.
2. All Home Language Surveys will be sent to school secretaries who will make copies and give them to the ESL teachers.
3. Depending on the responses to the questions on the Home Language Survey, the ESL teacher may need to screen a student's English proficiency to determine if he/she is limited English proficient and eligible for ESL services.
4. If a student is eligible for ESL services, the family and the teacher will be informed.
5. The principal will assign grade placement, taking into consideration the ESL teacher's recommendation.
6. The length and frequency of ESL sessions is based on a student's English proficiency level.

Exit Policy

In keeping with the Illinois State Guidelines, each student's English language proficiency will be assessed annually using the IL Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English from State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS) test, which usually takes place in January/February. Students will automatically exit the ESL program when the Illinois State Board of Education deems them proficient enough in English to function effectively in their classrooms. This is determined through several sections of the ACCESS test scores (literacy and composite proficiency levels).

Once the student is exited, his/her progress will continue to be monitored by the ESL teacher for at least two years. The ESL cumulative record will be placed in the student's temporary file. In this way, the classroom teacher will be aware that a student has been an ESL student and will know to call upon the ESL teacher should the need arise.