

Collaborative Evaluation of Arlington Public Schools English Learner Programs

Quality Teaching for English Learners, WestEd

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Executive Summary

Arlington Public Schools partnered with the Quality Teaching for English Learners Initiative at WestEd to conduct a collaborative evaluation of programs and services for current and former English Learners. The district recognizes the urgent need to improve these programs and services, due to the persistent differences in achievement outcomes for English Learners as compared to non-English Learners on state English, Math, and Science Standards of Learning tests (Virginia Department of Education, 2019) and the increasing demands placed on graduates by an ever-changing society. English Learners need high-quality opportunities to learn challenging content in order to fully realize their immense potential and to become full participants in the community, in college, and throughout their careers.

The collaborative process for the evaluation engaged a team of district teachers, administrators and coaches in a review of educational opportunities for English Learners in Arlington Public Schools. The collaborative effort was guided by five evaluation questions:

1. How effectively does **classroom instruction** challenge and support English Learners?
2. How are English Learners making **progress** in terms of language and academic development?
3. How well do school and district structures for **collaboration and professional learning** expand the expertise of educators to teach English Learners?
4. How successful are school and district efforts to **engage parents** of English Learners and make English Learners feel welcome?
5. How well do district **policies and programs** serve diverse subgroups of English Learners?

Data collected by WestEd staff and district teams for this evaluation took place during the 2018–2019 academic year and included: classroom observations; student shadowing; focus groups with students, parents, teachers, and district staff; interviews with administrators and district staff; surveys of students, teachers, administrators, and bilingual family liaisons; and review of district policies and program documents.

Additional analyses on student outcomes were made possible by using extant administrative data.

Providing English Learners with rigorous opportunities to engage with deep subject area content in a language they are still developing is the responsibility of all teachers (Valdés, Kibler, & Walqui, 2014) and lies at the center of this report’s findings. Other factors—such as community, parent, and student engagement—can support sustained efforts to improve all elements of the system, but without quality instruction, no education system will fulfill the promise of its students.

Key findings of the collaborative evaluation include the following:

1. Learning Opportunities for English Learners

Among the 72 English Learner classrooms that we observed, the collaborative team found:

- Caring and talented professionals throughout the district—both in the classroom and in positions of leadership.
- Improved supports for dually identified students (e.g., English Learner students with a 504 Plan or IEP). EL Resource Specialists are now assigned to every school to monitor and oversee services for English Learners with disabilities.
- Appropriate, grade level texts were used in a large majority of classrooms, but there were limited opportunities to engage English Learners¹ in rigorous academic activity to adequately prepare them for college and career. English Learners observed did not regularly engage in generative disciplinary practices and in assignments that required higher level thinking (For a more complete definition of academic rigor, see pp. 36-37).
- Few and inconsistent opportunities for English Learners to engage in quality interactions with their peers and teachers (i.e., sustained opportunities to talk about disciplinary ideas that help them develop understanding and language proficiency).

¹ The term “English Learner” (EL) is used throughout this report to reflect the current name used by the Arlington Public Schools District office. This term replaces the terms ESOL and/or HILT that had been used by APS at the time of data collection when referring to programs, courses, and personnel serving English Learners.

- Limited opportunities presented to English Learners to engage in adequate language practice and explicitly attend to language (i.e., how language works, connections to meaning, analyzing author’s choices).

2. English Learner Outcomes and Progress in Language and Academic Achievement

- English Learners in Arlington Public Schools outperform English Learners in other parts of the state on state content assessments.
- English Learners who have exited as Proficient in more recent school years have spent less time identified as English Learners than in previous years.
- Within recent cohorts of Kindergarten English Learners, over three quarters attain *Reaching* by the end of fifth grade. Among those students who remain English Learners, few attain *Reaching* during the middle school years. This is consistent with national patterns of English Learner performance.
- Although a small percentage of current high school English Learners take advanced courses, the percentage of former English Learners who take advanced courses is comparable to students who were never classified as English Learners.
- Among cohorts of graduating students, many English Learners who are at lower proficiency levels are dually identified as special education and they graduate at lower rates. Students who have attained *Reaching* or have been reclassified as *Proficient* graduate at rates comparable to students who have never been English Learners.
- A large percentage (44%) of middle school English Learners have been classified as English Learners for five or more years, and a large percentage (40%) have been English Learners since Kindergarten.
- At the high school level, large percentages of English Learners at different proficiency levels are chronically absent (missing more than 10% of a school year).

3. Professional Learning and Collaboration Opportunities

- EL teachers reported feeling both well-prepared to teach English Learners and well-supported as compared to general education teachers.

- Professional learning opportunities around English Learners are optional for non-EL teachers.
- Educators reported a lack of support for specialists and teachers of non-core subjects (e.g., art, P.E., electives, etc.).
- Teachers and administrators expressed a need for additional professional development on the topic of English Learners.
- Educators reported insufficient time provided for productive collaboration with co-teachers around the education of English Learners.

4. Parental Engagement and School Climate

- Parents of English Learners reported that schools communicated well with them more often than parents of non-English Learner students.
- Parents have high aspirations for their children, wanting them to be able to study at university and have the career of their choice.
- Parents of English Learners were more likely to say that their child's teacher was a good partner than parents of non-English Learners.
- Parents desired improved communication in the areas of program placement, testing, and resources for support.
- Parents of high school English Learners specifically requested more and clearer information about course choices and placement policies.
- Some high school parents expressed concern that teachers are not doing enough to help their students when they struggle.
- Parents of both elementary and secondary English Learners were satisfied with the bilingual parent liaisons who they feel are good at building community within schools.

5. District Programs and Policies for English Learners

- District programs closely follow policies developed by the state of Virginia with regard to instructional time and staffing.
- Efforts to coordinate across programs are better developed at the central level, with some heterogeneity at school sites.

- Bilingual family liaisons provide key support at school sites to connect with students and parents.

Based upon these findings, we advise the district to enact the following recommendations:

- Articulate and communicate an ambitious vision and shared mission for English Learners throughout APS.
 - A vision statement should articulate the educational experiences students need to achieve success in college, career, and life.
 - A mission statement should make clear that the responsibility for educating English Learners is shared by all educators—general education teachers included.
- Offer a required, coherent and sustained series of professional learning opportunities for all educators to strengthen classroom teaching and learning experiences and opportunities for English Learners to achieve the district’s vision. Such professional learning opportunities should develop teachers’ ability to:
 - Design and enact rigorous learning experiences for English Learners in order to develop their content understanding, analysis skills, and language practices.
 - Offer appropriate supports for English Learners to engage in high-challenge work.
 - Create opportunities for English Learners to engage in Quality Interactions—interactions that build on participants’ ideas—in order to promote a deep understanding of concepts.
 - Sustain a purposeful language focus that assists English Learners in developing literacy practices.
- Build on existing positive school climate and caring relationships with English Learner students and their families.
 - Continue to build positive relationships with students and their families so that these relationships are consistently strong across all school sites.

- Educate parents about program options upon students' enrollment and during key transitions.
- Assess students' socioemotional needs at the site level and make recommendations for appropriate interventions.
- Define and operationalize instructional programs and structures to support English Learners.
 - Infuse ELD courses with academic rigor, quality interactions, and a purposeful language focus.
 - Provide English Learners at the intermediate and higher levels of English proficiency the opportunity to learn content alongside English-proficient peers in order for them to benefit from exposure to more native-like language practices.
 - Increase school site coordination and communication among individuals from different departments (e.g., English Learners, Special Ed, Gifted Services) that serve English Learners.

This collaborative evaluation of English Learner Programs in Arlington Public Schools presents a picture of the instructional opportunities offered English Learners and recommendations for improving services to meet the needs of all learners and prepare them for successful futures. We acknowledge the APS educators who initiated and participated in conducting this evaluation—a candid acknowledgment of both the need and desire to make change.

Introduction

Educators in Arlington Public Schools (APS) recognize that in an information society and knowledge economy, all students, especially English Learners, need quality opportunities to learn challenging content in order to fully realize their immense potential and to become active, contributing participants in their community, in college, and in their careers. For this to be possible, students of APS need to graduate with the ability to engage in critical thinking and non-routine reasoning, to collaborate and work with co-workers, to possess intellectual stamina, to communicate in a number of modalities, and to be responsible, participating members of society. In order to gauge whether the learning opportunities students are currently offered prepare them for this future, Arlington Public Schools partnered with the Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL) Initiative at WestEd to conduct a collaborative assessment of the caliber of learning experiences in which English Learners in the schools participate as measured against 21st century needs.

Unlike the more typical external, third-party review of school district programs, the collaborative process enacted for this review fully engaged a group of APS teachers, district administrators, and coaches as central participants in the review process. By engaging in data collection and analysis together, school and district staff collectively defined a vision of quality learning opportunities. Staff then drew on this collective vision, as they jointly observed and agreed upon both what is present and what is missing in the learning opportunities offered to English Learners in APS. This collaborative process fosters a greater understanding of the underlying principles of quality teaching for English Learners and increases the capacity of the staff involved to enact cycles of analysis and improvement beyond the conclusion of the collaborative review. This collaborative process also allows district staff to contextualize recent changes that have taken place, highlighting successes that might not otherwise have been visible to the QTEL team. Another benefit to the collaborative review process is that it allowed us the opportunity to work closely with an outstanding group of knowledgeable, talented, caring, and committed professionals (teachers, coaches, principals, and administrators) whose care and concern for English Learners was truly inspiring.

This report reviews the educational opportunities offered English Learners at APS during the 2018–2019 Academic Year. We begin by describing the current educational context of

English Learners in the United States, then provide a brief discussion of the most recent publicly available demographic data for Virginia and APS. In the following section, we identify the key principles of quality instruction that served as the foci for this collaborative review, after which we present the findings that emerged from the data collected. As the findings will demonstrate, there are some classes in APS in which rigorous, quality learning opportunities for English Learners are present and others in which such opportunities need to be further developed.

This evaluation and report come at a critical time for APS. APS has recently reached a settlement agreement with the Department of Justice’s (DOJ) Civil Rights Division to remedy “several aspects of the District’s program for English Learner students (‘ELs’)” (Settlement Agreement Between the United States and Arlington Public Schools, 2019, p. 2). Although the current report does not document the actions that APS has taken in response to the DOJ settlement, it indicates the degree of importance APS placed upon English Learner programs and services even prior to the DOJ’s investigation. Together, the DOJ settlement and this report present a clear course of action for the future. Given the collaborative design of the current evaluation, APS is well-equipped to exceed standards of compliance issued in the DOJ settlement. If supported with adequate resources, we believe APS is poised to make significant changes internally, while also signaling to other school districts near and far what excellence in English Learner education entails. We fully support APS in their quest to serve as educational models for the nation.

Demographic Overview

Nationally, in the past 20 years, the population of English Learners in public schools has increased by more than 30%, growing from 3.8 million in 2000 to almost 5 million in 2016, or 9.6% of the total student population (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2019a). In the state of Virginia, the English Learner population has grown even faster, nearly tripling from 2000 (36,802) to 2016 (109,104) (NCES, 2019b), an increase that corresponds to the concentration of English Learners more than doubling from 2000 (3.2%) to 2016 (7.8%).

In addition to demographic changes, the United States is also experiencing educational shifts in the way it conceptualizes learning and teaching, with schools being called upon to transform instruction in order to foster the deeper learning that is required for the 21st

century. One outcome of these shifts is the Common Core State Standards Initiative developed in 2010, which seeks to ensure all students graduate high school prepared for “college, career, and life” regardless of their background (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2019). In 2010–2011, Virginia’s Board of Education began a process of adopting and revising their Standards of Learning (SOL), to ensure that the instructional standards implemented in Virginia’s public schools are equal to or surpass those found in the Common Core State Standards. In doing so, Virginia expresses a goal to provide all students an opportunity to meet the new demands of a more globalized, complex world. This process of revising and enhancing standards in Virginia continued in the 2017–2018 school year. These new standards highlight the expectations for what students do with language as they engage in content-area learning. Such expectations are consistent with the understanding among second language educators that, given content- and language-rich learning environments in which meaningful interactions with teachers and peers are fostered, students can both acquire language and use their emerging English to engage in content learning simultaneously (Bunch, Kibler, & Pimentel, 2012; Moschkovich, 2012; Quinn, Lee, & Valdés, 2012; van Lier & Walqui, 2012).

Attention to these standards is paramount given the requirements today’s society places on students after they leave high school. Nonetheless, it is important to note that Virginia’s SOL represent the *minimum* expectations for “what students should know and be able to do at the end of each grade or course” (Virginia Department of Education, 2019). In a rapidly changing 21st century, students must be able to engage in critical thinking and problem solving, to collaborate and be leaders; to display initiative and entrepreneurialism, to engage in effective oral and written communication, and to display agility and adaptability, curiosity and imagination, perseverance and stamina (Mehta & Fine, 2017). Additionally, newly created American jobs increasingly revolve around interactions—exchanges involving complex problem solving, experience, and contextual understanding—that English Learners will enhance through their participation. The generative set of skills and understandings required to succeed in the 21st century require what some call “21st century learning” and “deeper learning” (Heller, Wolfe, & Steinberg, 2017; National Research Council, 2012), and what we refer to as “quality learning” (Walqui & van Lier, 2010)—terms that we use interchangeably throughout this report. Placing deep and quality learning at the center of educational improvement efforts has the potential to create optimal learning contexts for English Learners who are simultaneously developing language and literacy. Furthermore, English Learners bring with them a wide

range of linguistic and cultural resources that position them favorably for the kind of learning advocated for in the 21st century and for the kind of learning that builds their capacity as critical participants and actors of change in our society (Walqui & Bunch, 2019).

Demographic Profile of English Learners in Arlington Public Schools

English Learners have consistently been a large part of the school population of Arlington Public Schools (APS) (e.g., Acosta, Marzucco, Connors, & Rivera, 2012). In the 2018–2019 academic year, about a quarter of students (23%) received EL services at the elementary level, while at the secondary level 13% of students received such services, for a total of 18% of all students in grades K–12 (APS, 2018b). The concentration of English Learners at individual school sites, however, varies widely, with nine elementary schools having a school population that was more than 30% English Learners in the 2018–2019 school year. These English Learners come from diverse linguistic backgrounds, speaking 93 languages other than English (including Spanish, Arabic, Amharic, Mongolian, and Bengali) and representing 130 countries of birth other than the United States. Consistent with the pattern nationwide, most English Learners (65%) were born in the United States (APS, 2018b).

Academic Achievement of English Learners in APS

With the passage of the new federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015, the specific achievement targets for English Learners were changed, with long-term goals set for the 2023-24 school year using the 2015-16 school year as a baseline. Compiled in the below table are indicators specific to English Learners in APS, as monitored by the VDOE and based upon the most recent data available (Table 1).

Indicator	Current Value	Annual Target	Long-Term Goal
Reading Pass Rate	61%	53%	75%
Mathematics Pass Rate	75%	57%	70%
Federal Graduation	54%	65%	84%
Chronic Absenteeism	12%	8%	10%
English Learner Progress	57%	46%	58%

Table 1. Arlington Public Schools ESSA Accountability Targets for English Learners
SOURCE: VDOE

In the area of mathematics pass rate, English Learners in APS have already exceeded the long-term goal as well as the annual target. In other areas, such as English Learner Progress as defined by the WIDA ACCESS English language proficiency exam, English Learners in APS exceed the annual target (46%) and are within one percentage point of the long-term goal (58%). On average, 14% of all English Learners attain proficiency each year. For other areas, such as graduation following the federal definition, however, English Learners are thirty percentage points (54%) from the long-term goal for four-year graduation (84%). Meanwhile, while the reading pass rate for English Learners (61%) exceeds the annual target (53%), it is thirteen percentage points away from the long-term goal (75%). Indeed, when compared to the state as a whole and other large Divisions in the region, APS English Learners compare favorably in recent years on multiple subjects (See Figure x in the outcomes section).

As will be shared in the Findings section of this report, English Learners in Arlington Public Schools outperform their English Learner peers on state content assessments in neighboring Virginia districts. This is a fact that should be acknowledged and celebrated. Nevertheless, it must also be acknowledged that great differences in the achievement of English Learners and non-English learners within the district exist. Recent changes to the Virginia Department of Education's Standards of Learning grade-level and End-of-Course tests have widened the distance between English Learners in Arlington Public Schools and their non-English Learner counterparts. Recent trends have seen an increasing distance over time across the different tested subject areas (see Figures A and B). From 2016–2017 to 2018–2019, the percentage point difference in pass rates has more than doubled in Reading (from 24 to 54) and Writing (from 27 to 60) when English Learners are compared to non-English Learners. Over the same time period, percentage point increases in the difference in pass rates have been smaller in Math (from 19 to 29) and Science (from 30 to 53).

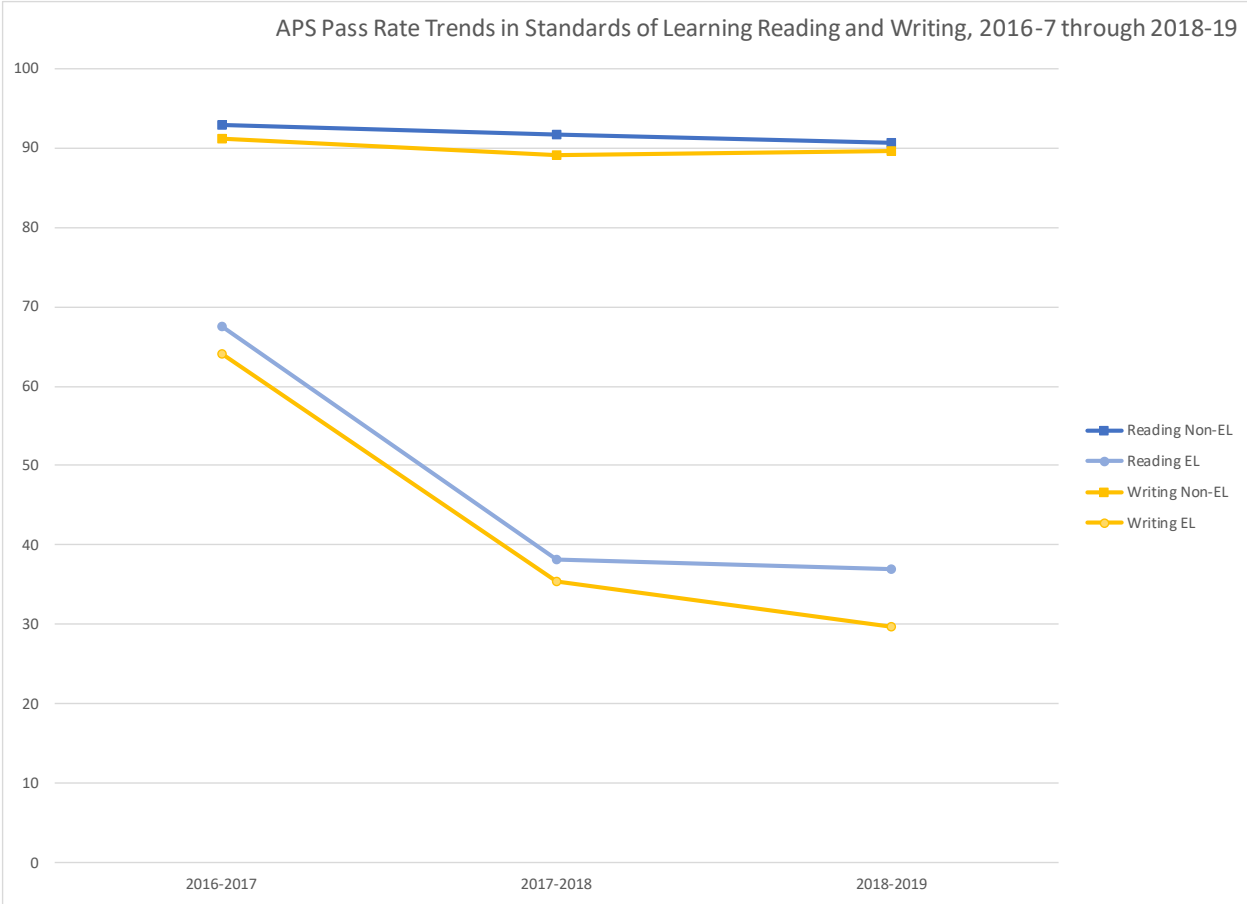


Figure A. APS Pass Rate Trends in Standards of Learning Reading and Writing, 2016–17 through 2018–19

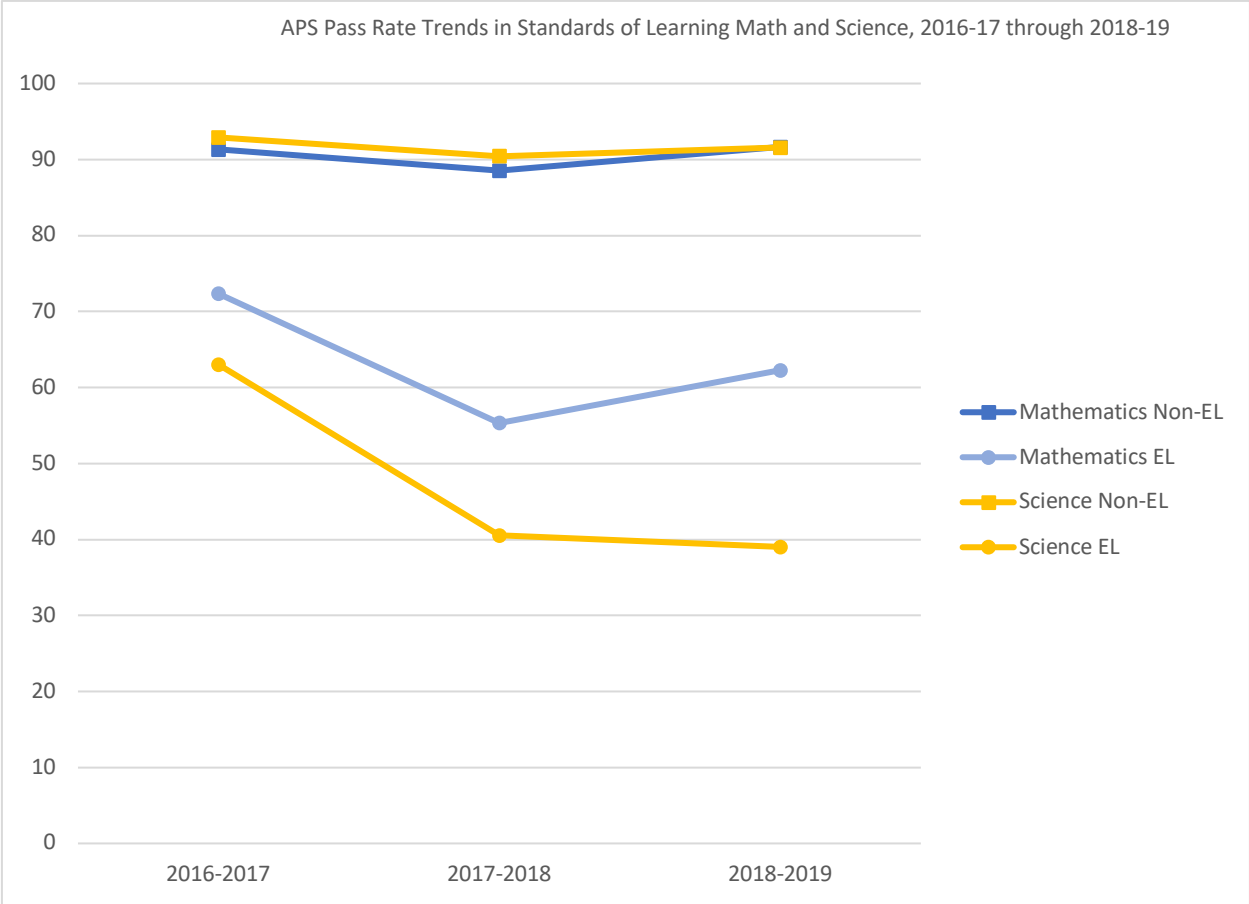


Figure B. APS Pass Rate Trends in Standards of Learning Math and Science, 2016–17 through 2018–19

Within Arlington Public Schools, these differences can be further disaggregated into the proficient and advanced performance levels reported on state tests. When compared to their non-English Learner counterparts, much smaller percentages of English Learners score at the highest, advanced level. This pattern is persistent and deepens across grade levels in math as well as science (Figures C and D). At the high school level, in terms of End-of-Course exams, small percentages of English Learners not exceeding 5% are reaching the highest, advanced proficiency level (Figure E).

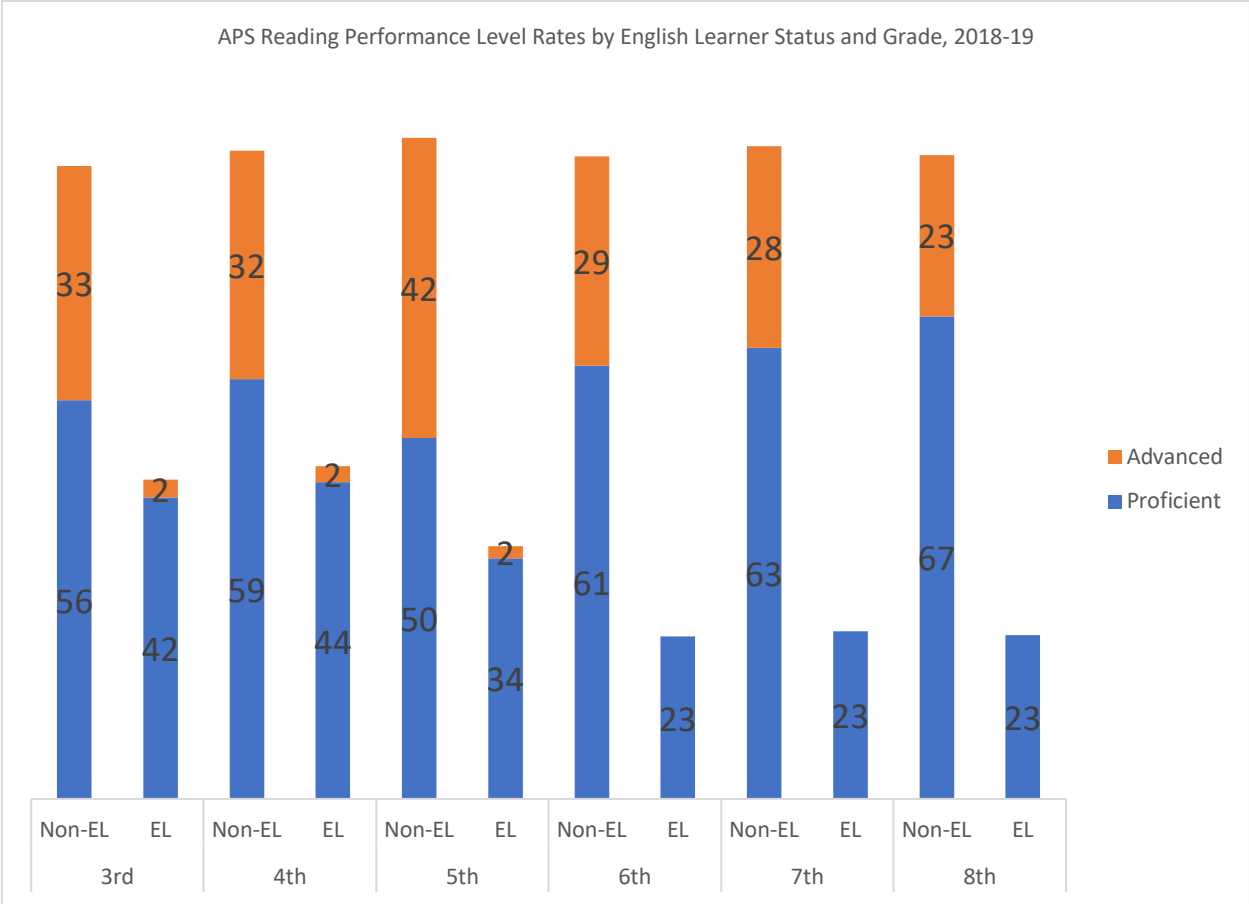


Figure C. APS Reading Performance Level Rates by English Learner Status and Grade, 2018-19

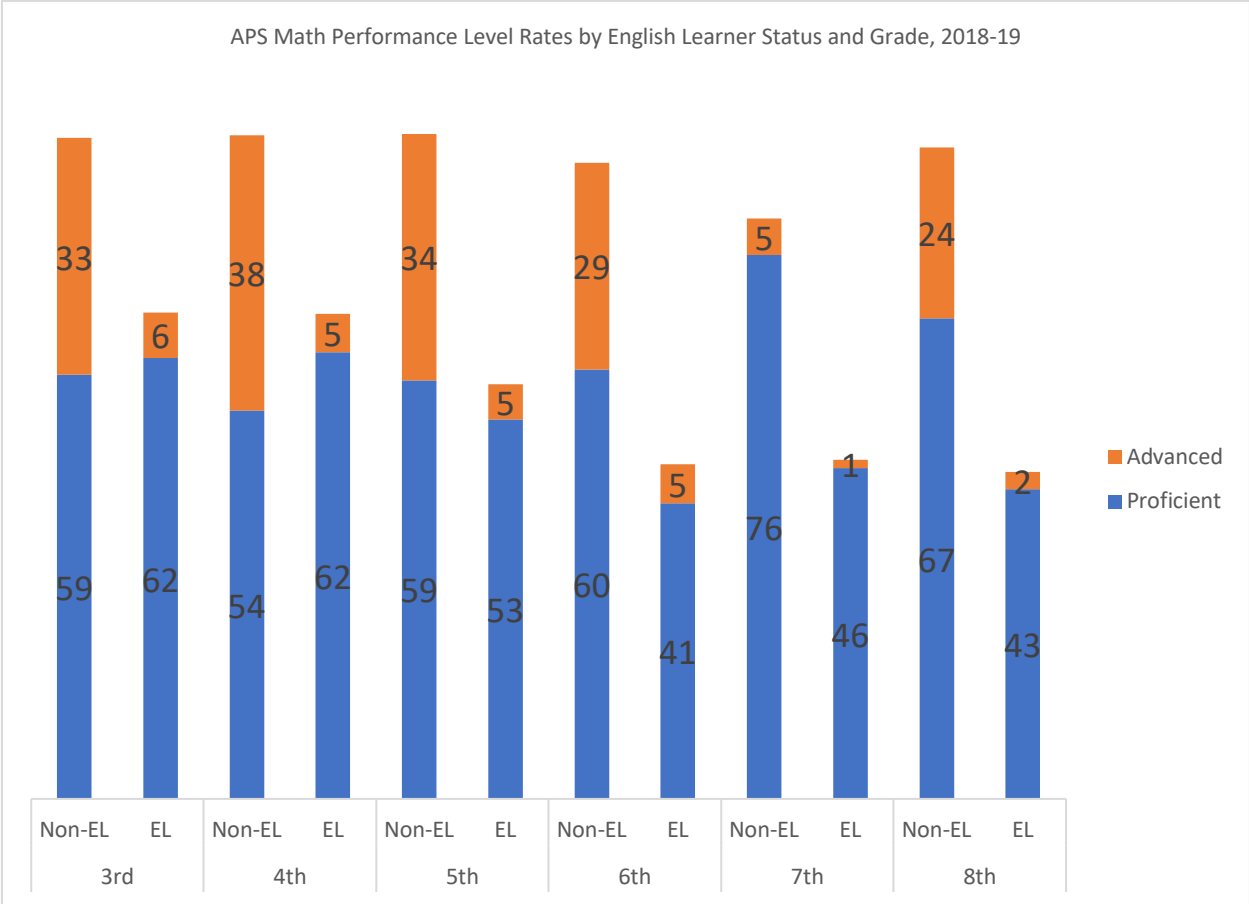


Figure D. APS Math Performance Level Rates by English Learner Status and Grade, 2018-19

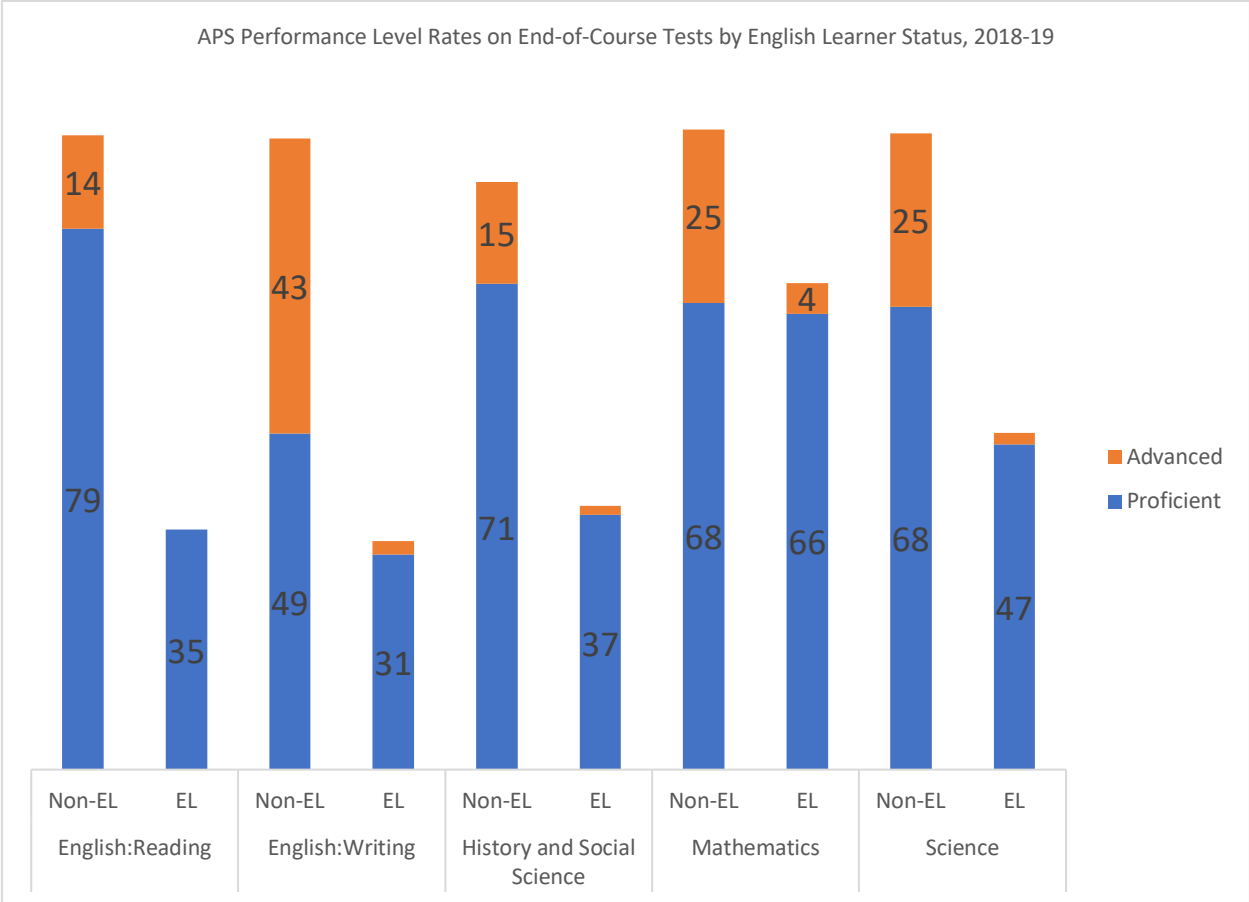


Figure E. APS Performance Level Rates on End-of-Course Exams by English Learner Status, 2018-19

Quality Learning for English Learners

Quality learning for English Learners—and other students—engages them in substantive, rigorous disciplinary activities and interactions with peers. Through well-crafted and well-enacted lessons, students simultaneously develop conceptual, analytic, and language practices as they communicate ideas and build their knowledge. In a pedagogy that empowers students to build their futures in deep and accelerated ways, rigorous talk drives learning (Walqui & Bunch, 2019).

When accomplished teachers offer students quality learning opportunities, the teaching act flows smoothly as students work at the edge of their competence, continuously pushing and expanding their abilities. All students are equitably involved and joyfully participating, knowing that although they are engaged in hard work, the results merit the effort. If the observer is not a knowledgeable educator, they may think that this teacher is a “natural,” and that the lesson is the result of little effort. The same comment emanates from observing an accomplished ballerina in action: She makes impressive leaps that are both graceful and elegant, and the whole dance flows effortlessly. Behind both, however, years of deliberate, consistent practice and hard work have made the performance seem natural. Ballet coaches or critics, and expert educators, know not only the hard work behind these masterful performances but more importantly, experts can isolate steps in the performance, give them specialized technical names, understand their structure and process, and how each step contributes to an accomplished performance that is more than the sum of its parts. This ability to understand and talk about essential components of practice makes improvement possible. Having understandings and names for components enables experts to precisely and concisely make suggestions for improvement. This is why, while accomplished teaching with English Learners should occur harmoniously, it is useful to isolate components to richly describe and improve practice. With the goal of assisting educators to build future-oriented learning opportunities that challenge and support English Learners, we selected the following three principles of quality instruction as focal points for this evaluation:

- Sustain Academic Rigor in teaching English Learners;
- Engage English Learners in Quality Interactions; and
- Sustain a Language Focus in teaching English Learners.

The principles we used derive from observations of effective classroom practice in a variety of contexts and with diverse types of English Learners. These principles of instruction (developed by QTEL staff in collaboration with Ofelia Garcia at Teachers College) are abstractions of practice—since in practice they coexist harmoniously. The principles allow us to identify the key actions that characterize learning experiences that challenge and support students and should be present in all classrooms, regardless of content, grade level, or student characteristics.

In this report, we will unpack each principle individually as we consider observations carried out in Arlington Public Schools to understand elements of quality teaching for English Learners that are in place and areas in need of improvement. We do so with the full understanding that, like in dance, performing one individual step well does not render an accomplished performance. It is the harmonious weaving of steps that creates a masterful performance.

Supporting these principles are several interconnected components that must co-exist at the systemic level:

- A clear vision of English Learners and shared mission for English Learner education;
- Access to learning opportunities that balance high challenge with high support;
- Programs and initiatives that are both well-designed and well-implemented;
- Continuous professional learning for teachers and staff that builds educator expertise; and
- A school climate that welcomes students and their families.

These components should be clearly articulated and communicated throughout the school district. We now discuss each of these components in further detail.

A Clear Vision of English Learners and Shared Mission for English Learner Education

In order to be maximally effective, all activities within the district should be guided by a clear and coherent vision that reflects how staff believe English Learners are capable. A vision statement sets forth the futures of which English Learners are capable and how learning opportunities should be organized in order to realize their immense potential. This vision must be clearly and widely communicated within each school community, using it to guide school and district actions, policies, and communications. Among the five components that together influence quality experiences for English Learners, vision is foundational, as it serves to inform each of the remaining components by articulating specific, attainable goals from which progress will emerge. To realize that vision, effective educational systems have a sense of shared mission. Mission refers to the varied and aligned roles all educators and district staff will play in order to ensure excellence for English Learners. While a vision sets the goal, from the perspective of the English Learner, the mission statement offers a top-level strategy for how the system will realize that vision in practice. Key to the vision and mission is that it is shared by all educators, rather than thinking of the education of English Learners as being the primary responsibility of EL teachers.

Learning Opportunities for English Learners that Balance High Challenge with High Support

Sociocultural learning theory—which posits that all learning is social in meaningful interaction with others—is foundational to the design of quality learning for English Learners (Walqui & van Lier, 2010). To enable English Learners to work in their zone of proximal development, instruction must balance high challenge with high support (Vygotsky, 1978). Tasks and lessons must be academically rigorous while offering appropriate scaffolding that enables English Learners to work in the learning zone (Gibbons, 2015). Three Principles define quality instruction for English Learners:

- Engage English Learners in ***quality interactions***
- Sustain ***academic rigor*** in teaching English Learners
- Sustain a ***language focus*** in teaching English Learners.

Engage English Learners in Quality Interactions

Because learning is a social process mediated by language (Vygotsky, 1978), quality verbal interactions about disciplinary ideas are central to learning. Teachers *engage in Quality Interactions* with English Learners by structuring and supporting interactions that are both sustained and reciprocal and that build knowledge in relevant aspects of the discipline. Students and teacher engage in dialogue that is not scripted but rather builds on the participants' ideas to promote deep understanding of concepts.

Students extend beyond simple utterances to elaborate, illustrate, and connect to the disciplinary ideas of their interlocutors. That is, teachers must invite students to engage in interactions that pursue understanding, encourages reasoning, argumentation, questioning, and the generalization of ideas. A good part of a teacher's work is to clearly provide expectations and supports so that students can engage in these interactions.

Sustain Academic Rigor in Teaching English Learners

Educators *sustain academic rigor* in teaching English Learners by promoting deep disciplinary knowledge and a focus on the central ideas of a disciplinary theme in all their interconnections and interrelationships. Academically rigorous instruction focuses on the substantive and generative concepts and skills in a discipline by encouraging complex subject matter understandings and arguments. Instruction for English Learners must not be watered down (Walqui & van Lier, 2010; Heritage, Walqui, & Linqunti, 2015).

Educators may want to make academic tasks easier for English Learners given their ongoing acquisition of English, but in fact, English Learners are not incapable of tackling complex subject matter concepts in their new language. Indeed, teachers can sustain academic rigor by: 1) keeping the focus clear—developing central ideas first, postponing interesting but secondary details; 2) selecting substantive and generative concepts and skills to focus on; and 3) engaging students in higher-order thinking skills by inviting them to combine ideas, compare and contrast, analyze, and apply new understandings to novel situations.

Sustain a Purposeful Language Focus in Teaching English Learners

Teachers sustain a purposeful language focus by explicitly developing disciplinary uses of language, discussing how language works, and highlighting the characteristics of different genres and subject-specific discourse (Walqui & van Lier, 2010; Kibler, Valdés, & Walqui, 2014). Sustaining a purposeful language focus incorporates three goals: 1) offering models of language that assist students in carrying out disciplinary work; 2) focusing on language issues in meaningful contexts and activities; and 3) amplifying students' access to the academic uses of language. Models of language, such as formulaic expressions, are particularly critical for English Learners to engage in disciplinary work. These models are not rigid scripts, but rather choices that students can select from as they develop greater autonomy in using language (Koelsch, Chu, & Bañuelos, 2014). The role of the teacher is to amplify, not simplify communications and to explicitly attend to language and provide students the necessary support (knowledge of Latin roots, awareness of patterns of nominalization, existence of formulaic expressions, etc.) that will allow them to build or convey meaning.

Well-Designed and Well-Implemented Programs and Initiatives

Programs and initiatives are well-articulated when they are clearly described by district staff and clearly understood by all stakeholders. Programs—whether ESL Pull Out, Structured English Immersion, Transitional Bilingual Education, or other—must elaborate their respective goals along with corresponding characteristics such as language used in instruction, components of instruction, and duration of instruction (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2015) and implement them across classrooms and sites with consistency. All programs and initiatives should support the overall vision for English Learners in the district and not be at cross-purposes. For example, it is possible for two types of bilingual programs to exist within a school system (e.g., Dual Language Immersion and Transitional Bilingual Education) as long as both aim to prepare English Learners for the same ambitious goals. In situations in which programs and initiatives may not speak directly to the needs of English Learners, implementation plans should address how English Learners are to be included and supported. These programs must be adequately supported in terms of personnel and resources.

Continuous Professional Learning that Builds Educator Expertise to Work with English Learners

For all teachers to be able to engage in the above-discussed practices, they need to be provided with opportunities to both understand what they need to do and be able to do it. Knowledge plus action is expertise, and ongoing professional development for teachers is key to improving teacher expertise, and consequently, the quality of learning opportunities they offer their students. Teacher learning is not “finished” once the initial preparation phase ends, but rather, teachers continue to develop their expertise along a professional continuum that spans their careers (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). This is why implementing the type of practices discussed above in classrooms with English Learners will involve changes in the ways teachers think about teaching and enact learning opportunities for their students.

An extensive body of literature reports the difficulty of changing teachers’ instructional beliefs (e.g., Lortie, 1975, 2002; Pajares, 1992; Tanase & Wang, 2010), which form the basis for classroom practice, especially when the support they receive is sporadic. Short-term interventions have little effect on transforming more traditional approaches to teaching (Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998), but longer, sustained opportunities for teachers to examine their beliefs in light of new and developing understandings of teaching and learning disciplinary content and ways of using language for English Learners, as well as opportunities to connect these understandings to practice, have shown to significantly impact teachers’ beliefs and resulting enactment in practice (Darling-Hammond & Hammerness, 2005; Reeves, 2006). Thus, professional development for content area teachers of English Learners is more effective when the opportunities are long-term and coherent (Turkan & Schramm-Possinger, 2014; Walqui, 2008).

Moreover, professional development for teachers of English Learners should provide the opportunity to build their expertise regarding both pedagogical content and language knowledge. Pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987) is the blend of “content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction” (Shulman, 1987, p. 8, cited in Bunch, 2013; Walqui, 1997). The notion of pedagogical language knowledge (Galguera, 2011; Bunch, 2013) adds the dimension of teachers’ knowledge of disciplinary uses of language and the pedagogical

practices needed to scaffold English Learners' understanding of the purposes, social context, structure, and linguistic functions of oral and written texts in a discipline.

As professionals, district staff must constantly engage in self-reflection and actively try to incorporate new ideas into their existing practices. This is especially true in schools and classrooms in which demographic changes are apparent. Every individual (whether a nurse, counselor, or school psychologist) should have the knowledge and expertise that will equip them to work with students whose cultural or linguistic background is different from their own. In fact, researchers in English Learner education support all teachers in developing expertise to work with English Learners (Valdés, Kibler, & Walqui, 2014). Ongoing professional development consists of much more than opting in to attend a stand-alone workshop once in a while. Where possible, individuals in job-alike groups (all kindergarten teachers, for example) should attend districtwide professional learning opportunities and be provided with planning time to consider how to apply new learning to their practice.

A Welcoming School Climate

A welcoming school climate is of paramount importance in establishing trusting relationships with students and their families (United States Department of Education, 2016). The educational enterprise is collaborative by its very nature; and parents/guardians must feel comfortable coming to the school and interacting with those individuals who care greatly for their students. School staff should be knowledgeable about the cultural and linguistic assets of their students and their families and seek to build upon these assets whenever possible (Valenzuela, 1999). Also, the demands on families have only grown over the past decades, making it difficult for caregivers to attend to children's every need. They must feel as if they have a place to go to ask for help or information and receive it kindly and without judgment. Students, too, must feel that the school is a safe place and that they can feel comfortable approaching teachers and other adults.

Collaborative Evaluation Process

Arlington Public Schools’ teachers, coaches, and site and district leaders were central participants in the collaborative process of this evaluation. A primary benefit of the collaborative process is that district staff became proficient in identifying the three principals of quality learning which were the focus for this study. These district staff can help other APS educators to apply the same lens in future observations, thus supporting staff capacity well beyond the conclusion of this collaborative evaluation.

One of the distinctive sources of data for this review was student shadowing. The activity of shadowing a student offered APS teachers, coaches, and school and district leaders a unique opportunity to walk alongside students, to try to see through their eyes and hear through their ears. In this review, students were shadowed for two hours, spanning two to three classrooms (at the secondary level) and multiple activities or topics (at the elementary level). The potential variation across a student’s day surfaces conditions that facilitate student participation, academic achievement, and language development.

Another important source of data for this review consists of collaborative classroom observations that focused on the learning opportunities provided to English Learners and their peers. Teams of APS educators, led by a QTEL facilitator, observed lessons in multiple classrooms in order to calibrate shared understandings of quality learning. As part of a comprehensive evaluation of English Learner Programs in Arlington Public Schools, we engaged in 72 classroom observations in grades K–12 in 8 schools across the district (see Table 2).

Grade	Total	HILT Pullout	Other*	General Education				Secondary HILT			
				ELA	SS	Math	Sci	ELA	SS	Math	Sci
K-5	34	2	3	12	3	6	7	N/A			
6-12	38	N/A		2	3	8	4	10	6	2	3
Total	72	2	3	14	6	13	11	10	6	2	3

NOTE: * "Other" includes morning meeting and art.

Table 2. Classroom Observations by Grade Level, Subjects, and Program

To prepare for the complementary review activities (those undertaken solely by QTEL), the District Leadership Team (consisting of staff from the EL Office and from the Office of Evaluation and Planning) consulted with the QTEL team in terms of the refinement of survey and focus group instruments, as well as in the selection of sites across the elementary, middle, and high school levels. District staff recruited 4 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, and 2 high schools to serve as sites of collaborative (conducted with APS staff) or complementary (conducted by QTEL independently) site visits.

The four-day collaborative review entailed four processes as outlined in Figure F.

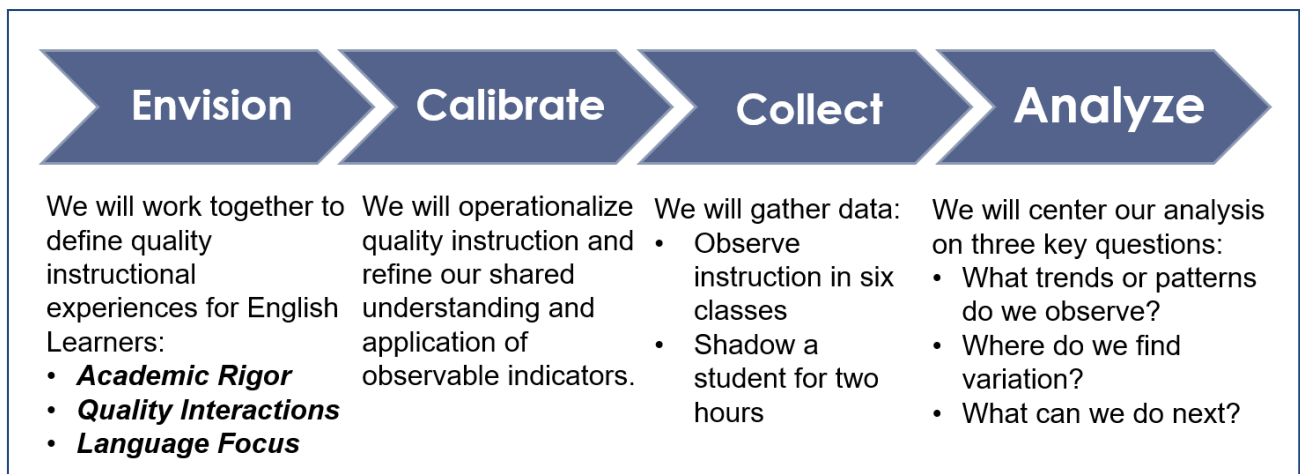


Figure F. Four Phases of Collaborative Evaluation

The first phase of the collaborative evaluation was to collectively envision quality learning. The Expanded District Team of 32 educators (including EL teachers, content-area teachers, resource teachers, and site and district administrators) participated in a two-day workshop and learned about the three characteristics of quality learning: academic rigor, quality interactions, and a language focus.

The team then engaged in the second phase of calibrating observation lenses. Using a suite of transcripts and videos, the team learned how to use two tools for observing key elements of quality instruction for English Learners: 1) a classroom observation instrument, and 2) a student shadowing protocol (Table 3 and Figure G).

Classroom Observation Protocol		
Criteria	Indicators	Evidence
Students engage in rigorous, deep, disciplinary work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class activities target a central, substantive idea of the discipline. Students are engaged in activities that ask them to connect ideas (e.g., synthesize, generalize, explain, hypothesize). Student activities are generative and can be used across a variety of situations. 	
Classroom environment and activities balance high challenge with high support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities offer students high challenge opportunities to engage in disciplinary practices. Supports are offered that allow all students to enter, participate, and grow in disciplinary practices. Criteria for quality work are made clear to students. 	
Students engage in quality interactions around disciplinary content with other students and with the teacher.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students engage in sustained talk with other students and/or the teacher, making extended utterances and taking multiple turns. Student interactions are reciprocal, offering responses to teacher or peers that are appropriate and build on ideas. Students listen to each other attentively as they consider their responses. Teacher questions are open-ended, relevant, and engage students in higher-order thinking. 	

Table 3. Classroom Observation Protocol

In the third phase, collaborative data collection included both classroom observations and student shadowing. Small teams of five (four APS staff and one QTEL facilitator) visited 6–7 classes for 15 minutes each. As part of their observation schedule, the teams engaged in calibration of observations in composing evidence statements with regard to the three criteria of academic rigor, quality interactions, and a language focus.

The student shadowing protocol followed the schedule of a single student over two hours. These two hours were divided into eight segments, each 20 minutes in duration. For each 20-minute segment, APS staff observed and recorded the opportunities that the student had to participate in interactions, the ways in which the student used language, and the type of academic work in which the student was engaged (Figure G).

Student Shadowing Recording Sheet			
Segment	With whom did the student <i>interact</i> ? How <i>sustained</i> and <i>reciprocal</i> were these interactions?	How did the student use <i>language</i> ?	What was the <i>academic work</i> in which the student was engaged?

Figure G. Student Shadowing Recording Sheet

After the collaborative data collection was completed, the fourth phase was an analysis workshop facilitated by QTEL staff. The Expanded District Team engaged in analysis activities to identify trends and patterns in the data, surface potential sources of variation, and begin to strategize next steps in planning concerted actions. For both the classroom observations and the student shadowing, team members engaged in a process of aggregation to complement the detailed, thick descriptions of practice. Some posters showing their initial findings are shown below in Figure H.

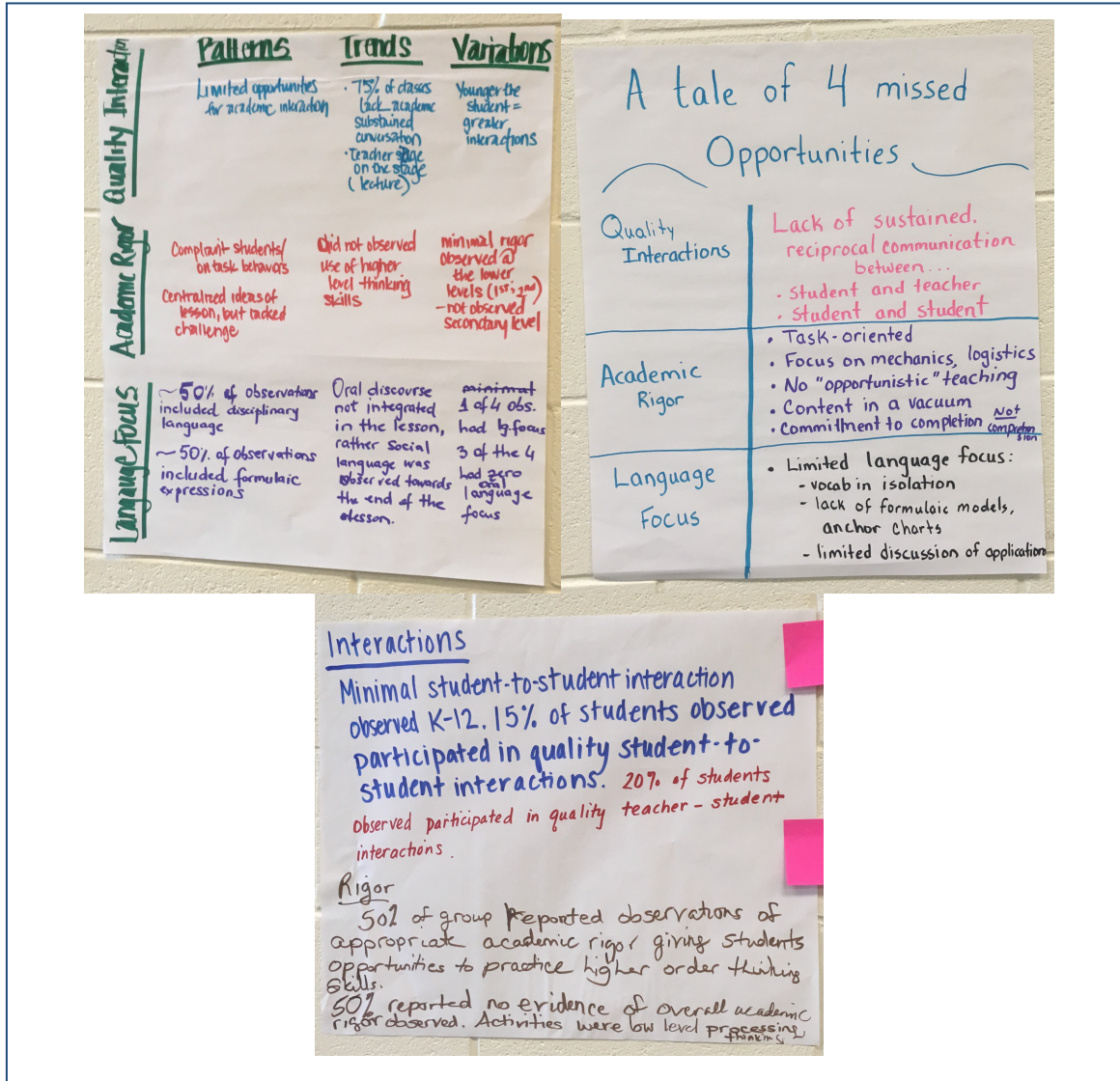


Figure H. Sample Analysis Posters

Complementing these collaborative data collection and analysis activities were additional data collection activities conducted independently by QTEL staff. In consultation with district leadership, the QTEL staff conducted additional classroom observations, for a total of up to 72 observations at 8 school sites. QTEL staff also served as the facilitators of interviews and focus groups with key individuals, including mixed groups of district staff, current English Learners, and parents of current and former English Learners in the district. QTEL staff also collected survey data from teachers, administrators, and classified staff. The total participants and sites for the various data sources are summarized in Appendix A. Appendices B-K include instruments used in the data collection process.

Findings

Five overarching questions guided this review:

1. How effectively does **classroom instruction** challenge and support English Language Learners?
2. How are English Learners making **progress** in terms of language and academic development?
3. How well do school and district structures for **collaboration and professional learning** expand the expertise of educators to teach English Learners?
4. How successful are school and district efforts to **engage parents** of English Learners?
5. How well do district **policies and programs** serve diverse subgroups of English Learners?

We frame the findings within the wider context of deep, quality learning opportunities all students need in order to succeed in the 21st century. In doing so, we draw upon a definition of quality instruction that is rooted in the principles discussed previously.

Findings indicate that there are classes in APS in which quality learning opportunities for English Learners (i.e., those characterized by quality interactions, academic rigor, and a meaningful language focus) are present. In other instances, quality opportunities were not observed. These findings point to the ways that instruction has, in some instances, not kept up with content standards for English Learners. While the world continues to change at a rapid pace, the opportunities for English Learners to develop the skills for college, career, and life must keep pace. It is important to note, that while rigorous standards-based opportunities for English Learners were not present in all classrooms, we believe that English Learners have immense potential and are uniquely positioned to develop many of the skills required in the 21st century, with the support of APS district leaders and educators. We recognize that APS has and continues to demonstrate a deep investment in this entire collaborative review process, expressing a commitment to both questioning and improving the programs and practices in place for their English Learners.

Learning Opportunities for English Learners in Observed Schools

In this section, we address the evaluation question: How effectively does classroom instruction challenge and support English Learners? In order to answer this question, we drew on classroom observations and student shadowing data to capture the nature of learning experiences offered English Learners in three focal areas. We specifically asked:

To what extent does classroom instruction offer challenge and support for learning that:

- sustains academic rigor with English Learners?
- engages English Learners in quality interactions?
- sustains an explicit language focus with English Learners?

As we present the findings that address these three focal areas (academic rigor, quality interactions, and explicit language focus), we provide three sets of vignettes to exemplify what was observed at APS schools during the review process. The first set of vignettes demonstrate examples of pedagogy that is approaching quality instruction—that is, instruction that integrates academic rigor, quality interactions, and a meaningful focus on language. The second set of vignettes are examples of classroom instruction that have promise to reach the potential of quality instruction we want to see for English Learners. The third set of vignettes are examples typical of the classroom instruction that was observed in which elements of quality instruction were lacking.

Quality Learning for English Learners in Action

For the purposes of this report, we separated the components of quality teaching so as to richly describe each. The components addressed included Academic Rigor, Quality Interactions, and a purposeful Language Focus. However, the goal and reality are that these components do not operate in isolation. Instead, they work together, interweaving such that when accomplished teaching with English Learners occurs, it is harmonious and seamless in nature. Quality teaching thus flows in ways that appear and feel natural, whereas in actuality, much effort, foresight, and planning are behind each of these pedagogical situations. We highlight two APS classroom vignettes observed during data collection that are the closest to achieving quality instruction for English Learners.

Vignette 1: High Quality Instruction (Example)

In a secondary English language arts lesson, students are reading multiple related texts. Students are seated in groups of four. The teacher reminds them that they are going to be reading on their own, each from a different perspective, annotating and getting their notes ready for a discussion that will start in 15 minutes. The text is from a short story about an incident of assault that takes place in the woods. There are four versions of the story told from compelling but competing perspectives. The first version is told by a bystander who witnessed the events. The second version is from the perspective of a bandit who attacked a man and his wife. The third version is from the perspective of the wife who was assaulted. And the last version is the husband's perspective.

Each student in the team has been assigned a different lens to focus on as they read and they have to annotate their copies of the text, notice how facts are related, and the way in which they are told (e.g., are adjectives used to enhance the emotional support of the version? Is the narrative purely factual?). The text is rich and complex.

Students read on their own, making notes in their notebooks. They do not seem to have trouble with the reading. They worked diligently. When time is up, the teacher asked them to compare their notes orally, making sure they support their conclusions using quotes from the text. Students presented their stories and perspectives efficiently, listening attentively to their partners' presentations, nodding or signaling agreement or disagreement. When all four versions have been shared, students begin discussing, comparing, and contrasting the versions.

Students competently carried out the activity, as the teacher stood by a group to listen to the conversation, and then moved to another group. Students were engaged, focused, and clearly enjoyed the reading and its discussion.

Vignette 2: High Quality Instruction (Example)

In a secondary English Language Arts class, the students have read an engaging, allegorical short story that is about society's attitudes toward individuals with different talents or abilities. Fifteen students are seated in a circle and are engaged in a Socratic Seminar discussing the meaning of the text, the author's message, and connections they can make to our present society. The teacher had provided focus questions that students had worked on prior to the seminar. All students have taken copious notes and responses to these focus questions that they can refer to as they engage in the discussion. Ten out of the fifteen students who are present engage in deep discussion, making connections within the text and to concepts and ideas outside the text. A student poses one of the focus questions to open the discussion and other students in the circle freely participate citing evidence from the text when appropriate.

Student 1: What is the author's message? What is he trying to convey?

Student 2: I think it is about the need for diversity in the world. See here it says...

Student 3: No, it's really about how the government is deciding that all will be the same...but based on the least able person.

Student 4: I think he is trying to say to embrace diversity ... [elaborates with an example]

Many interactions are reciprocal as students build on each other, disagree, provide elaboration. The teacher provided accountable talk guidelines and a worksheet with model formulaic expressions students could use in the discussion. Students show they are experienced with enacting these norms for participation.

Student 1: No, I don't think I want to live in a society where everyone is equal because our individuality is what...

Student 2: I think being different is what allows society to improve, advance. For example, Albert Einstein...

The teacher intervenes a couple of times to pose a question for consideration or to encourage students who have not participated yet.

Teacher: What is the author wanting you to think about technology? Is it like cellphones? Can you make a connection?

At the conclusion, students engage in self-reflection about their contributions to the discussion. They rate the quality of their participation using a rubric and respond to open-ended questions about what was strong in their performance and what they will need to improve for the next time.

Note: While the instruction in this class demonstrates the elements of quality instruction (i.e., high academic rigor, opportunities for quality interactions between the teacher and students and among students, and to some degree, a purposeful focus on language), there is a concern about who is present to experience this example of quality instruction. The class roster has 20 students listed, however, noticeably missing were English Learners. When asked about the (lack of) English Learners in the class, the teacher explains that the five English Learners in the class have been pulled out to work with an EL teacher in a small group in another room.

The Potential in Arlington Public Schools

In other classrooms and site visits, we observed some fundamental elements on which a successful program could be built. For example, students come to school and are not disruptive. Teachers are friendly and show a caring demeanor and attitude towards

students. Some teachers make an effort to engage students in collaboration or discussions, with student participation and small group interaction varying widely in quality.

Below are two vignettes of what was observed at APS during the review process (in the left-hand column) and options for how the same lesson could be constructed in order to strengthen quality interactions, academic rigor, and high expectations (in the right-hand column).

Vignette 3	
What was Present	What is Possible
<p>Students in a second grade science class were working on a final project at the end of a unit of study on the water cycle. They sat in their table groups and listened as the teacher provided directions on how to attach science words (e.g., "collection," "evaporation") printed on plain white paper to long strips of construction paper, gluing both ends of the construction paper together to form a circle. Although students were handling strips of paper that contained words that dealt with a central concept, the water cycle, there was no mention of the purpose of this activity. Students were solely focused on following the teacher's directions: cutting, gluing, writing, etc.</p>	<p>Students have had ample opportunities to explore multiple science ideas with regard to the water cycle. Now as they demonstrate the understandings that they have reached together, they need to be given structured options for re-presenting their understanding in new genres. Multiple options could be offered to small groups, such as an annotated diorama or a dramatic reenactment of different phases of the water cycle. While the use of technical terms to describe different processes is important, students must be offered authentic opportunities to use that language to express their understandings so that they gradually develop greater autonomy in language choices.</p>

Vignette 4

What was Present	What Could Be
<p>In a high school ELD Social Studies class, the topic was different types of governments, including monarchy (absolute and constitutional) and democracy. Two collaborating teachers had created a dramatic simulation in which one student acted as a "monarch" and the other students acted as "subjects." During the dramatization, the monarch commanded his subjects to dance a specific dance, even if his subjects did not like it. Students laughed and had fun throughout the exercise.</p>	<p>The teacher could have asked students to engage in the central idea of the lesson (oppression vs. freedom) by asking them to identify a situation from their life in which they had no choice and a situation in which they were allowed to do whatever they wanted. After sharing their scenarios with their small group, the teacher asks each group to choose one scenario from among those shared at their table to act out. After acting out their scenarios, students turn to their partners to discuss how they felt when they acted out the "no choice scenario" and how they felt when they acted out the "do whatever you want" scenario. Students are encouraged to think about how these experiences might have shaped their future behavior and emotions. The concept of a monarchy and democracy are now introduced.</p>

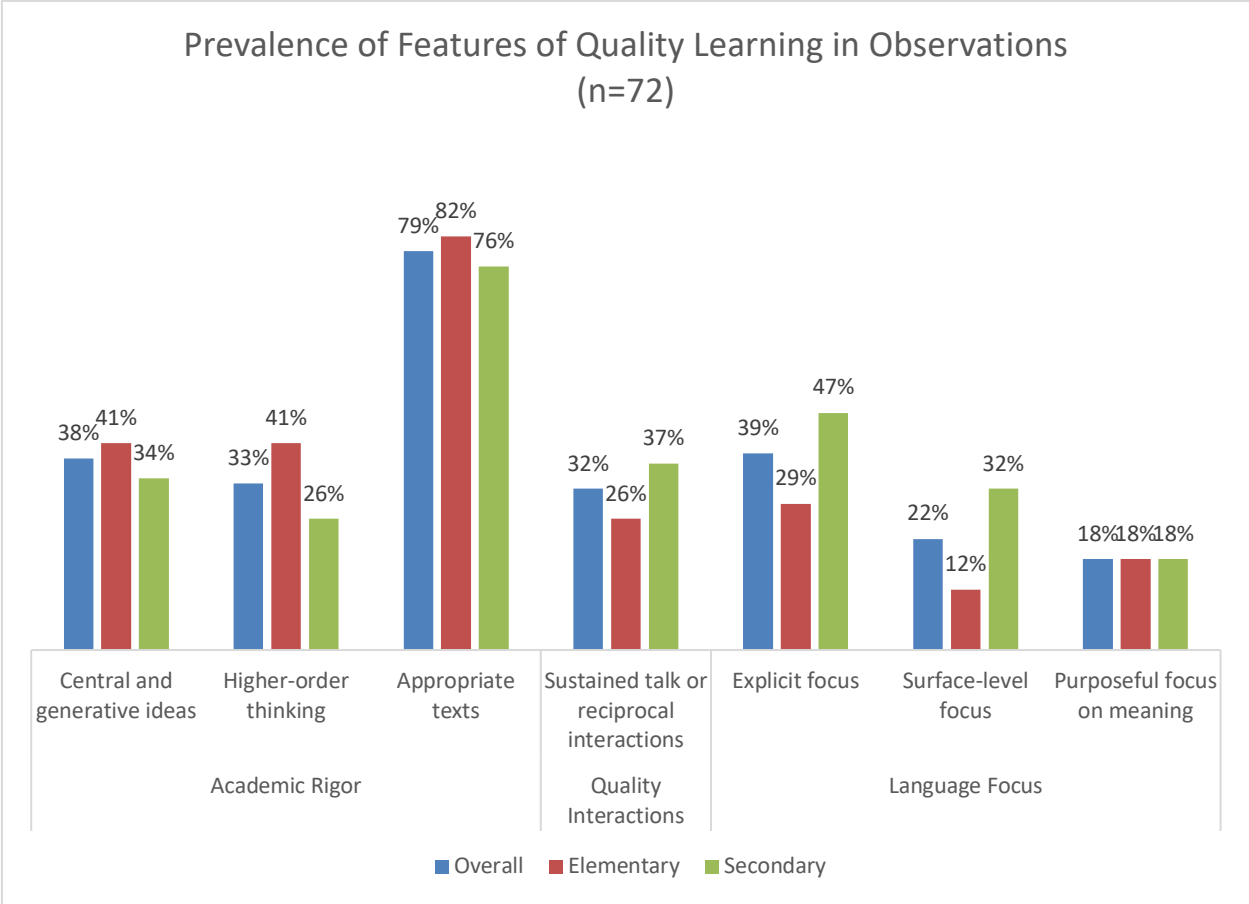


Figure I. Prevalence of Features of Quality Learning in Observations

Typical Patterns of Instruction in Arlington Public Schools

Academic Rigor

As shown in Figure I above, in a majority of classrooms observed, students were not engaged in generative disciplinary ideas nor in the interconnections among these ideas. About two fifths of all lessons observed (38%, or 27 out of 72 lessons) met the criteria for central and generative ideas. Lessons observed at the elementary level were slightly more likely (41%, or 14 out of 34 lessons) to address generative ideas compared to lessons at the secondary level (34%, or 13 out of 38 lessons).

Most K–12 classrooms did not engage students in activities that required higher-order thinking skills. Rather than creating spaces for students to engage in tasks that centered on higher-order thinking, the other two thirds of lessons had students engage in the carrying out of routine procedures or the recall of definitions or facts. Students engaged

in higher-order thinking in one third (33%, or 24 out of 72 lessons) of observed lessons at both elementary and secondary levels. Higher-order thinking was more frequently observed at the elementary level (41%, or 14 out of 34 lessons) than at the secondary level (26%, or 10 out of 38 lessons).

Vignette 4: Academic Rigor	
What is in Place	Analysis of What is Missing
<p>Students in a second grade class sat at their tables of four with blank maps of the United States. Students were asked to label several features of their maps (i.e., United States, mountains, ocean, etc.), by copying the model map presented on a large screen at the front of the room. Once they finished labeling, they were instructed to paint their maps using color to distinguish between the features. As students copied and painted, their talk focused on using the correct labels, spelling the labels correctly, placing those labels in the precise location, paint brush size, and paint color to use to complete the maps. Throughout the activity, the teacher made herself available to students who had questions about the activity.</p>	<p>In this classroom vignette, students engage in a geography-based activity on maps. While the ability to read and interpret maps is an important, transferable skill, the structure of this activity and the content both lack academic rigor. Academically rigorous tasks engage students with disciplinary concepts that are generative (can be applied to novel situations outside of the activity) and in higher-order thinking (generative cognitive skills).</p> <p>In this vignette, the activity does not invite students to engage with the discipline of geography in deep, conceptual ways that help students to develop understandings of the features of maps, the uses of maps, the importance of accuracy, or how maps have changed across history. Perhaps this activity was part of a bigger lesson about central, generative ideas. Within the observed activities, however, neither the teacher's instruction nor the structure of the activity itself made any connections to ideas, concepts, or information from other lessons. Instead, the structure of the activity and procedure-oriented talk throughout suggested that this was an activity in isolation. Additionally, the materials—the map and the particular labels used—were not challenging for students.</p>

Although activities generally lacked academic rigor, appropriate texts were used in a large majority of lessons observed. In a more than three fourths (79%, or 57 out of 72 lessons) of observations, class activities involved a text that was appropriate for the idea or concept that was the focus of the lesson. The appropriateness of texts did not vary greatly between lessons observed at the elementary (82%, or 28 out of 34 lessons) and secondary (76%, or 29 out of 34 lessons) levels. Although selected texts were generally appropriate, in many instances what teachers had students do with the texts and materials did not satisfy the other criteria for academic rigor.

Quality Interactions

English Learners need to be provided with ample opportunities to engage and participate in activities in which their learning is co-constructed through sustained interactions with peers. If provided with these opportunities regularly, over time, students begin to appropriate the language they use and hear during these exchanges and are able to apply those linguistic proficiencies to writing or speaking tasks in novel situations and assessments. Therefore, it is vital that students talk *with* (rather than talk *to*) their peers, exchanging and elaborating on ideas through extended discourse around key disciplinary texts and concepts (van Lier, 2004).

Quality interactions were not a consistent feature of most lessons. For instance, sustained talk or reciprocal interactions were present in about one third of visited classrooms (32%, or 23 out of 72 lessons). At the elementary level, opportunities for quality interactions were seen in about one fourth of classrooms (26%, or 9 out of 34 lessons), while quality interactions were seen in just over one third of classrooms (37%, or 14 out of 38 lessons) at the secondary level.

Furthermore, observations noted instances in which teachers posed close-ended questions in a “call and response” format that did not invite meaningful interactions. In other instances, teachers posed open-ended questions to which some students provided extended responses, but the teacher did not follow with invitations to students to discuss and negotiate meaning with their peers.

Vignette 5: Quality Interactions

What is in Place	Analysis of What is Missing
<p>In an elementary ELD pull-out for two students, the focus was on manipulating “sound pictures” to create the words the teacher had selected for the lesson. The teacher posed multiple questions which individual students answered in one or two words. As students responded, the teacher corrected them when they were incorrect and gave the correct answer.</p> <p>Teacher: Today, we’re going to focus on sounds. We manipulate sounds—sound pictures. Twig.</p> <p>Students wrote letters on individual white boards, at first writing more letters than needed.</p> <p>Teacher: Okay, let’s do it together.</p> <p>[They all write TWIG.]</p> <p>Teacher: And, what happens if we take off the /g/?</p> <p>Student 1: It’s TWI!</p> <p>Student 2: Because the “g” is gone!</p> <p>Teacher: Okay, yeah....</p> <p>Teacher: [Asks students to drop a sound on another word.]</p> <p>Student 1: [Responds incorrectly.]</p> <p>Teacher: [Asks for another answer.]</p> <p>Student 2: [Answers correctly.]</p> <p>Teacher: Stop! Don’t tell her the answer. She needs to learn it for herself!</p>	<p>In this classroom vignette, we do not observe quality interactions either between teacher and students or between students. First, the interactions observed are not sustained—they do not go beyond single utterances; they do not elaborate, illustrate, or make connections to ideas. Second, the limited interactions observed do not focus on jointly constructing knowledge. Both elements are essential to quality interactions.</p> <p>There is a combination of factors that contribute to the lack of quality interactions in this vignette. To begin, the questions the teacher posed were not open-ended; they were close-ended and constructed to elicit one-word responses. Additionally, the structure of the activity itself did not include invitations for students to interact in quality ways. Furthermore, no language models were provided either orally or visually to support quality interactions.</p> <p>Together, the prompts and activity structure set the expectation—students should not elaborate, illustrate, or connect their responses to the ideas of their peer, teacher, or information previously learned. To the contrary, the teacher stopped students whenever they started to interact beyond simple 1-2-word responses and co-construct understanding in response to her questions. Additionally, the only source of explicit examples/models of language that were provided was when she corrected students’ word choice and provided the correct word.</p>

Most instances of quality interactions that were observed appeared to be sporadic and unplanned. Few observed lessons had quality interactions between peers that were both sustained and reciprocal (13%, or 9 out of 72 lessons). There were an additional 4 lessons observed in which sustained and reciprocal interactions took place between the teacher and the class as a whole.

In instances where lessons allowed for or required students to interact, many were characterized by a “turn and talk” format in which students were asked to share a response with a partner. Although these instances represented opportunities for students

to speak, no structure, modeling, or expectations were provided to encourage the conversation to continue. Instances of quality interactions in which students engaged in deep exchanges, listening to and building on each other's ideas, were sporadic. More commonly observed were exchanges that tended to feature simple utterances and a lack of building on peers' ideas, such that these exchanges did not lead to a deepening of understanding of the discipline.

Purposeful Language Focus

Few lessons had an explicit focus on language.² Across all lessons observed, less than half (39%, or 28 out of 72 lessons) included an explicit focus on language. Lessons that incorporated a focus on language were more common at the secondary level (47%, or 18 out of 38 lessons) compared to the elementary level (29%, or 10 out of 34 lessons).

Additionally, in instances where there was explicit attention on language, the focus was often on “bits and pieces” of language. For instance, in about one fifth of observed lessons (22%, or 16 out of 72 lessons), the focus of language was on elements such as vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation, or grammar.³ Such a surface-level focus in terms of language was somewhat more common at the secondary level (32%, or 12 out of 38 lessons) than at the elementary level (12%, or 4 out of 34 lessons). Below are two APS classroom vignettes that are very typical of what was observed during the classroom observations piece of data collection.

² “No explicit focus on language” means that neither the teacher nor students drew attention to how language works or the choices that the authors or students can make in using language.

³ A focus on vocabulary included activities in which students were instructed to take notes by copying definitions of words. A focus on mechanics included teacher corrections of student writing that focused on subject-verb agreement and spelling, rather than the organization of ideas or quality of arguments and evidence.

Vignette 6: Purposeful Language Focus

What is in Place	Analysis of What is Missing
<p>In a sixth grade English class, the teacher's corrections to student writing are primarily focused on grammatical elements, such as capitalization and agreement.</p>	<p>The focus in these two classroom vignettes is on grammatical correctness and the vocabulary. Although grammar and word knowledge can serve a purpose, teaching with a purposeful language focus begins with meaningful ideas, contexts, and activities. Students are supported to read and interpret disciplinary genres so that they can understand the purpose of a genre, followed by the structure, disciplinary practices (e.g., describing, justifying, explaining), and typical language patterns. As students develop understandings, they can analyze authors' choices in language and expand their autonomy in how they will use language for disciplinary purposes.</p>
<p>In an eighth grade World Geography class, a focus on language is reduced to students being asked to provide definitions for a list of vocabulary words that are written in boldface within a text that introduces the document-based essay task.</p>	

In some observations, an explicit focus on language assisted students in attending to meaning and making connections. More specifically, in slightly less than one fifth of lessons (18%, or 13 out of 72 lessons), the focus on language attended to meaning more generally or enabled students to understand how language is deliberately patterned. The number of lessons observed that incorporated a purposeful focus on language was similar at the elementary (18%, or 6 out of 34 lessons) and secondary (18%, or 7 out of 38 lessons) levels. For example, one teacher during a whole-class discussion of a text elicited from students the meaning of the phrase “sunrise to sunset.” Such a focus on meaning supported students as they developed an understanding of where meanings come from and how they differ across settings and purposes. In another lesson during whole-group discussion, multiple students attended to literary elements such as author’s purpose in discussing the text that they were reading. In four lessons, modeled language facilitated small-group interaction and advanced disciplinary understanding of the content.

At the secondary level, ELD courses are taught by EL teachers who specialize in English language development. The vast majority of ELD courses we observed (90%, or 19 out of 21 lessons) did not meet the criteria for academic rigor. Moreover, few opportunities for students to engage in quality interactions were provided. The focus of such courses was largely on vocabulary, phonics, and other atomistic aspects of language. In one ELD class, for example, students were provided a list of words which they needed to look for in the dictionary. The instructions that the teacher provided were to copy the definition onto a piece of paper and illustrate the word’s meaning by drawing a picture. In another ELD class, students worked on a computer program in which they were asked to identify short

and long vowel sounds in isolated words. It is easy to see why students might seem bored and disengaged in such classes. English Learners, even those with the most basic English proficiency, are motivated by lessons that are interesting, engaging, and applicable to school and other aspects of their lives.

Learning Opportunities for English Learners in General

To address learning opportunities provided for ELs in general education classrooms, we relied on data from classroom observations, teacher surveys, focus groups with various district-level staff, and a review of relevant documents. General education classroom teachers with English Learners in their classes do not always possess the relevant expertise needed in adjusting and delivering content to English Learners. One way that APS ensures the general education classroom teachers and instructional assistants can support ELs and former ELs is by providing regular classroom teachers with a co-teacher who is a specialist in English learner education, who in theory, is able to provide appropriate support to English Learners during lessons that are co-planned and co-delivered with the general education teacher. This is a solution that is being used increasingly throughout the country; however, the solution is not without its limitations. For example, co-teachers in APS are not provided for every class in which English Learners are enrolled. Schools make decisions as to which classes their co-teachers will work in based on students' greatest needs. Another limitation is that in order to be maximally effective, co-teachers must co-plan with general education teachers. This happens at times within APS, but given limited planning time, it is very difficult to fully take advantage of both the general education teachers' and the co-teachers' expertise. This is a persistent challenge faced by school districts who have experimented with this method. It is not one that is particular to APS.

Another way in which the district supports general education teachers' work with English Learners is by making professional development opportunities available to them. What our data from interviews with school personnel revealed, however, is that many general education teachers opt out of this type of professional development given that it is not mandatory. Instructional assistants also receive professional development opportunities. Unfortunately, such trainings are attended by instructional assistants only and there is no guarantee that such trainings have also been attended by the general education classroom teacher whom they have been assigned to support.

Differentiation is a common term in describing instructional adjustments that are made in order to accommodate the needs of English Learners, usually depending on their level of English literacy or oral proficiency. To better understand how teachers deliver instruction to English Learners, a survey was distributed to EL teachers and a separate survey was distributed to general education teachers. Surveys of EL teachers in which 156 responses were collected reveal that most teachers frequently differentiate instruction for their English Learners. For example, when EL teachers were asked whether they use less complex texts or assignments with English Learners, 118/156 (75%) reported that they do so at least once per day. Surveys of general education teachers who teach English Learners, however, revealed that fewer teachers do so on a daily basis, 76/441 (17%).

Another form of differentiation is grouping students into homogeneous groups by language proficiency level. Among EL teachers, 107/156 (68.5%) responded that they do so at least once per day. By contrast, non-EL teachers with English Learners in their classrooms responded that they group EL students by language proficiency at least once a day in 175/441 responses (40%). These data clearly show that EL teachers use differentiation strategies with English Learners more often than do non-EL teachers. Overall, differentiation of instruction for English Learners was mentioned as one of the “best ways of supporting English Learners” in 12/156 (7.6%) open responses by EL teachers and in 25/441 (5.6%) open responses by non-EL teachers. While EL teachers may report that they differentiate quite often (at least once per day), it is not at the top of their list when asked to enumerate the best ways in which they can support their English Learners.

English Learner Progress and Outcomes in Language and Academic Achievement

The overarching question for this section of the evaluation is: *How are English Learners making progress in terms of language and academic development?*

In order to answer this question, we identified five finer-grained questions:

1. How long does it take English Learners to attain English language proficiency?
2. How long do English Learners spend at each English language proficiency level?
3. What are the outcomes and achievement of English Learners and former English Learners with regard to:

- a) Attendance
 - b) Disciplinary incidents
 - c) Advanced course enrollments
 - d) Graduation/Dropout Status and Diploma type
4. How does the academic performance of English Learners in Arlington Public Schools compare with English Learners in other similar Divisions in Virginia?
 5. What are patterns and trends within different subgroups of English Learners defined by:
 - a) Initial grade of classification?
 - b) Special education status?

To answer these descriptive evaluation questions, we analyzed extant administrative data from the Student Information System. These data include the past three school years for all students in the district as well as longitudinal English language proficiency data for English Learners.

Analytic Approaches

Throughout this section of the report, we present two types of analysis, each with its advantages and limitations. The first focuses retrospectively on groups who exited English Learner status in a given school year. This kind of analysis has the advantage that it can potentially identify common characteristics of a group of students. On the other hand, the group of students who exited in a given year will vary widely in terms of grade level of entry, grade level of exit, and other demographic characteristics.

The second approach is more prospective, focusing on a well-defined cohort of students over time. One standard cohort at the elementary level is to consider a group of English Learners who were enrolled in Kindergarten during a particular school year. At the secondary level, it may be appropriate to consider a group of ninth graders who were enrolled in a particular school year. This analysis is more comparable with other recent studies in other states (e.g., Kieffer & Parker, 2016; Thompson, 2017; Slama et al., 2017). Results for a prospective cohort account for historical changes in policy or tests, but longitudinal databases are more difficult to construct.

How Long Does It Take English Learners to Reach English Language Proficiency?

Retrospective Analysis of Exited Students

For cohorts ending in the past three school years (2017–2018, 2016–2017, and 2015–2016), we cross-tabulated the number of years it took those individual students to exit, recording their total number of years in English Learner status. The distribution of years spent in English Learner status is shown by cohort in Figure J.

The overall distribution has shifted from a normal distribution centered on five years (see 2015–2016 cohort in Figure J) to one that is skewed to the left, with many students exited after two or four years (see 2018 cohort in Figure J). This pattern reflects how more recent cohorts have been spending less time in English Learner status before being classified as proficient.

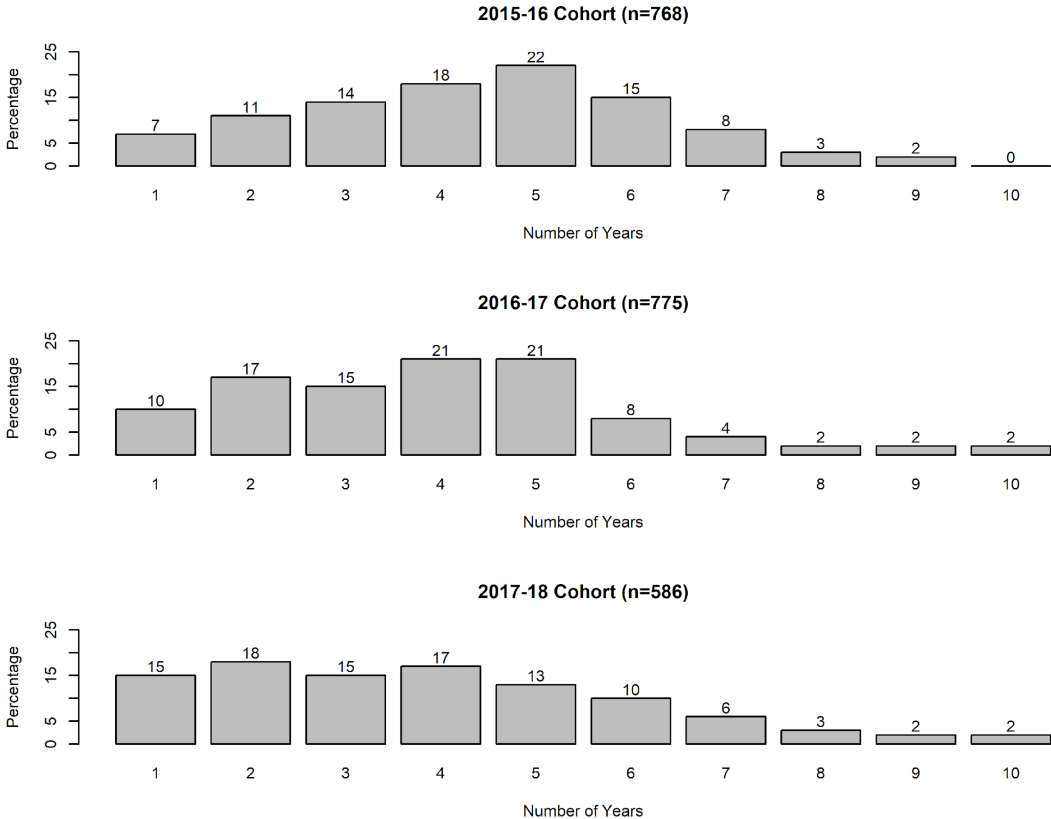


Figure J. Time Spent in English Learner Status by School Year of Exit

These trends can be summarized further by examining the average number of years students who have exited have spent in English Learner status (Table 4). From the 2015–2016 school year, the mean number of years exited students spent in English Learner status has decreased from 4.41 years to 3.88 years for students who exited in the 2017–2018 school year. For all three cohorts of exited students, the median time spent as an English Learner was 4 years. More than three fifths of exited students did so in four or fewer years for the later 2016–2017 (62%) and 2017–2018 (65%) cohorts.

Cohort	Average Years	Cumulative Exit Rate After		
		Three Years	Four Years	Five Years
2015–2016	4.41	32%	50%	72%
2016–2017	3.97	41%	62%	83%
2017–2018	3.88	47%	65%	77%

Table 4. Summary Statistics for Time Spent in English Learner Status by Exit Rate and School Year

For the most recent cohort of students exited in the 2017–2018 school year, the time spent in English Learner status varied by grade level of exit (Figure K). Among exited elementary school students, four years was the most common (26%) amount of time to spend as an English Learner. For students who exited in grades 6–8, however, the most common (25%) number of years spent as an English Learner was six years. Among students exiting in the high school grades, the two most common numbers of years to spend in the district were one year (20%) and two years (17%). One limitation of an analysis of exiting students is that they may differ in important ways from students who remain classified as English Learners.

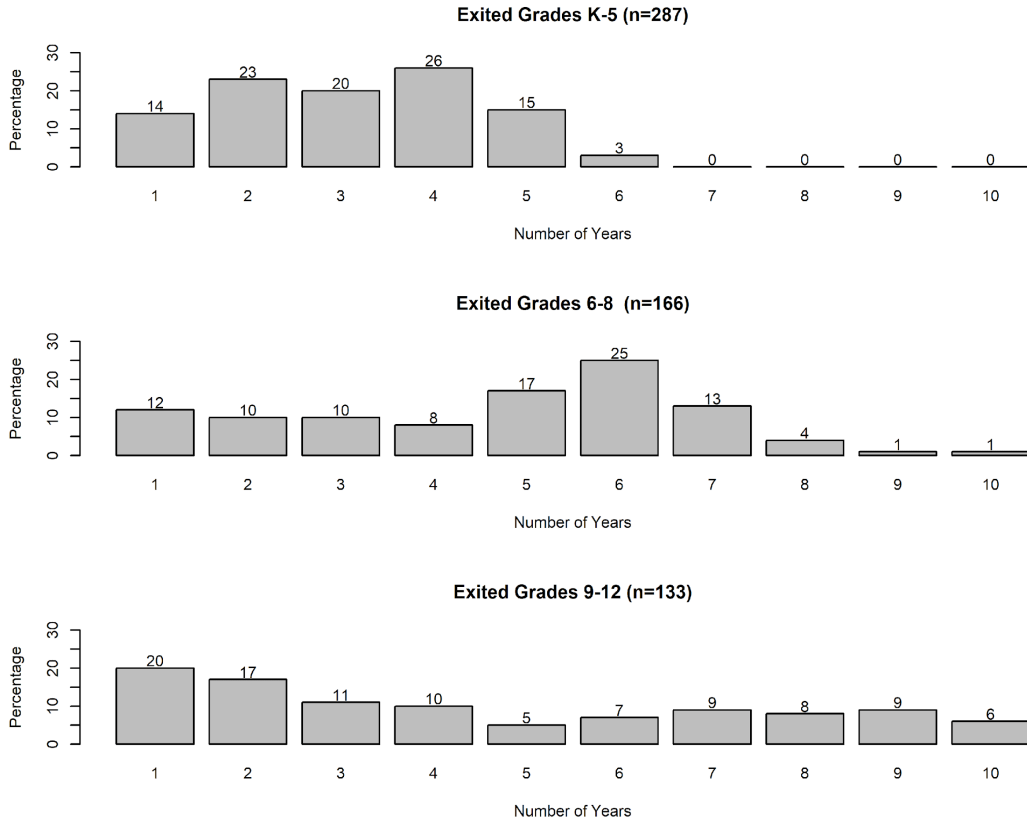


Figure K. Time Spent as English Learner for Students Exited in 2017–18 by Grade Level of Exit

Students who had exited in the elementary (K–5) grades did so in an average of 3.16 years, compared to 4.60 years for those exiting in the middle grades (6–8) and 4.53 years for those exiting in the high school grades (Table 5).

Level at Exit	Average Years	Cumulative Exit Rate After		
		Three Years	Four Years	Five Years
Elementary	3.16	56%	82%	97%
Middle	4.60	32%	40%	57%
High	4.53	47%	57%	62%

Table 5. Summary Statistics for Time Spent in English Learner Status by Grade Level of Exit in 2017–18

Prospective Cohorts

An alternative approach is to track a single cohort of English Learners in a given grade over time. Using longitudinal data, we identified six cohorts of Kindergarten students dating back to the 2010–2011 school year, which was the last year included in the previous evaluation (Acosta et al., 2012). For each cohort, we tracked the first grade in which students attained the Reaching level. We report the overall percentage of students who attained Reaching, and the mean number of years spent in the English Learner status by those students (Table 6).

Kindergarten in	N	Reaching by 2017–2018		
		Percentage	Number	Mean Years
2010–2011	309	79%	235	4.95
2011–2012	392	77%	301	4.31
2012–2013	482	78%	374	4.33
2013–2014	521	57%	297	3.88
2014–2015	520	35%	181	3.08
2015–2016	476	18%	88	2.28

Table 6. Rates of English Learners Attaining Reaching and Time in Status by Kindergarten Cohort

Interpreting more recent cohorts is difficult as the 2015–2016 cohort would have only reached the third grade by the beginning of the 2018–2019 school year. For the three most recent Kindergarten cohorts, students have only been in the school system for 5 or fewer years. For these reasons, it is the most meaningful to examine progress over time for the first three Kindergarten cohorts entering the 2010–2011 through 2012–2013 school years (Table 7). The similar pattern of rates of attaining Reaching suggests that the new norm is for half of entering Kindergarten cohorts to be reclassified within four years. On the other

hand, rates for these three cohorts all appear to hit a ceiling at around 77–79% after 6 years, or at the end of fifth grade, with only small increases in attaining Reaching in subsequent years.

Grade	Cumulative Rates of Attaining Reaching		
	Kindergarten Cohort		
	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13
2nd	0%	8%	10%
3rd	23%	56%	52%
4th	64%	66%	65%
5th	72%	76%	78%
6th	73%	77%	
7th	76%		

Table 7. Cumulative Rates of Kindergarten Cohorts at Reaching by Grade Level of Attainment

How Long Do English Learners Spend at Each of the English Language Proficiency Levels?

Retrospective Cohorts

For the same three cohorts of exited English Learners detailed above, we compiled the average number of years that those exited students spent in each English language proficiency level as defined by WIDA (Table 8). If students were advancing every year, the mean number of years at each proficiency level would be 1.

Cohort	Mean Number of Years at Proficiency Level			
	Entering (ELP1)	Beginning (ELP2)	Developing (ELP3)	Expanding (ELP4)
2015–2016	1.53	1.56	1.88	1.64
2016–2017	1.66	1.52	1.65	1.60
2017–2018	1.65	1.49	1.68	1.58

Table 8. Mean Number of Years at Each Proficiency Level by Cohort

Overall, exited students are spending less time in each of the higher proficiency levels (Beginning (ELP2) through Expanding (ELP4)) when the cohort ending in 2018 is compared to the cohort ending in 2016. The average length of time spent in the Entering (ELP1) proficiency level has increased from the cohort ending in 2016 (1.53 years) to the cohort ending in 2018 (1.65 years). These trends suggest that students more recently reclassified as English proficient have spent less time in the English Learner status, and

most of the corresponding ELP levels. Looking within each exiting cohort, the levels where English Learners spend the most time have also changed. For the 2016 cohort, they spend the most time in the highest two ELP levels. For the more recent 2017 and 2018 cohorts, they spend the most time in the Entering (ELP₁) and Developing (ELP₃) levels. This pattern may suggest that students in the Expanding (ELP₄) are exiting somewhat more quickly.

An alternative measure is to consider for those three cohorts of reclassified students the percentage of students at each English language proficiency level who made progress to the next level after one year at the level—that is, they were at that level for exactly one year (Table 9). English language proficiency progress is 60% or higher for the Beginning (ELP₂) and Expanding (ELP₄) levels, while ranging between 45% and 58% for students who are Entering (ELP₁) or Developing (ELP₃).

Cohort	Percentage Spending One Year at Level			
	Entering (ELP ₁)	Beginning (ELP ₂)	Developing (ELP ₃)	Expanding (ELP ₄)
2015–2016	57%	60%	45%	62%
2016–2017	51%	64%	58%	67%
2017–2018	50%	62%	57%	60%

Table 9. Percentage of Students Who Make Progress to Next English Proficiency Level in One Year

Looking in greater depth at the cohort that exited in 2017–2018, we can disaggregate the mean number of years that students spent at each proficiency level by the grade level at which they exited (Table 10). Students who exited at the secondary level generally spent more time at each of the of proficiency levels. Students who exited in the middle grades spent longer on average at the Beginning (1.63 years) and Developing (1.73 years) levels. Those English Learners who exited in the high school grades spent close to two years each at the Developing (1.95 years) and Expanding (2.03 years) levels.

Grade Level at Exit	Mean Number of Years at Proficiency Level			
	Entering (ELP ₁)	Beginning (ELP ₂)	Developing (ELP ₃)	Expanding (ELP ₄)
K–5th	1.52	1.47	1.56	1.44
6th–8th	1.73	1.63	1.73	1.50
9th–12th	1.73	1.41	1.95	2.03

Table 10. Mean Number of Years at Each Proficiency Level for 2017–18 Cohort by Exit Grade Level

Rates of progress can also be compared based upon the grade levels in which students exited English Learner status (Table 11). In most cases, the progress of students who exit

in the elementary grades is more rapid at each of the English language proficiency levels, compared to those students who exit in middle or high school.

Grade Level at Exit	Percentage Spending One Year at Level			
	Entering (ELP1)	Beginning (ELP2)	Developing (ELP3)	Expanding (ELP4)
K–5th	55%	62%	59%	67%
6th–8th	47%	56%	48%	62%
9th–12th	43%	68%	52%	42%

Table 11. Percentage of Students Who Make Progress to the Next English Proficiency in One Year Among Students Exiting in 2017–18 by Grade Level of Exit

Longevity of English Learner Status

Looking at how long students stayed in the first four English language proficiency levels, we tabulated by grade the number of students who were classified English Learners for 5 or more years, and those who had been English Learners since Kindergarten (Table 12). In the middle school level, nearly half (44%) of English Learners have been in that status for five or more years, and two fifths (40%) have been in that category since Kindergarten. In the high school level, about one fifth (20%) of English Learners have been in the category for five or more years. One in 10 high school English Learners (11%) have been in that category since Kindergarten.

Grade	English Learner for 5+ years		English Learner since Kindergarten	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
6th	95	47%	88	43%
7th	83	41%	71	35%
8th	81	46%	77	43%
Middle School	259	44%	236	40%
9th	52	18%	36	13%
10th	55	19%	33	11%
11th	62	23%	33	12%
12th	18	18%	*	*
High School	187	20%	102	11%

Table 12. Longevity as English Learners by Current Grade Level

What Are the Outcomes and Achievement of English Learners and Former English Learners?

This section is organized according to several outcomes that range from proximal measures of school engagement (e.g., attendance) to distal outcomes (such as graduation):

- Attendance
- Disciplinary incidents
- Advanced coursework
- Dropout, graduation status, and diploma type

Attendance

As defined by the Virginia Department of Education (2018), a student is “chronically absent” when he or she misses 10% of a school year. We calculated the percentage of students who were “chronically absent” (Table 13). For school accountability purposes, the state-monitored cut-offs are when more than 15% or more than 25% of students are chronically absent. Those subgroups in APS with 25% or more of students being chronically absent are highlighted in red below, while those subgroups 15% or more but less than 25% of students chronically absent are highlighted in orange (Table 13).

School Year	Grade	ELP1	ELP2	ELP3	ELP4	ELP5	ELP6	Former EL	Never EL
2015–2016	K	15%	9%	7%	11%				5%
	1	8%	9%	4%	8%	0%	4%	0%	4%
	2	3%	5%	3%	7%	0%	6%	0%	3%
	3	7%	4%	3%	3%	0%	1%	4%	3%
	4	5%	6%	7%	3%	0%	3%	2%	3%
	5	6%	11%	2%	6%	0%	3%	3%	4%
	6	9%	9%	2%	3%	8%	4%	3%	2%
	7	2%	0%	4%	10%	10%	4%	3%	4%
	8	15%	3%	6%	7%	11%	3%	3%	6%
	9	19%	10%	7%	6%	3%	12%	4%	4%
	10	30%	17%	25%	34%	11%	9%	5%	8%
	11	13%	24%	27%	13%	14%	13%	15%	9%
12	33%	38%	44%	52%	18%	26%	21%	13%	
2016–2017	K	16%	11%	11%	7%				7%
	1	16%	14%	8%	12%	0%	10%	0%	5%
	2	6%	7%	5%	5%	0%	4%		5%
	3	9%	8%	6%	5%	0%	7%	7%	4%
	4	9%	15%	7%	6%	0%	6%	5%	4%
	5	13%	11%	7%	5%	0%	5%	7%	4%
	6	9%	5%	4%	4%	0%	2%	3%	4%
	7	6%	10%	2%	5%	5%	8%	4%	5%
	8	7%	9%	2%	10%	12%	3%	4%	5%
	9	24%	6%	15%	9%	8%	3%	4%	5%
	10	39%	32%	19%	24%	15%	17%	8%	7%
	11	37%	36%	36%	41%	24%	18%	13%	10%
12	67%	50%	56%	44%	36%	30%	26%	17%	

School Year	Grade	ELP1	ELP2	ELP3	ELP4	ELP5	ELP6	Former EL	Never EL
2017–2018	K	16%	14%	13%	8%				7%
	1	11%	10%	12%	4%		0%		5%
	2	14%	9%	6%	6%		9%		4%
	3	8%	5%	8%	4%		3%		3%
	4	8%	5%	5%	6%		5%		5%
	5	8%	6%	7%	6%		5%	4%	5%
	6	17%	10%	2%	9%		4%	0%	4%
	7	9%	5%	7%	11%		5%	4%	7%
	8	6%	22%	10%	8%		8%	6%	4%
	9	25%	17%	2%	9%		7%	6%	5%
	10	33%	24%	28%	20%		14%	11%	8%
	11	56%	51%	37%	27%		18%	15%	11%
12	57%	75%	56%	45%		34%	22%	18%	

Table 13. Percentage of APS Students Who Are “Chronically Absent” by Grade and English Language Proficiency (ELP) Level

Disciplinary Incidents

Disciplinary incidents include violations such as disorderly conduct, misuse of electronic devices, and harassment. Such incidents may result in no formal action or in-school or out-of-school suspension. The number and rates of disciplinary incident vary across English language proficiency levels and fluctuate across school years (Table 14). For most groups (e.g., Entering (ELP1), Developing (ELP3), Reaching (ELP6), and Never English Learners) the rates of disciplinary incidents have increased across three school years.

	School Year					
	2015–16		2016–17		2017–18	
	Number	Pct	Number	Pct	Number	Pct
Entering (ELP1)	25	1.5%	67	3.8%	59	4.7%
Beginning (ELP2)	25	2.0%	19	1.7%	41	3.6%
Developing (ELP3)	36	2.6%	48	3.6%	73	5.1%
Expanding (ELP 4)	63	6.6%	61	5.8%	79	5.6%
Bridging (ELP5)	45	11.0%	40	10.4%		
Reaching (ELP6)	13	1.0%	49	3.4%	97	4.4%
Former English Learner	88	4.6%	115	5.9%	75	5.8%
Never English Learner	326	1.9%	405	2.3%	509	2.7%

Table 14. Number and Percentage of Students with One or More Disciplinary Incidents by English Language Proficiency (ELP) Level and School Year

Phonological Awareness Literacy Screener (PALS)

Following a cohort of first-graders across three years, the rates at which they were able to meet the grade-level standards on the PALS varied largely by their initial ELP level, as shown in Figure L. Students who started in ELP3 (Developing) in the first grade had performance that was comparable to non-ELs. Those students who were in ELP4 did better than their non-EL peers across the three school years.

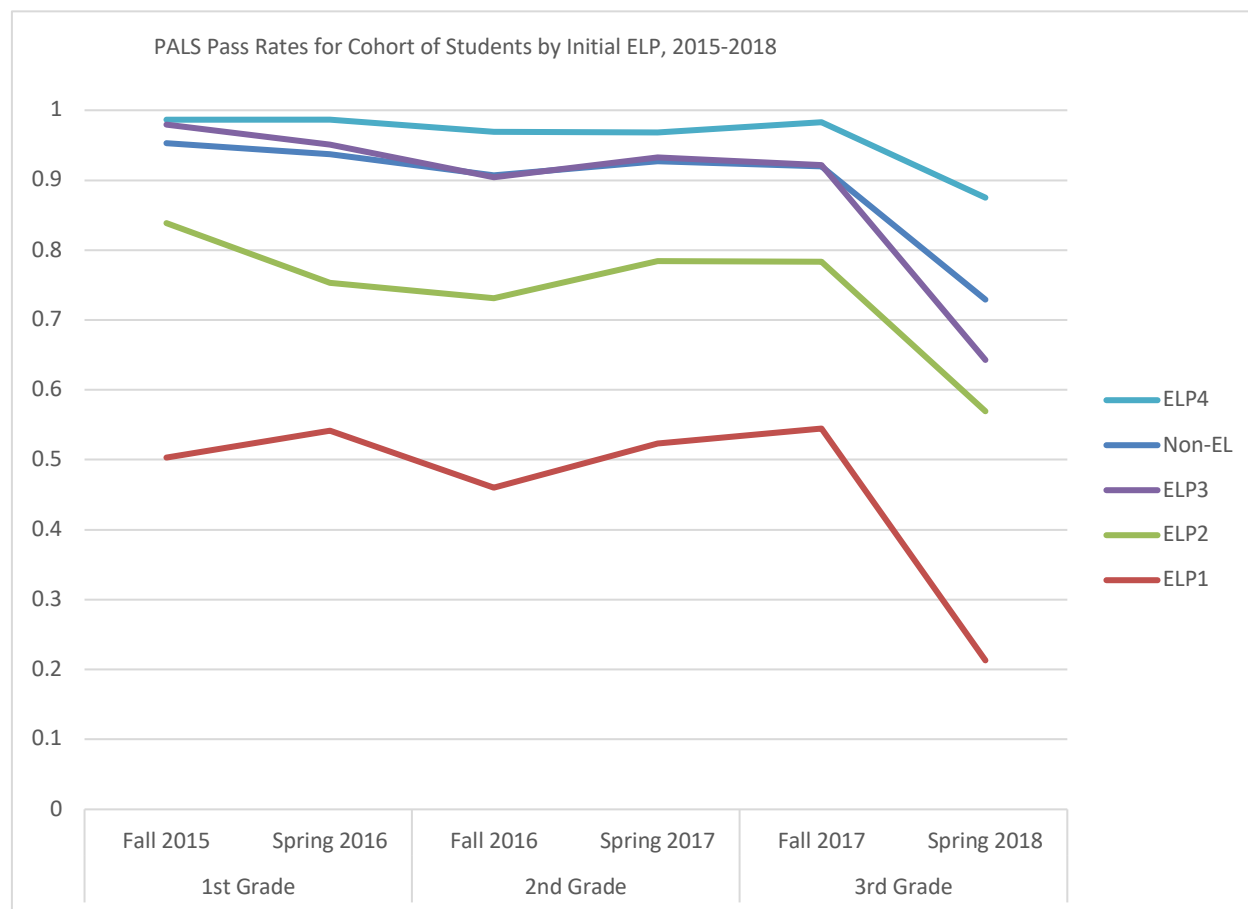


Figure L. PALS Pass Rates for Students by Initial ELP, 2015-2018

For the PALS-Plus assessment given to 4th and 5th graders, on the latest administration available (given in Spring 2018), a similar pattern of performance related to ELP was observed (Table 15).

	Percentage Met PALS-PLUS	
	Grade	
	4 th	5 th
ELP1	15%	9%
ELP2	9%	10%
ELP3	28%	12%
ELP4	82%	39%
ELP6	88%	63%
Non EL	63%	70%

Table 15. Percentage of 4th and 5th Grade Students Meeting PALS-PLUS Standard by English Language Proficiency, Spring 2018

For the SOL tests, because some tests are not given in each year, some ELP categories were combined in reporting and tracking recent trends in performance levels across subjects (See Tables 16 and 17).

Test	SY	Level	ELP1	ELP2	ELP3	ELP4	ELP5	ELP6	Non EL
Reading	2015-16	Advanced	43%	43%	10%	4%	4%	9%	33%
		Proficient	24%	25%	37%	48%	51%	75%	59%
	2016-17	Advanced	48%	34%	10%	4%	4%	12%	34%
		Proficient	25%	18%	34%	47%	46%	73%	59%
	2017-18	Advanced	13%	5%	3%	3%	N/A	12%	33%
		Proficient	9%	16%	32%	51%	N/A	74%	59%
Math	2015-16	Advanced	9%	9%	6%	7%	5%	19%	31%
		Proficient	34%	47%	54%	61%	62%	67%	59%
	2016-17	Advanced	10%	7%	4%	6%	5%	17%	31%
		Proficient	32%	42%	49%	60%	63%	69%	60%
	2017-18	Advanced	10%	6%	4%	6%	N/A	17%	31%
		Proficient	34%	37%	47%	60%	N/A	68%	57%

Table 16. Percentage at Performance Levels on Math and Reading SOL by ELP level

	SY	Level	ELP1-3	ELP4	ELP5	ELP6	Non EL
Writing	2015-16	Advanced	19%	1%	3%	4%	41%
		Proficient	15%	26%	45%	68%	47%
	2016-17	Advanced	15%	1%	2%	5%	44%
		Proficient	8%	23%	36%	64%	45%
	2017-18	Advanced	18%	2%	N/A	10%	44%
		Proficient	13%	40%	N/A	61%	46%
History	2015-16	Advanced	3%	3%	2%	15%	31%
		Proficient	36%	48%	65%	63%	60%
	2016-17	Advanced	6%	4%	1%	14%	33%
		Proficient	37%	39%	58%	64%	58%
	2017-18	Advanced	4%	5%	N/A	12%	29%
		Proficient	34%	46%	N/A	66%	61%
Science	2015-16	Advanced	4%	1%	2%	8%	29%
		Proficient	24%	53%	60%	73%	63%
	2016-17	Advanced	2%	0%	2%	8%	29%
		Proficient	26%	44%	58%	72%	63%
	2017-18	Advanced	3%	2%	N/A	7%	28%
		Proficient	24%	50%	N/A	76%	62%

Table 17. Percentage at Performance Levels on Writing, History, and Science SOL by ELP level

Advanced Courses

In middle school, students at the Reaching level take advanced courses (e.g., Algebra, Geometry, Math 7 for sixth graders, Pre-Algebra for seventh graders, and intensified language courses including Spanish, French, and Chinese) at rates less than one half of those students who are not English Learners. Students who have been classified as Proficient in English, however, take advanced courses as or more often than their non-English Learner peers at the middle school level (Table 18).

	(ELP1-3)	Expanding (ELP4)	Bridging (ELP5)	Reaching (ELP6)	Proficient Former EL	Never EL
2015-16	3%	9%	29%	23%	56%	49%
2016-17	8%	13%	31%	26%	60%	61%
2017-18	6%	18%	N/A	31%	79%	64%

Table 18. Percentage of Middle School Students Taking Advanced Coursework by English Language Proficiency Level and School Year

In terms of the percentage of students enrolled in at least one advanced high school course (i.e., Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, dual enrollment, or other intensified courses), students in the first four English language proficiency levels are enrolled at lower rates (5%–21%) than their Reaching counterparts. Former English Learners are enrolled at rates generally comparable to their peers who were never English Learners (Table 19).

	ELP1–3	ELP4	ELP5	ELP6	Former EL	Never EL
2015–2016	8%	13%	20%	48%	70%	73%
2016–2017	5%	16%	23%	50%	75%	76%
2017–2018	5%	21%		59%	76%	77%

Table 19. Percentage of High School Students Enrolled in at Least One AP/IB or Advanced/Intensified Course by English Language Proficiency and School Year

Graduation Status and Diploma Type

For the cohort of students who were scheduled to graduate in 2018, attainment of outcomes varied widely based upon the English language proficiency levels and English Learner status (Table 20). Calculations of outcomes exclude students who transferred out from the denominator. Students in the first three English language proficiency levels attained a diploma at a rate of 28%, with a dropout rate of 43%. A large majority of diploma recipients at the first three English language proficiency levels were dually identified as special education. Among the 88 students who had reached the Expanding (ELP4) level, a large majority (81%) received diplomas. Students who were at the Reaching level or former English Learners achieved diplomas at rates (96–97%) comparable to their never English Learner counterparts (96%).

ELP Levels	Number in Graduation Cohort	Diploma	Dropout	Still Enrolled
ELP1–3	56	28%	43%	28%
ELP4	88	81%	*	*
Reaching	162	96%	*	*
Former English Learner	241	97%	*	*
Never English Learner	1023	96%	3%	*

Table 20. Cohort Status by English Language Proficiency Subgroup for Graduating Class of 2018

A related pattern was also seen in the distribution of diploma types, among those who had received them (Table 21). A large majority of students at the first four English

language proficiency levels received a Standard diploma (74%), while a sizable fraction (19%) received a diploma of “Other,” less advanced type. Two fifths of students who were at the Reaching level (42%) received an Advanced Studies diploma, while the percentage of students who received an Advanced Studies or International Baccalaureate diploma among former English Learners (67%) was comparable to the percentage among students who were never classified as English Learners (74%).

Subgroup	Number	Other	Standard	Advanced Studies	Int'l Bacc.
Entering (ELP1)–Expanding (ELP4)	85	19%	74%	*	*
Reaching	156	*	58%	42%	*
Former English Learner	234	*	30%	67%	*
Never English Learner	976	2%	25%	68%	6%

Table 21. Diploma Type by English Language Proficiency Subgroup among Recipients

How Does the Academic Performance of English Learners in Arlington Compare with Other Large Urban Districts in Virginia?

Drawing upon data published by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) with regard to passing rates on the Standards of Learning (SOL) for English Learners, we compiled the following tables comparing Arlington Public Schools to five other large urban districts based upon results from 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19 (Figures M, N, and O).

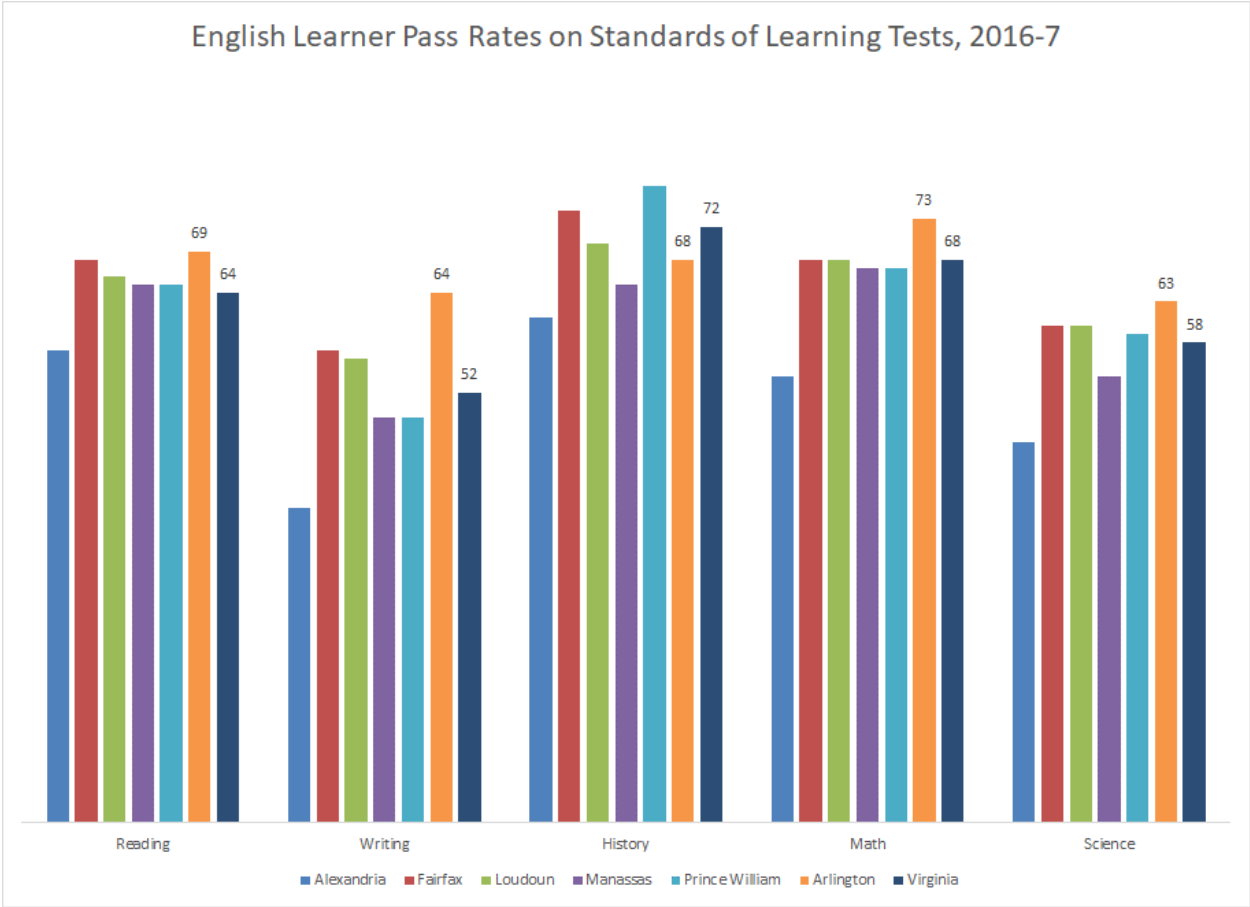


Figure M. Proficiency Rates of Current English Learners by Standard of Learning and District, 2016–17
SOURCE: Virginia Department of Education

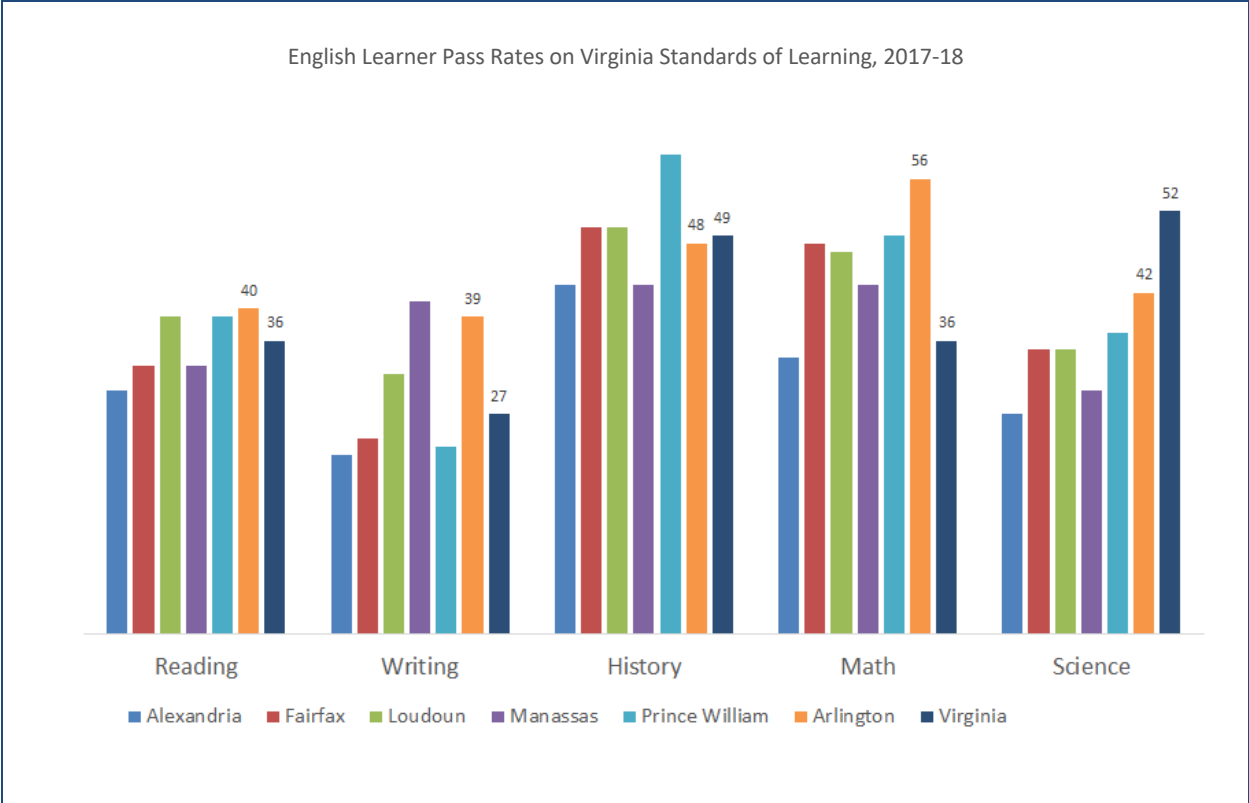


Figure N. Proficiency Rates of Current English Learners by Standard of Learning and District, 2017–18
SOURCE: Virginia Department of Education

During the 2017–2018 school year, in three out of five subject areas (reading, writing, and mathematics), Arlington Public Schools English Learners passed at rates higher than the English Learners in the state as a whole. In three subject areas (reading, mathematics, and science), Arlington Public Schools English Learners passed at rates higher than all five of the other comparison districts. In history, English Learners in Arlington passed the Standards of Learning at a rate (48%) lower than three other divisions (Prince William, Loudon, and Fairfax) as well as the state as a whole (49%).

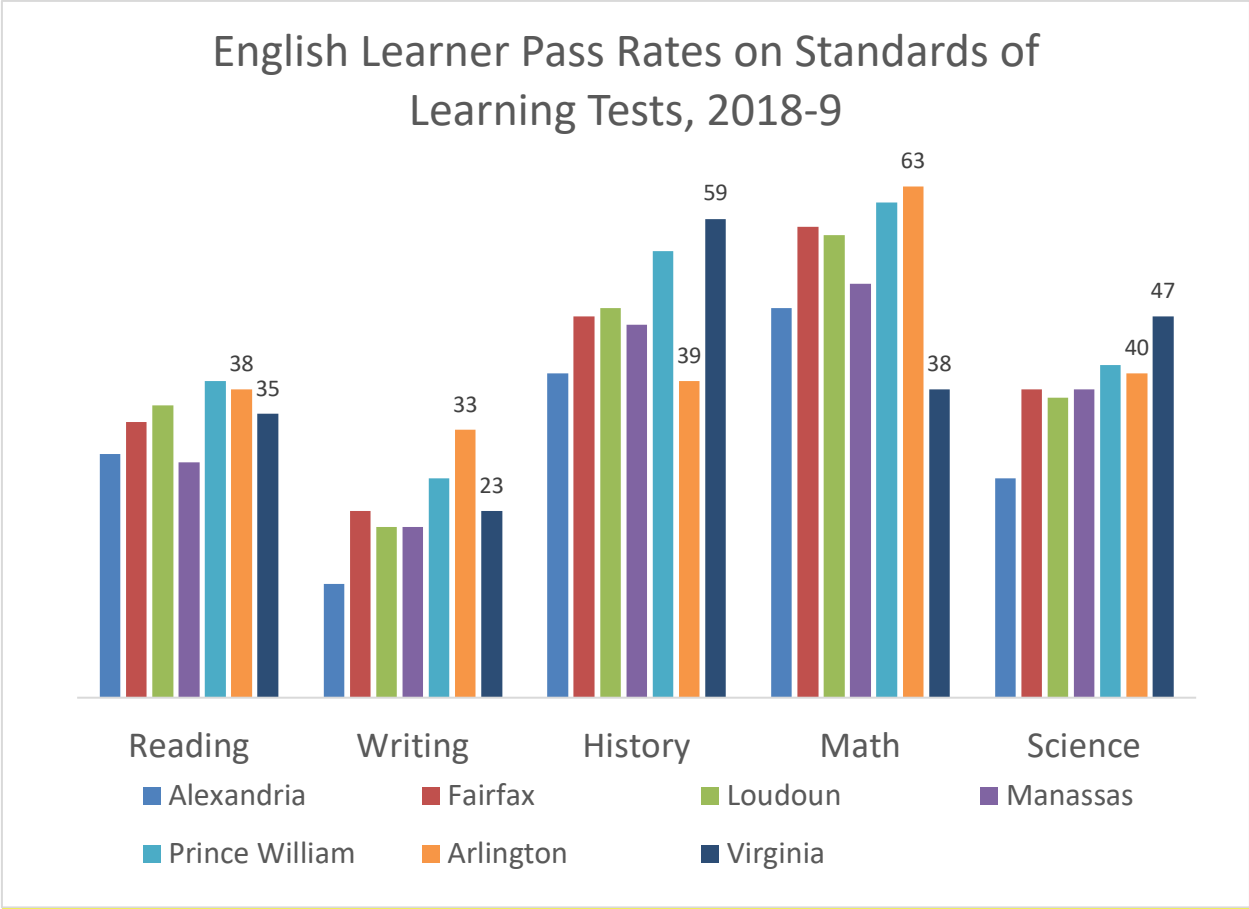


Figure O. Proficiency Rates of Current English Learners by Standard of Learning and Division, 2018-19.
SOURCE: Virginia Department of Education

In the most recent 2018-19 school year, APS English Learners did better than their statewide English Learner counterparts in three subjects (Reading, Writing, and Math). In Writing and Math, APS English Learner pass rates exceeded the state average by 10 percentage points and 25 percentage points, respectively.

What are Patterns and Trends within Different Subgroups of English Learners?

In this section, we consider subgroups defined by two additional variables:

- Initial grade of classification as English Learner
- Special education status

Initial Grade of Classification as English Learner

Another way to look to consider the retrospective rates at which groups of English Learners attain Reaching is to use the initial grade level of classification as English Learner. These groups are not cohorts because the students initially entered English Learner status in different school years. For these purposes, we considered all students who were classified as Proficient in the 2017–2018 school year (Table 22). Overall, students who were first enrolled as English Learners in Kindergarten were by far the largest group (69%, or 403 out of 586 students). Fewer than 50% of all students who arrived after 1st grade have attained the Reaching proficiency level. This result indicates that students who arrive later than Kindergarten may have different characteristics and needs that require additional attention in attaining English language proficiency.

The mean number of years spent in English Learner status generally tends to decrease as the initial grade as English Learner increases (Table 22). This trend only describes students who were reclassified as Proficient, which is to say that those students who attain Reaching do so more quickly, which may mean they are not entering at the first English language proficiency level. Given that the majority of students who were initially classified in 1st grade or later are still in the first four English language proficiency levels, it may be that they have different needs and growth trajectories in terms of English language proficiency.

Initial Grade as EL	Number	Mean Years to Attain Reaching (ELP6)
Kindergarten	403	4.55
1st–3rd	96	2.84
4th–5th	46	2.06
6th–8th	37	2.08
9th–10th	14	1.43

Table 22. Percentage of English Learners to Attain Reaching and Mean Years by Entry Grade for Students Reclassified as Proficient in 2017–18

Special Education Status

In terms of students who were dually identified (those English Learners receiving special education services), we compiled results based upon a few key questions, including time to English language proficiency, disciplinary incidents, and graduation for latest cohort in the 2017–2018 school year.

Among the 586 students who achieved proficiency in the 2017–2018 school year, there were 87 students enrolled in special education who had spent time as English Learners. The average number of years spent in English Learner status was slightly lower (3.74 years) compared to the overall average (3.88 years), and the distribution had a somewhat different shape, with many students spending only one year in English Learner status (25%), or two years (17%) and five years (18%) in the English Learner category (Figure P).

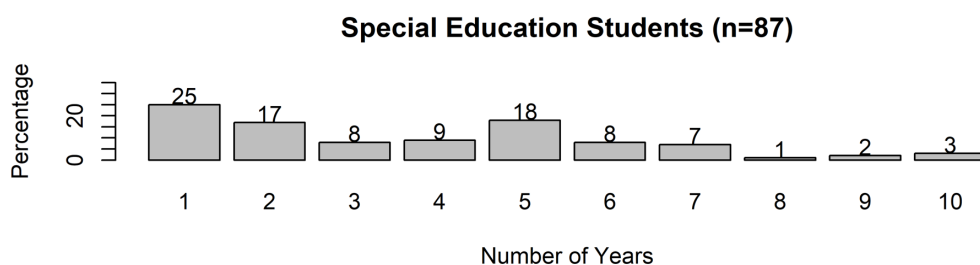


Figure P. Time Spent in English Learner Status among Special Education Students Who Exited in 2017–18

In terms of discipline, English Learners receiving special education services have higher rates of discipline-related incidents than their counterparts who do not receive special education services. This is true for English Learners at all four English proficiency levels (Table 23). Among former English Learners, however, rates of disciplinary incidents are higher among those students who are not identified as special education (4.9%) compared to those who are (2.2%).

	Not Special Education		Special Education	
	Pct	Number	Pct	Number
Entering (ELP1)	4.9%	51	*	*
Beginning (ELP2)	3.3%	28	4.9%	13
Developing (ELP3)	2.7%	29	13.7%	44
Expanding (ELP 4)	3.0%	32	15.1%	47
Reaching (ELP6)	3.9%	76	10.9%	21
Former EL	4.9%	60	2.2%	15
Never EL	1.5%	237	9.4%	272

Table 23. Percentage of Students and Number having Disciplinary Incidents by Special Education Status and English Language Proficiency

Among the 81 dually identified students who had ever been English Learners in the 2018 graduation cohort, 74 students (91%) received a diploma. Among the 74 diploma recipients, a majority (74%, or 55 students) received a Standard diploma, while a smaller fraction (15%, or 12 students) received an Applied Studies diploma. While some of these

74 students did receive an Advanced Studies diploma, the number was smaller than 10 and therefore too small to report.

Potential issues to consider based upon these findings include:

- Practices around exiting English Learners into mainstream instruction.
- Approaches to addressing the large population of middle school English Learners who have been in that category their entire school careers.
- Targeted efforts to address absenteeism among high school English Learners.

Professional Learning and Collaboration Opportunities around English Learners

In order to answer this question, we drew from multiple data sources, including teacher and administrator surveys, teacher and administrator interviews, and teacher focus groups.

Perceived Self-Efficacy and Support

We surveyed all general education teachers and EL teachers in the district. Responses to the survey demonstrate considerable variation in teachers’ perceptions of self-efficacy in teaching English Learners. In general, EL teachers were much more likely (43%–56% strongly agreeing) to report that they were both well-prepared and well-supported to teach English Learners, compared to general education teachers (18%–21% strongly agreeing) (Table 24).

	ESOL/ HILT Teachers	General Education Teachers
I have sufficient professional preparation to meet the needs of English Learners.	49%	20%
I have ample professional learning opportunities to support me in my job.	43%	21%
I am well-supported in teaching English Learners in my classes.	45%	18%
I am effective at designing instruction that supports English Learners.	56%	21%

Table 24. Percentage of EL and General Education Teachers Strongly Agreeing with Survey Statements

Professional Learning

When asked about professional development opportunities, educators indicated that professional learning on the topic of English Learners is popular among EL teachers. By contrast, general education teachers are more likely to opt out. Notwithstanding, teachers reported needing additional EL-related professional development in the areas of pedagogical scaffolding, second language acquisition, culturally responsive education, and co-teaching.

“Professional Development on ELLs should be integrated within the PD on core content—English reading, writing, math, and science, just as our students are integrated. It should not be a separate (thus optional) module, but part of how all of us instruct and assess our students.”

– Teacher

Co-Teaching

There is significant variation both within and across school sites in terms of how co-teaching for English Learners is designed, communicated, and implemented. Within observed lessons, EL teachers very infrequently shared teaching roles equally with the general education teacher.

Educators also reported that insufficient time is provided for full and productive collaboration in planning lessons to be co-taught. One non-EL educator summarized this sentiment stating, “I wish I had more time and opportunity to meet and plan with my HILT teachers to better support our students.” Another educator stated, “Ample co-planning time needs to be made available to teachers who are suddenly expected to be teaching courses together. This is not occurring at my school.”

Parent Engagement and School Climate

This section addresses the question: *How successful are school and district efforts to engage parents of English Learners and create welcoming schools?*

Parent focus groups, as well as teacher and administrator interviews, served as the primary data sources for responding to this evaluation question.

Findings reveal that parents of English Learners at both elementary and secondary levels hold high aspirations for their children, wanting them to be able to study at university and have the career of their choice. Parents indicated overall satisfaction with individual school site and district efforts to engage them in their child's schooling. Specifically, parents of English Learners were more likely to say that their child's teacher was a good partner than parents of non-English Learners, and reported that schools communicated well with them more often (74% quite well or better) than parents of non-English Learner students (64% quite well or better) (See Figure Q).

“I feel very supported by the school. We live just a few meters from here. Because in every circumstance, in any emergency the people at this school are supporting me. I'm a single mother and this school for my two children is like a second home. Women at this school say to my daughters, 'We are your aunts' and so I am very grateful. I feel very integrated into the community here and my kids are happy.”

– Parent of elementary EL students

Some parents of English Learners also offered potential areas for improved communication at both the district and school levels, particularly in the areas of program placement, testing, and resources for support. For example, all of the parents in one of the focus groups (with at least 20 parents in attendance) said that they did not know how their children were initially identified to be a part of the EL program. Parents were especially curious as to why U.S.-born children are also in the EL program. There is an acute lack of awareness among parents as to what qualifies a student to receive English Learner services in the district. Parents are similarly unaware of the testing policies in the district. They asked, for example, whether standardized tests are given in English or in students' home language(s).

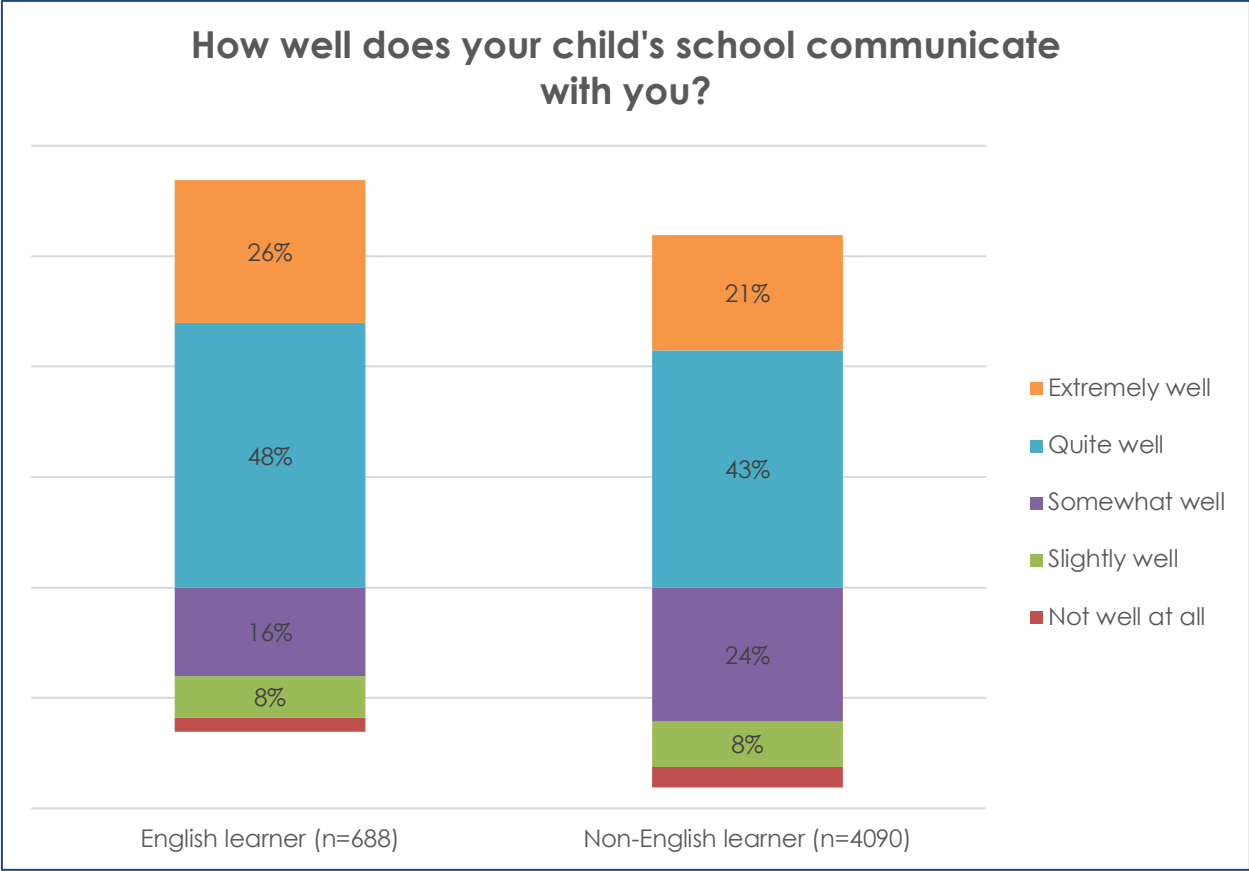


Figure Q. Parent Perception of Quality of School Communications by Child's English Learner Status

Parents of secondary English Learners requested more and clearer information about course choices and placement policies. Additionally, parents of secondary English Learners expressed concerns that their children are separated in ELD classes where they do not learn English fast enough, while experiencing bullying from their mainstream peers. One parent of a high school English Learner summarized concerns about the treatment of English Learners by non-English Learners as follows:

I have spent much time in schools and I have seen non-EL students behave very poorly toward EL students. We need to advocate on their [EL students'] behalf by asking school leaders to take control of the situation, to assign someone to look after HILT students to make sure it doesn't continue.

Regarding access to credit-bearing courses, some parents of high school-aged English Learners acknowledged that students' prolonged enrollment in ELD courses prevented their children from enrolling in certain credit-bearing courses. This comment was echoed by teachers and students as well.

In terms of preparing students for their future, parents of both elementary and secondary English Learners see a need to provide targeted efforts to expose students to various career options: “I would like to know if there is a class that students can take that could give them information on what different careers are out there and how much education is required to enter into those fields. Kids need to know what jobs and career paths are available. They need a special class so that they can learn about all the different options.”

Lastly, parents at both the elementary and secondary levels described the tremendous strain they and their families are under—single parents who are working and raising children, families that experienced trauma in their home countries prior to their arrival in the U.S., adults having to navigate a web of social services in addition to their work and child-rearing responsibilities. They expressed satisfaction with the bilingual parent liaisons who they feel are good at building community within schools. However, they felt that the district could do a better job of creating safe spaces for parents to support one another.

District Programs and Policies for English Learners

Findings in this category provide a general description of the program models available to English Learners across the district.⁴ More importantly, the findings speak to the clarity, articulation, and implementation of programs and initiatives for diverse subgroups of English Learners throughout the district. The primary finding with regard to programs and policies for English Learners is that the district has a well-articulated system of entry, placement, and a variety of program models and supports to serve diverse groups of English Learners.

Student Placement in English Learner Programs

Upon enrolling in APS, ELs are identified and placed for services according to policies articulated by the Virginia Department of Education. Data from focus groups and interviews with district administrators indicated that for all students coming into APS, parents or legal guardians need to complete a Home Language Survey. Any survey

⁴ Due to the variation in policies and programs at elementary and secondary grade levels, we have noted findings that are particular to either only elementary grades or only secondary grades where necessary.

responses that indicate that “a language other than English” is spoken in the home are flagged and the student’s English proficiency is immediately assessed at the Language Services Resource Center (LSRC) using the language proficiency assessment adopted by the Virginia Department of Education—the WIDA ACCESS.

In addition to assessing a student’s language proficiency, LRSC staff also administer a basic math screener to see if the student has any foundational knowledge in math. If a student is found to have very low levels of English proficiency, the math screener is conducted in the student’s home language (if it is available). If it is determined that a student has no English proficiency, a writing sample is collected in his/her home language to determine the student’s level of literacy in that language. When it is available, LRSC staff also collect any additional information that parents have from the student’s previous school(s) and this information is used in the identification and placement process.

Upon concluding the assessments, LRSC staff meet with the parents and share the results of the English Proficiency Assessment and provide an idea of where the student placed in all four language domains (listening, speaking, reading, writing). If it is determined by LRSC staff that English Learner services are required, the student is officially designated as an English Learner. Although the LRSC makes recommendations for program and grade level placement, it is up to the school to make a final decision about program and grade level. In the case of secondary schools, the counselors at individual school sites take all the information collected by the LRSC (including coursework, units completed in the prior state or home country) and make a decision on grade and program placement.

At the elementary level program models for English Learners include a dual language model in which instruction takes place in Spanish and English, or an English-only model in which the student receives pullout ELD instruction by an EL teacher or “push-in” instruction from his/her classroom teacher and co-teacher. At the middle and high school level, English Learners are placed in content area courses (some of which are designed especially for English Learners) ELD courses according to the student’s WIDA level. As long as they are designated English Learners, students must take the WIDA ACCESS on an annual basis. Students must achieve a score of 4.4 on the assessment to qualify for reclassification into the general education program.

Program Models

Elementary English Learner Instructional Program Models	
Co-teach	In the co-teaching model, the classroom teacher and the English Learner teacher plan and teach the content together. The teachers share instructional responsibility and are both involved in the teaching and assessing of student. The English Learner teacher addresses the language acquisition needs through differentiated instruction. This instruction gives the English Learners access to and understanding of the grade level standards.
Push-in	In the push-in model, the classroom teacher and the English Learner teacher share instructional responsibilities. The English Learner teacher works with small groups of English Learners inside their grade level classroom, with a focus on English language development. This instruction gives the English Learners access to and understanding of the grade level content.
Pull-out	In the pull-out model, English language development instruction by the English Learner teacher takes place in small groups outside of the classroom. This intense instruction is often for short periods of time and can be in groups by English proficiency level or heterogeneous learning groups.
Consult/Monitor	This model is for students who have reached English proficiency and may still need language support. It is provided by English Learner teachers meeting with classroom teachers to share scaffolded lesson plans, adapted texts, or other language supports.

Table 25. Elementary English Learner Program Models

As indicated in the Table 25 above, there are four program models that serve English Learners in the elementary grades: the Co-teaching model, the push-in model, the pull-out model, and the consult/monitor model. One additional program model—the Dual Language Immersion program model—exists at two elementary schools. Native Spanish-speaking English Learners in Dual Language Immersion classrooms have the benefit of a Spanish-speaking teacher who can support the acquisition of their content knowledge and English language development.

At the secondary level, program models for English Learners were primarily English only. Some courses, depending on the subject area, are designated content classes for EL students (e.g., EL Science, EL Social Studies, etc.) at particular WIDA levels. Other courses (e.g., P.E. and electives) are taught by general education teachers. All English Learners are required to be enrolled in a separate ELD class in addition to their regular content courses. As reported on teacher surveys, 21% of general education teachers strongly agree that they are effective at designing instruction that supports English Learners. Given the difficulty of supplying co-teachers who are specialists in EL education to all general education teachers, general education teachers can benefit from a coherent and consistent program of professional development that enables them to deliver appropriately rigorous, grade-level content instruction to English Learners with adequate support. As we have stated elsewhere in this report, it is the responsibility of all educators

to meet the language and content needs of English Learners, whether they view themselves as teachers of language or not. Program components for middle school in each subject area and by each English proficiency level are provided in the Table 26.

Middle School English Learner Instructional Program Models		
Subject	English Language Development (ELD) 1 and 2	English Language Development (ELD) 3 and 4
Language Arts	ELD 1 and ELD 2 Language Arts and Reading (two periods for each level, EL 1 and EL 2): These courses are designed for English Learners who are identified as EL 1 and EL 2. The courses teach English language arts and reading through a curriculum that is similar to the general education English language arts curriculum. Materials and instruction are appropriate for EL 1 and EL 2 students and allow them access to the standards of the general education courses.	ELD 3 and ELD 4 Language Arts and Reading (two periods for each level). These courses are designed for English Learners who are identified as EL 3 and EL 4. The courses follow the Virginia Standards of Learning for language arts and are taught using appropriate materials in order for students to understand the content while developing English language proficiency.
Social Studies	ELD 1 Social Studies and ELD 2 Social Studies: Each course is designed for English Learners who are identified as EL 1 and EL 2. This course follows the Virginia Standards of Learning for US History (Part 1) and builds content knowledge and English language proficiency.	ELD 3-4 US History, Civics, and Economics to 1865 or General Education History. ELD 3-4 US History, Civics, and Economics to 1865 courses are designed for English Learners who are identified as EL 3 or EL 4. Geography/World History courses align to the general education standards for geography and world history.
Science	ELD 1 Science and ELD 2 Science: Both courses are designed for English Learners who are identified as EL 1 and EL 2. The courses build background and mastery of Virginia middle school science content and English language proficiency.	Science – Students are enrolled in a general education science course.
Math	General Education Mathematics (with additional support, if needed, through enrollment in an EL Mathematics class): Students are enrolled in the appropriate mathematics course. If additional support is needed, a student can also be enrolled in an ELD Mathematics course that supports learning the mathematics concepts and the language of mathematics.	Mathematics – Students are enrolled in a general education mathematics course.
Electives	Physical Education – Students are enrolled in general education physical education. Elective – Students select and are enrolled in one or two general education elective(s) of their choice to match their interests as their schedule permits.	Physical Education – Students are enrolled in a general education physical education course. Elective – Students select and are enrolled in general education electives of their choice match their interests.

Table 26. Middle School English Learner Instructional Program Models

Similarly, program components for high school provided in Table 27.

High School English Learner Instructional Program Models		
Subject	English Language Development (ELD) 1 and 2	English Language Development (ELD) 3 and 4
Language Arts	ELD 1 and ELD 2 Language Arts and Reading: These courses are designed for English Learners who are identified as EL 1 or EL 2. The courses teach English language arts and reading through a curriculum that is similar to the English language arts curriculum of the general education classes. Materials and instruction are appropriate for EL 1 and EL 2 students and allow them access to the standards of the general education courses.	English 9 ELD 3-4 (two periods): These courses are designed for English Learners who are identified as EL 3 or EL 4. These courses follow the English 9 Standards of Learning and are taught using appropriate materials in order for students to understand the content while developing English language proficiency. English 10 ELD 3-4 (two periods): These courses are designed for English Learners who are identified as EL 3 or EL 4. These courses follow the English 10 Standards of Learning and are taught using appropriate materials in order for students to understand the content while developing English language proficiency.
Social Studies	ELD 1 and ELD 2 Social Studies: These social studies credit-bearing classes align with the Virginia Standards of Learning.	ELD 3-4 or General Education Social Studies: EL 3 and EL 4 students can be enrolled in a variety of social studies classes, which can include World Geography, World History, US/Virginia History, or US Government.
Science	ELD 1 and ELD 2 Science: The course builds background on high school science content and English language proficiency. ELD Principles of Physics: This science credit-bearing class aligns with the Virginia Standards of Learning.	ELD 3-4 or General Education Science: EL 3 and EL 4 students can be enrolled in a variety of science classes, which can include Environmental Science, Biology, Chemistry, or Earth Science.
Math	General Education Mathematics (with additional support, if needed, through enrollment in an EL Mathematics class): Students are enrolled in the appropriate grade level mathematics course. If additional support is needed, a student can also be enrolled in an EL Mathematics course that supports learning the mathematics concepts and the language of mathematics.	Mathematics – Students are enrolled in a general education mathematics course.
Electives	Physical Education – Students are enrolled in general education physical education. Elective – Students select and are enrolled in general education electives of their choice to match their interests, as their schedule permits.	Physical Education – Students are enrolled in a general education physical education course. Elective – Students select and are enrolled in general education electives of their choice to match their interests.

Table 27. High School English Learner Instructional Program Models

Monitoring of English Learners at the Elementary and Secondary Levels

At the beginning of each academic year, elementary-level students are assessed in Reading using the Developmental Reading Assessment and Fountas & Pinnell. At each school, the reading specialists and EL teachers at each grade meet to go over these scores, scores on Virginia's Standards of Learning (SOL) assessment, and scores from the WIDA ACCESS. The collaboration between reading specialists and EL teachers continues throughout the year with both groups meeting on average once a month. Together, they determine whether a student is spending too much time out of class due to special interventions and make adjustments to the services individual English Learners should receive (e.g., if a student needs more language support, they may offer Leveled Literacy Intervention with language support). Meetings between reading specialists and EL teachers also take place after quarterly assessments in reading and math in order to identify students who need additional support. There are also regularly held Collaborative Learning Team (CLT) meetings across grade levels with a reading specialist, SPED teacher and EL teacher. They, too, are given time for planning and monitoring of student progress. In instances in which a student is not doing well, a Protocol Meeting takes place to determine what the student's needs are and next steps in terms of providing support and/or assessment. Protocol Meetings include the assistant principal, classroom teacher, reading and math specialists, and the EL teacher assigned to that grade level. By contrast, there are fewer assessments and monitoring systems used at the secondary level to track students' progress. One summative measure that is collected and reported on an annual basis is each individual student's WIDA level.

Additional Supports for English Learners

The district has implemented a variety of wrap-around services and supports to meet the needs of English Learners. While there is coordination at the central level around all of these services and supports, there is variability in the degree of articulation and coordination between the various service and support providers at the sites.

Gifted Services throughout the district are available to English Learners. District personnel reported that EL teachers and regular classroom teachers are able to recommend English Learners for testing at any time. A new Young Scholars Program provides testing for all second-grade students using a non-verbal test known as the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test, Second Edition. In addition, EL teachers are now being trained on how to administer the test, and regular classroom teachers are receiving

training on how to identify gifted students. Although there is one Gifted Specialist at each non-Title I school, it is a challenge to build the capacity of all teachers in terms of identifying students for testing and in terms of supporting teachers of gifted students. Although there are schools within the district where there is parity in the proportion of ELs and non-ELs who are provided Gifted Services, it is the opinion of one district staff that APS could benefit from the availability of a specialist who is dedicated to increasing the representation of English Learners in the program.

Supports for dually identified students (e.g., English Learners with a 504 Plan or IEP) are improving. Participants in a cross-program focus group with representatives from the EL Office and Special Education Office acknowledged that steps have been taken to improve the support this group of students receives. In the last two years, for example, EL resource specialists have been hired to work at elementary and secondary schools to monitor and oversee services for English Learners with disabilities. Additionally, EL resource specialists help to build capacity within the school in terms of identifying learning differences that are due to developing language proficiency and disabilities. These specialists oversee EL teachers who push in and co-teach with SPED and general education teachers to support students who are dually identified. Even with these supports, there is still room for improvement. For example, English Learners are, according to one district administrator, over-identified for special education and are in need of additional socioemotional supports that promote trauma-informed practices. A different district administrator expressed the need for more staff at the elementary level to identify and support dually identified students.

In terms of supports for English Learners as they transition between grades or move into more advanced WIDA levels of English proficiency, the expectation is that the general education teacher, the co-teacher, the ELD teacher, and the school's lead EL teacher will provide whatever support is needed. However, time for these individuals to communicate and work together is extremely limited, which makes it difficult to adequately coordinate coherent plans for every student.

With regard to policies and programs for Long-Term English Learners—defined by the Virginia Department of Education as English Learners who have received EL services for five years or more—we noticed no specialized program or course of study designed specifically for these students. Long-Term English Learners, most of whom are at the upper levels of English proficiency, are provided the same supports and course-taking

options as English Learners who have been designated English Learners for fewer than five years. EL Resource teachers, however, as of December of 2018, were beginning to explore options for monitoring Long-Term English Learners, setting up profiles of each student to document learning challenges and successes.

Program resources consisting of various EL support staff (EL teachers, EL specialists, and EL instructional assistants, etc.) are carefully allocated according to funding formulas. District staff make use of planning and allocation documents which are used to project enrollments of English Learners at various school sites. These planning allocations take three-year moving averages into account in terms of assigning staff to sites, including EL resource teachers who provide services to English Learners who are dually identified as having special needs. Central office staff noted that these resources may not be sufficient at schools that do not also have Title I funds.

Bilingual family liaisons provide key support at school sites to connect with students and parents. Survey results from bilingual family liaisons reflected their strong confidence in their ability to work with families and students well (88% strongly agreeing). Bilingual families also report being satisfied with the services provided by bilingual family liaisons who make them aware of school events, relay messages from classroom teachers, lend encouragement and support to students, and make families aware of various services provided by APS and the local community. The frequency with which bilingual family liaisons communicate with various members of the school community are presented in Figure R.

Bilingual Family Liaison Duties (n=26)

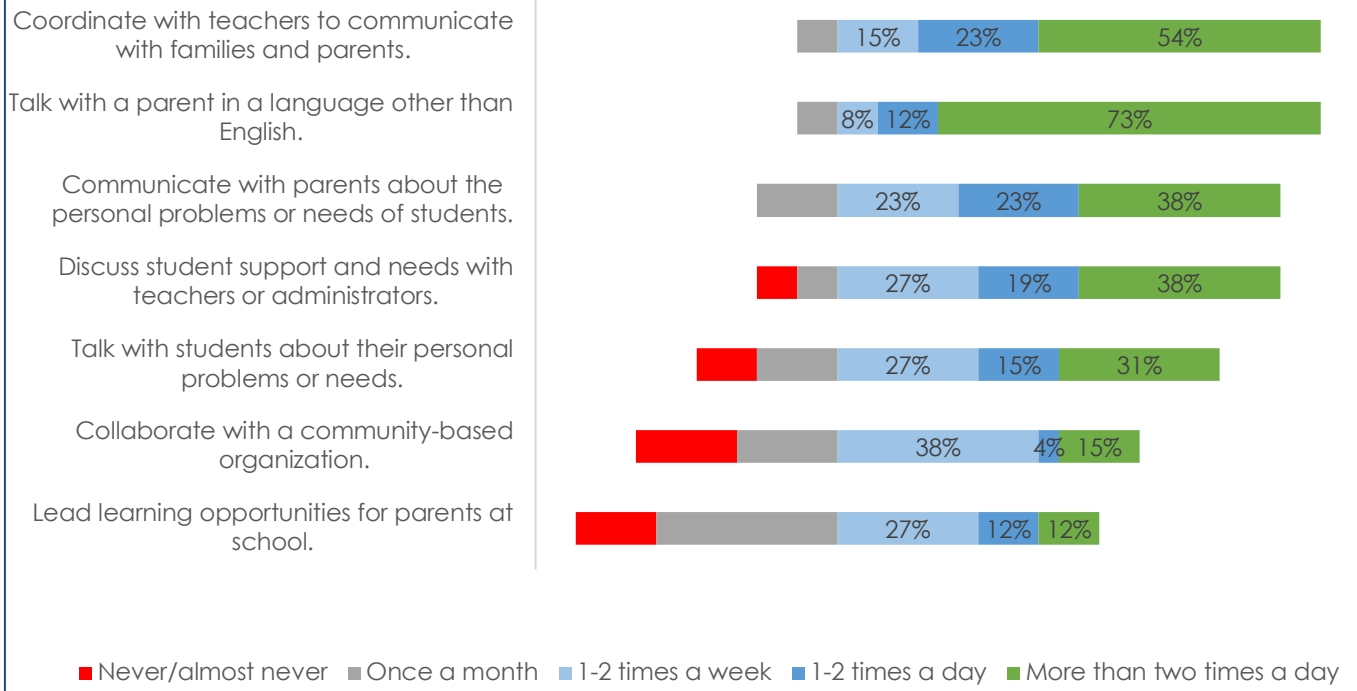


Figure R. Frequency with which bilingual family liaisons communicate with various members of the school community

Interdepartmental Communication and Coordination

Efforts to coordinate across programs like Gifted Services, Special Education Services, and English Learner Services are successful at the central level, with staff convening regularly to discuss common issues; however, the same level of coordination between programs is not evident in all schools. There are ample opportunities at the central office level for collaboration across programs such as the Gifted Services Office and other Student Services on a monthly basis. Recent efforts have standardized placement practices, supports for monitoring, and checklists at the central office level. Central office staff expressed some concern that site-level coordination may vary in intensity and quality, in particular between Gifted Services teachers and English Learner teachers with regard to coordinated professional learning opportunities. Although the intention is for specialists (from the English Learners Office as well as departments within Teaching and Learning) to build the capacity of general education teachers, central office staff reported inconsistent implementation across schools.

Recommendations

This collaborative review of APS English Learner Programs is situated within the larger context of the skills demanded by the 21st century in order for students to succeed in college, career, and life, and to participate as active contributors to our society. The skills needed in this fast-changing world require instructional experiences that go beyond today's teaching standards; that afford students, including English Learners, the deep, accelerated, rigorous, quality learning opportunities required for them to realize their potential and to succeed in the society of tomorrow. The recommendations we offer go beyond the measures identified by the DOJ, and thus enhance the Settlement Agreement. We strongly believe that Arlington Public Schools is in a prime position to signal to others what change can look like, by building on their strengths while addressing the gaps that emerged through this evaluation in order to create equitable, quality learning experiences for English Learners and all students. In doing so, Arlington Public Schools can choose to make a significant difference in the lives of their English Learners and serve as a national model for educational change. It is in this spirit that we present our recommendations.

Recommendation 1: Articulate and Communicate an Ambitious Vision and Shared Mission for English Learners' Experiences in School

A vision statement clearly sets goals for what English Learners are capable of and what their educational experiences should enable them to accomplish in school, career, and civic life. Developing such an ambitious vision requires multiple stakeholders share a belief in the immense potential of students and pedagogical vision for how learning experiences should be designed to realize the full potential of students. With a clear and common vision in place, school systems can develop mission statements that identify more specific practices, approaches, and roles for different levels of the system. Developing such an ambitious vision and shared mission offers APS the opportunity to re-imagine current structures and processes so that English Learners may meet the demands of the 21st century, exceeding the SOL.

The mission statement must further articulate how the responsibility for educating English Learners is shared by all educators: general education teachers, content-area

teachers, EL specialists, resource teachers, and other instructional staff. District-level leadership is imperative in leading change efforts, but educators at all levels must contribute in coherent and well-defined ways to improvement efforts.

We recommend the district:

- Communicate an ambitious vision that clearly articulates what is possible for English Learners and what is the nature of the learning experiences they will have in school.
 - Support the vision by ensuring that principals and other site leaders can communicate it to teachers and have the support to implement it at schools.
- Develop a shared mission that articulates the roles and expectations of different staff in enacting generative actions that will realize the vision.
 - Create and articulate a theoretically coherent pedagogical approach for the district that clearly outlines expectations for the practice of teachers of English Learners.
- Communicate the vision by designing and supporting a professional development plan that targets the key understandings and practices identified by the vision and develops them over time.
- Assess the implementation of the district vision at regular intervals through multiple measures, including student achievement measures, evaluations of teaching practice, and principal reports.

Recommendation 2: Offer a Coherent Portfolio of Professional Learning Opportunities for All Educators to Strengthen Classroom Teaching and Learning for English Learners

All teaching, whether provided by ELD professionals or classroom teachers, should be guided by a common understanding of how English as a second or additional language is learned—by participating actively in a classroom community in which all students engage in conceptual, analytical, and language practices. There must be an ethos within every classroom in every school that all children can achieve, no matter what their English

language proficiency or previous life experiences. To create classrooms that cultivate learning, teachers must:

- Increase the ***academic rigor*** of learning activities and educational experiences;
- Offer English Learners more quality opportunities for ***sustained talk and reciprocal interactions*** with peers; and
- Integrate a focus on ***purposeful language practices*** across the disciplines.

Teachers should purposefully organize instructional activities so that all students are engaged in actively constructing new knowledge. They should provide opportunities for students to engage in language practices that require them to share information, comprehend challenging texts, and express complex ideas in writing. Students at all levels of their education should be aware of the relationship between genre, purpose, and form in order to comprehend and compose a variety of texts. Finally, teachers should be available to help students who are struggling. Opportunities for students to seek out-of-class help in safe, welcoming environments should be provided. Students should feel that they are capable of learning and that it is okay to make mistakes along the way.

To achieve the shifts in instruction that have been recommended, all educators must develop deep understanding of quality teaching for English Learners, the theory that underlies the vision and pedagogical approach to learning, and the situated practices that can realize ambitious learning opportunities for English Learners. These understandings that serve as the basis for shifts in instruction, require a coherent, sustained professional development plan that is a powerful conduit for both communicating the district vision and ensuring that leaders and teachers can develop the expertise to enact that vision in schools and classrooms. Thus, we recommend a well-defined, coherent, and sustained approach to professional learning and capacity-building around quality instruction for English Learners for all educators.

We provide this recommendation with two caveats. First, the work must be a *long-term investment* with clear, measurable goals set for benchmarks along the way. Developing teacher expertise and leadership capacity takes time. Second, coherence and connection is key. The professional development activities must be theoretically and practically aligned, building on each other, communicating and deepening common ideas at multiple levels. A menu of disparate professional development choices will not advance the pedagogical vision set for the district. Building on the rich work done in terms of

advancing professional learning in the content areas, such as mathematics, efforts to strengthen instruction for English Learners should be fully integrated with existing efforts. In the process of integration, the system as a whole must be considered carefully.

Effective professional learning systems have the following features:

- They are ***theoretically coherent***, sharing in a common theory and principles that can be applied across grades and content areas.
- They are ***content-focused***, further developing the expertise of content-area teachers in their disciplines and in the teaching of English Learners.
- They offer opportunities for ***collaboration in job-embedded*** contexts, such as sharing implementation ideas, reflecting on practice, and designing instruction together.
- They offer experiences of ***sufficient duration***, both in terms of intensity and extension across the school year.

All of these professional learning opportunities need to work toward the common goals of developing educator expertise to:

- Design and enact ***rigorous learning*** experiences for English Learners.
- Offer ***appropriate supports*** for English Learners to engage in high challenge work.
- Create opportunities for English Learners to engage in ***quality interactions*** with their peers around disciplinary ideas.
- Sustain a ***purposeful language focus*** that assists English Learners in developing disciplinary literacy practices.

We further suggest that ELD teachers and coordinators engage in additional ongoing professional development around coaching to ensure that all teachers receive support to address the needs of English Learners.

Recommendation 3: Ensure that Positive School Climate and Caring Relationships Continue to Grow and Are Consistent Across Campuses Where English Learners Are Enrolled

With regard to English Learner programs, parent and student perceptions within APS are overall positive. We recommend that APS continue to build on these positive perceptions and relationships with students and their families to accelerate a positive school climate and enhanced classroom instruction. Doing so would require enhanced and deliberate communication between the district and parents of English Learners, with the goal of providing increased opportunities for parents to fully understand their child's education within the APS system.

The purpose, design, approach, and practices of all instructional programs should be clearly described and, in instances in which parents and students have a choice, descriptions and explanations of these program options should be readily and regularly available. All parents, for example, upon enrollment of students at any point in the school year, or, upon students' transition to a new school, should be made aware of the programmatic options available to their children and what the requirements are, if any, for admission. To facilitate informed choices, parents and guardians should clearly understand how a particular program, service, or intervention may benefit their students. For example, parents/guardians should clearly understand the differences between the dual language and other non-dual language programs in terms of their purpose and approach.

Finally, in order to meet the social and emotional needs of English Learners, the district should lead a site-level needs assessment for English Learners. Results from the needs assessment would form the basis of recommendations to the district for future interventions and supports for struggling students.

Recommendation 4: Define and Operationalize Instructional Programs and Structures to Support English Learners

This recommendation calls for a reconsideration of the program models and the accompanying structures intended to meet the needs of English Learners, particularly in terms of the groupings of students and the resulting curricular opportunities (or lack thereof) at the secondary level. While ELD courses are appropriate for students at all levels of proficiency, these courses must be characterized by academic rigor, quality interactions, and a purposeful language focus. The purpose of these courses should be to accelerate students' language development so that they can participate and excel in mainstream classes as quickly as possible.

A reframing of the current instructional program models would better meet English Learners' needs by providing equitable access to a high-quality education that draws on a co-teaching model, integrates the teaching of language with the teaching of content, and takes place in integrated settings in which English Learners at the higher levels of English proficiency learn alongside their English proficient peers. The district should issue guidance with respect to the classes and circumstances during which English Learners will participate in pull-out instruction, with the goal of maximizing English Learner participation in mainstream instruction.

In order to increase consistency of program implementation and quality across all schools, we further recommend an increased coordination and communication within and across school sites (both elementary and secondary), as well as between the district and school sites, in regard to the roles of the many entities serving English Learners (i.e., special education, gifted services). While there is coordination within the district level that includes regular meetings, such coordination and monitoring is lacking at the school site level, with much variation across sites. Essential to this recommendation is a consideration and articulation of the role of the district office in providing guidance and support for school sites, as well as ensuring that staff at individual school sites embrace the vision and mission for English Learners throughout APS.

Conclusion

This report outlines the current state of instructional experiences offered to English Learners at Arlington Public Schools. To help teachers, staff, and district leaders ensure that the instructional experiences provided to English Learners prepare them for success both within and outside of school, we make several recommendations. It is our hope that this report will provide tangible steps that can be taken to improve and strengthen the learning opportunities for all students at Arlington Public Schools. We believe such innovative change is possible through a combination of systemic policy and programmatic changes from the top—in which the district provides a clear, coherent vision for change along with organizational supports—which is then complemented by the bottom-up energy and novelty that emerges when actively engaging knowledgeable educators.

We wish to acknowledge the fact that APS initiated and participated in conducting this evaluation—a candid acknowledgment of both the need and desire to make change. APS’s acknowledgment supported a synergy of efforts. We deeply appreciate the willingness of APS educators and administrators to open their doors to allow for a deep introspection of the strengths and shortfalls of the system; both of which are necessary for deep change to occur.

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Appendix A: Data Sources and Collection

Data Sources	Participants and Sites
Classroom observations	72 observations at a total of 8 sites
Student shadowing	32 students at 4 sites
Focus groups	4 student focus groups (27 students total); 4 parent focus groups (35 parents total); 1 cross-program focus group (6 staff total)
Surveys	General education teacher survey (n=472) EL teacher survey (n=158) Administrator survey (n=37) Student (n=5730) and parent (n=4821) responses to the 2018 school climate survey

Table A.1. Overview of Data Sources, Participants, and Sites

Further detail is displayed in the below table about the distribution of classroom observations across grade levels and programs (see Table A.2).

Grade	Total	HILT Pullout	Other*	General Education				Secondary HILT			
				ELA	SS	Math	Sci	ELA	SS	Math	Sci
K-5	34	2	3	12	3	6	7	N/A			
6-12	38	N/A		2	3	8	4	10	6	2	3
Total	72	2	3	14	6	13	11	10	6	2	3

NOTE: * "Other" includes morning meeting and art.

Table A.2. Classroom Observations by Grade Level, Subjects, and Program

School Year	Total Students	Number of English Learners
2015-2016	25,865	6,955
2016-2017	26,821	7,104
2017-2018	27,372	7,297

Table A.3. Sample Sizes for Administrative Data Extracted from the Student Information System

Appendix B: EL Teacher Survey and Results

APS Survey: Instruction of English Learners (ESOL/HILT Teachers)

As part of the evaluation of program and services for English Learners in Arlington Public Schools, the Quality Teaching for English Learners initiative at WestEd is conducting a survey of all teachers in the district.

Your responses will be kept anonymous and confidential. Individual responses will not be shared with APS staff and WestEd will not report responses for any group less than 10. This means that, for example, if only 9 librarians respond to the survey, their responses will be included in the district-level report, but will not be reported out separately.

We thank you in advance for your input.

1. What grade(s) do you teach?

Check all that apply.

- K
- 1st
- 2nd
- 3rd
- 4th
- 5th
- 6th
- 7th
- 8th
- 9th
- 10th
- 11th
- 12th
- 77 (Adult)

2. At what school do you teach?

Mark only one oval.

- Abingdon Elementary
- Arlington Science Focus
- Arlington Traditional
- Ashlawn Elementary
- Barcroft Elementary
- Barrett Elementary
- Campbell Elementary
- Carlin Springs Elementary
- Claremont Immersion Elementary
- Discovery Elementary
- Drew Model Elementary
- Glebe Elementary
- Henry Elementary
- Hoffman-Boston Elementary
- Jamestown Elementary
- Key Immersion Elementary
- Long Branch Elementary
- McKinley Elementary
- Nottingham Elementary
- Oakridge Elementary
- Randolph Elementary
- Taylor Elementary
- Tuckahoe Elementary
- Gunston Middle
- H-B Woodlawn Secondary
- Jefferson Middle
- Kenmore Middle
- Swanson Middle
- Williamsburg Middle
- Arlington Community High
- Wakefield High
- Washington-Lee High
- Yorktown High
- Arlington Career Center (& Arlington Tech)
- Langston High School Continuation
- New Directions
- Stratford Program

3. For approximately how many English Learners do you provide instruction?

Please mark how often you enact the following instructional practices

4. When I teach, I
Mark only one oval per row.

	More than 2 times a day	1-2 times a day	1-2 times a week	Never/ almost never
Provide English Learners with less complex texts or assignments.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Group English Learners to work with peers with different levels of English proficiency (including non-English Learners).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focus a lesson on a single text that all English Learners and their peers will read.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Give English Learners explicit models of language to use.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Differentiate reading and assignment levels in homogeneous groups assigned by English language proficiency.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pre-teach academic vocabulary that English Learners will need in future lessons.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The best ways I can support my English Learners are by....

5.

Mark the extent to which you agree or disagree that English Learners in your class have quality opportunities to...

6. In my class, English Learners have quality opportunities to..
Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Read challenging and interesting subject matter texts.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Connect key ideas when addressing subject matter content.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Connect subject matter ideas with their personal experiences.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Listen to classmates and respond to their ideas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Engage in sustained talk with classmates about subject matter ideas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Elaborate upon their thinking beyond one-word answers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Some learning opportunities that are especially critical for English Learners are....

7.

**8. Mark the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.
Mark only one oval per row.**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have sufficient professional preparation to meet the needs of English Learners.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am effective at designing instruction that supports English Learners.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is primarily the ESOL/HILT teacher's responsibility to support the English Learners at my school site.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The use of students' native language in the classroom slows down English language learning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Some English Learners in my classroom are not capable of learning the content I am supposed to teach them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The presence of English Learners in mainstream classes has a negative impact on the achievement of other students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
With our support, English Learners will be able to realize their potential and succeed in school and beyond.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have access to information about English Learners in my classes, such as English language proficiency levels.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am confident in my ability to interact with the parents and families of English Learner students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have ample professional learning opportunities to support me in my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am well-supported in teaching English Learners.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
English Learners are emotionally supported by their teachers in their classes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

One important belief for all teachers of English Learners to have is....

9. _____

10. Mark how often you have opportunities to collaborate or coordinate with the following programs or staff.

Mark only one oval per row.

	Every month	Every quarter	Every semester	Every year	Never	N/A (position does not exist at my school)
Special Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gifted Services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
HILT Resource Counselor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Counselor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bilingual Family Liaison	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What topics for professional learning opportunities for teaching English Learners would you find most useful?

11.

Is there anything else you would like us to know?

12.

THANK YOU!

Frequency of Instructional Practices (EL Teachers, n=153)

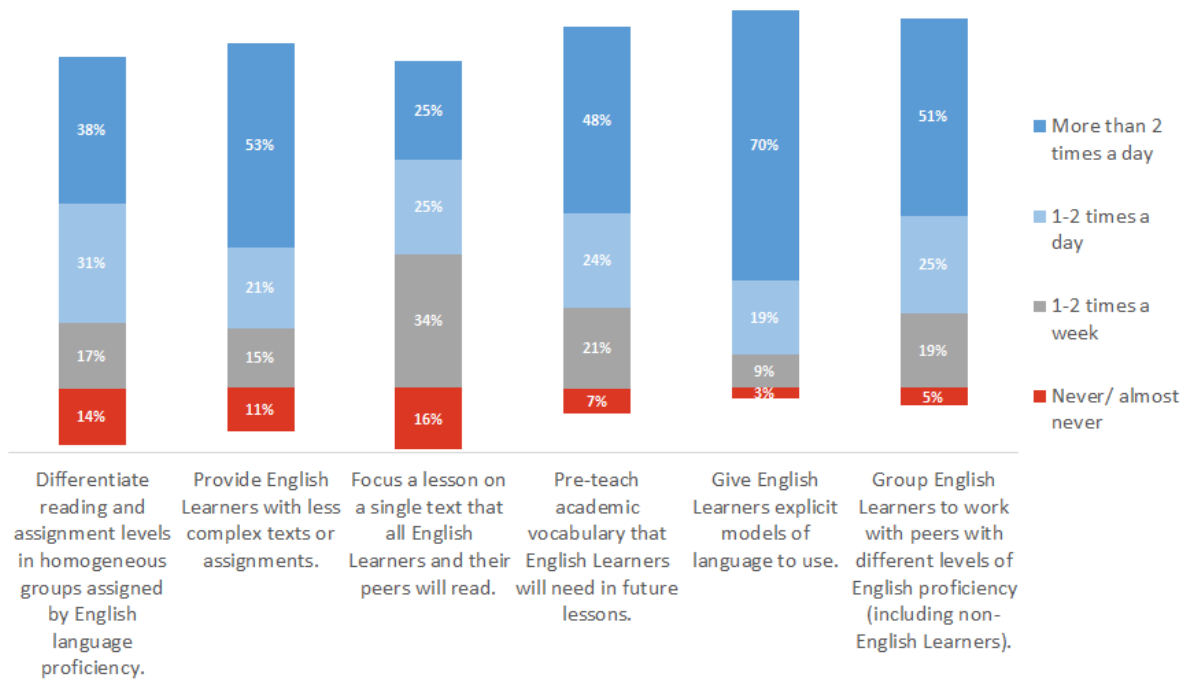


Figure B.1 EL Teacher Instructional Practices

English Learners have quality opportunities to... (ESOL/HILT Teachers, n=153)

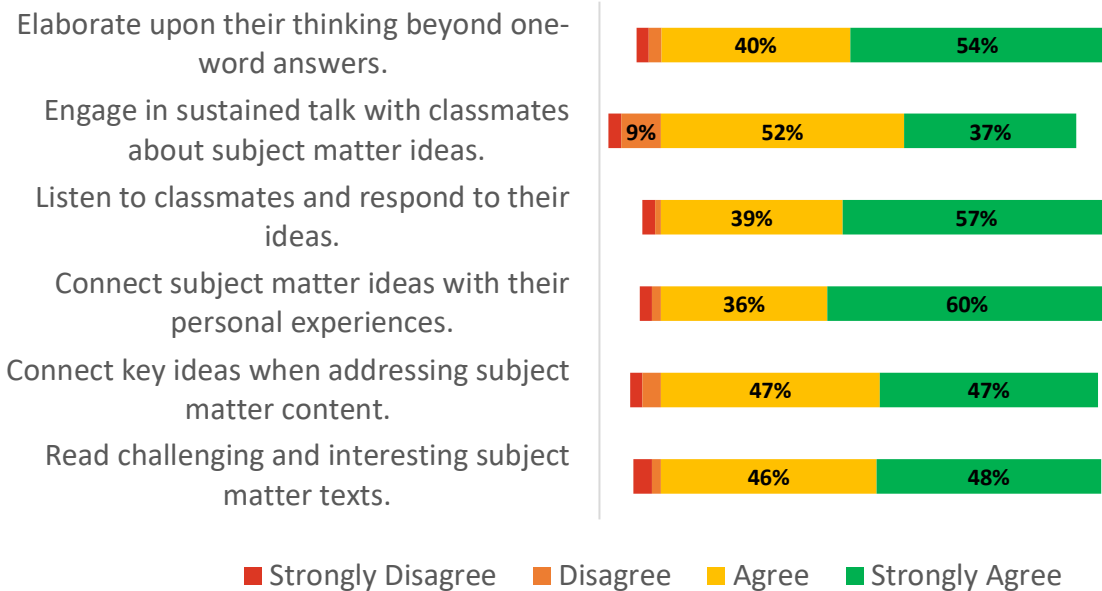


Figure B.2 English Learner Opportunities as Reported by EL Teachers

EL Teacher Beliefs, Part I (n=153)

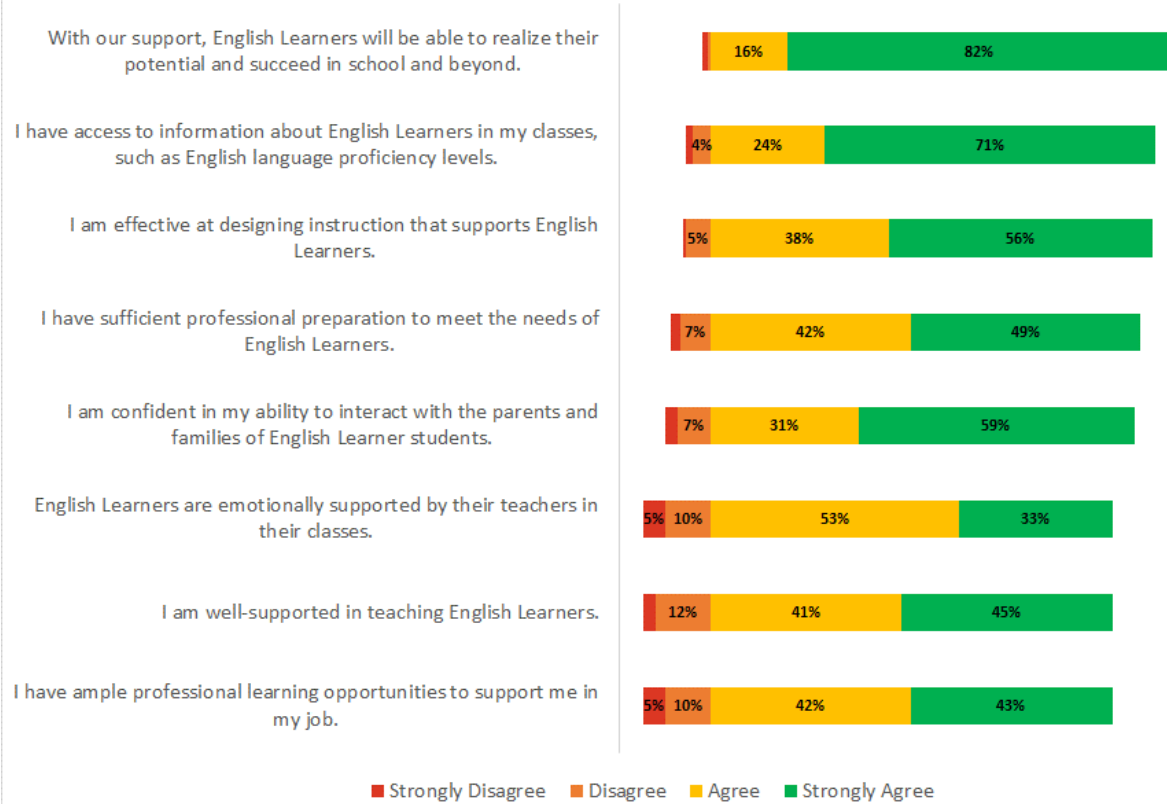


Figure B.3 EL Teacher Beliefs, Part I

EL Teacher Beliefs, Part II (n=153)

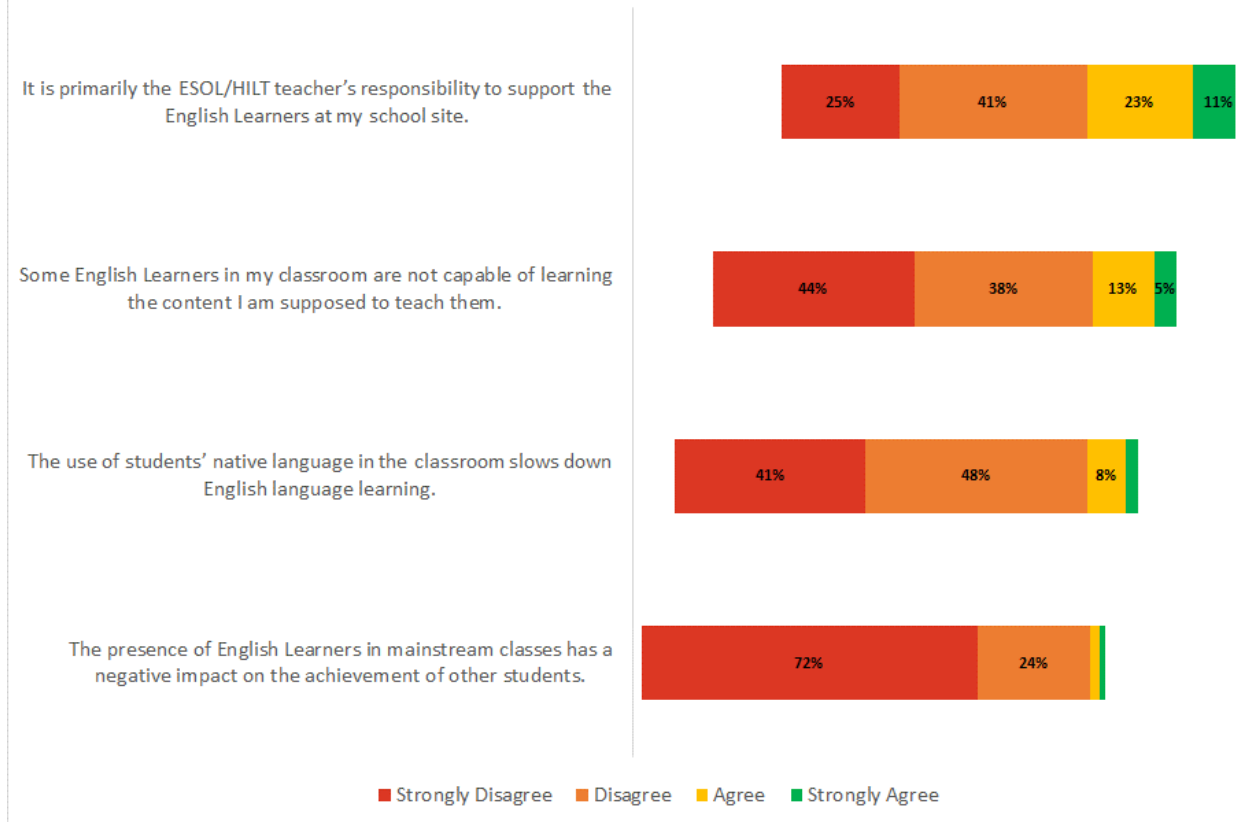


Figure B.4 EL Teacher Beliefs, Part II

EL Teacher Frequency of Collaboration and Coordination

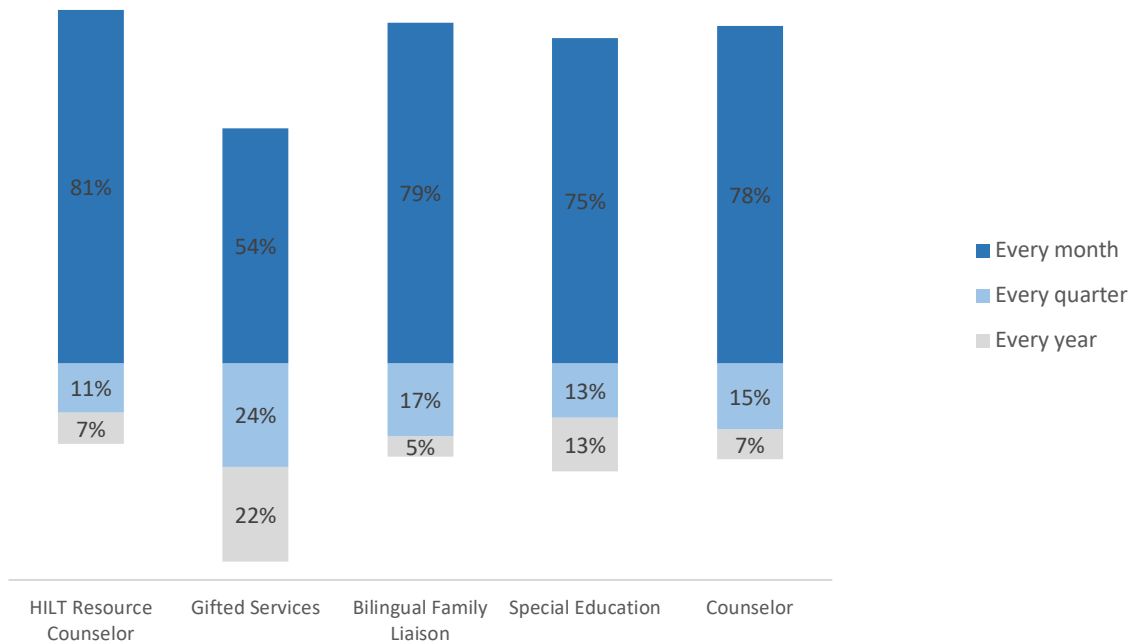


Figure B.5 EL Teacher Frequency of Collaboration and Coordination

Appendix C: Non-EL Teacher Survey and Results

APS Survey: Instruction for English Learners (Teachers who are not ESOL/HILT)

As part of the evaluation of programs and services for English Learners in Arlington Public Schools, the Quality Teaching for English Learners initiative at WestEd is conducting a survey of all teachers in the district.

Your responses will be kept anonymous and confidential. Individual responses will not be shared with APS staff and WestEd will not report responses for any group less than 10. This means that, for example, if only 9 librarians respond to the survey, their responses will be included in the district-level report, but will not be reported out separately.

We thank you in advance for your input.

1. What grade(s) do you teach?

Check all that apply.

- K
- 1st
- 2nd
- 3rd
- 4th
- 5th
- 6th
- 7th
- 8th
- 9th
- 10th
- 11th
- 12th
- 77 (adult)

2. At what school do you teach?

Mark only one oval.

- Abingdon Elementary
- Arlington Science Focus
- Arlington Traditional
- Ashlawn Elementary
- Barcroft Elementary
- Barrett Elementary
- Campbell Elementary
- Carlin Springs Elementary
- Claremont Immersion Elementary
- Discovery Elementary
- Drew Model Elementary
- Glebe Elementary
- Henry Elementary
- Hoffman-Boston Elementary
- Jamestown Elementary
- Key Immersion Elementary
- Long Branch Elementary
- McKinley Elementary
- Nottingham Elementary
- Oakridge Elementary
- Randolph Elementary
- Taylor Elementary
- Tuckahoe Elementary
- Gunston Middle
- H-B Woodlawn Secondary
- Jefferson Middle
- Kenmore Middle
- Swanson Middle
- Williamsburg Middle
- Arlington Community High
- Wakefield High
- Washington-Lee High
- Yorktown High
- Arlington Career Center (& Arlington Tech)
- Langston High School Continuation
- New Directions
- Stratford Program

3. What best describes your position?

Check all that apply.

- Classroom teacher
- Special education teacher
- Elective/specials teacher (PE, art, music, CTE, librarian, etc)
- Instructional coach (literacy coach, math coach, reading specialist, etc)
- Other: _____

4. What subject(s) do you teach?

Check all that apply.

- Elementary (core content)
- Math
- Science
- English Language Arts
- Social Studies
- Arts
- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- Health and Physical Education
- World Languages
- Other: _____

5. Do you have any English Learners in your class(es)?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

6. Do you know who the English Learners in your class(es) are?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

7. If you have English Learners, approximately how many are enrolled in your class(es)?

Please mark how often you enact the following instructional practices

8. When I teach, I....

Mark only one oval per row.

	More than 2 times a day	1-2 times a day	1-2 times a week	Never/ almost never
Provide English Learners with less complex texts or assignments.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Group English Learners to work with peers with different levels of English proficiency (including non-English Learners).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focus a lesson on a single text that all English Learners and their peers will read.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Give English Learners explicit models of language to use.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Differentiate reading and assignment levels in homogeneous groups assigned by English language proficiency.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pre-teach academic vocabulary that English Learners will need in future lessons.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The best ways I can support my English Learners are by....

9. _____

Mark the extent to which you agree or disagree that English Learners in your class have quality opportunities to...

10. In my class, English Learners have quality opportunities to..
Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Read challenging and interesting subject matter texts.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Connect key ideas when addressing subject matter content.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Connect subject matter ideas with their personal experiences.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Listen to classmates and respond to their ideas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Engage in sustained talk with classmates about subject matter ideas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Elaborate upon their thinking beyond one-word answers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Some learning opportunities that are especially critical for English Learners are....

11.

12. Mark the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.
Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have sufficient professional preparation to meet the needs of English Learners.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am effective at designing instruction that supports English Learners.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is primarily the ESOL-HILT teacher's responsibility to support the English Learners at my school site.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The use of students' native language in the classroom slows down English language learning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Some English Learners in my classroom are not capable of learning the content I am supposed to teach them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The presence of English Learners in mainstream classes has a negative impact on the achievement of other students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
With our support, English Learners will be able to realize their potential and succeed in school and beyond.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have access to information about English Learners in my classes, such as English language proficiency levels.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am confident in my ability to interact with the parents and families of English Learner students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have ample professional learning opportunities to support me in my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am well-supported in teaching English Learners in my classes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
English Learners are emotionally supported by their teachers in their classes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

One important belief for all teachers of English Learners to have is....

13.

What topics for professional learning opportunities about teaching English Learners would you find most useful? _____

14.

Is there anything else you would like us to know? _____

15.

THANK YOU! _____

Frequency of Instructional Practices (Non-EL Teachers, n=470)

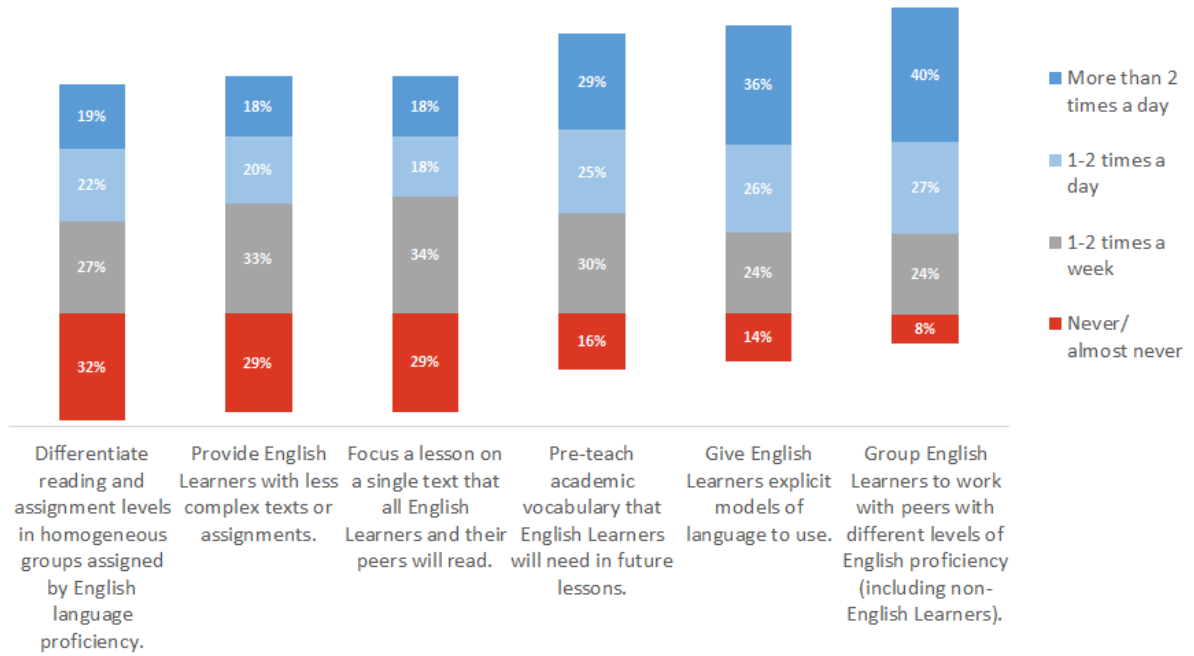


Figure C.1 Non-EL Teacher Instructional Practices

English Learners have quality opportunities to... (Non-EL Teachers, n=470)

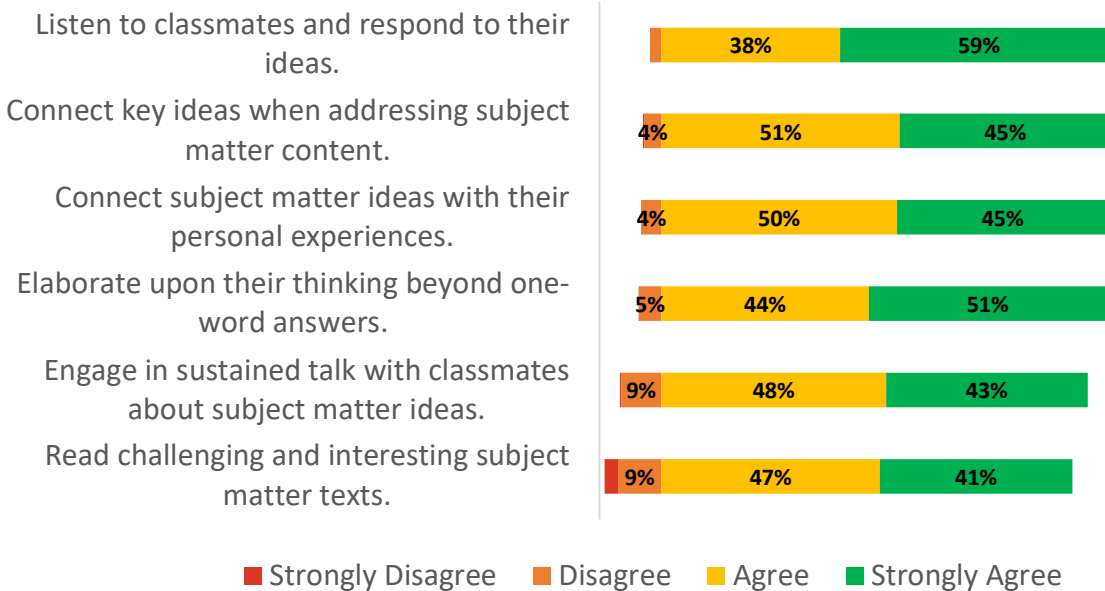


Figure C.2 English Learner Opportunities as Reported by Non-EL Teachers

Non-EL Teacher Beliefs, Part I (n=470)

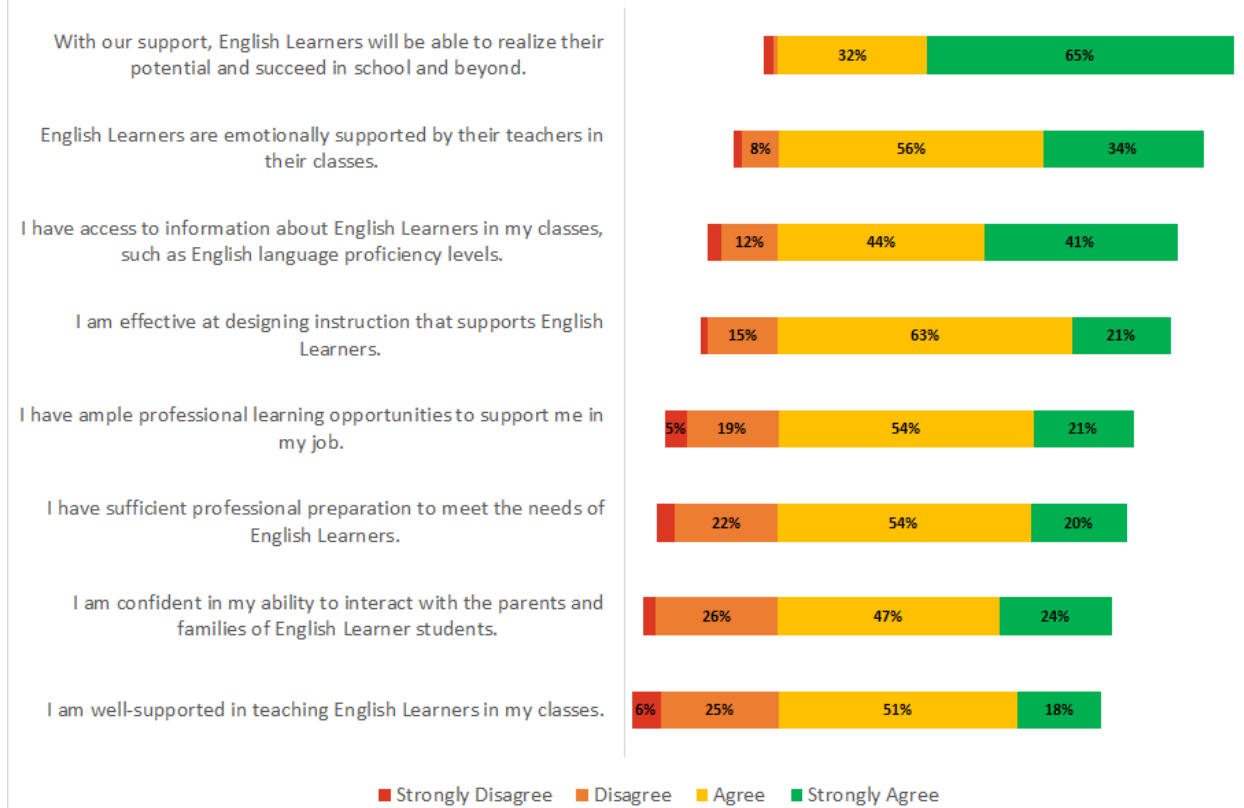


Figure C.3 Non-EL Teacher Beliefs, Part I

Non-EL Teacher Beliefs, Part II (n=470)

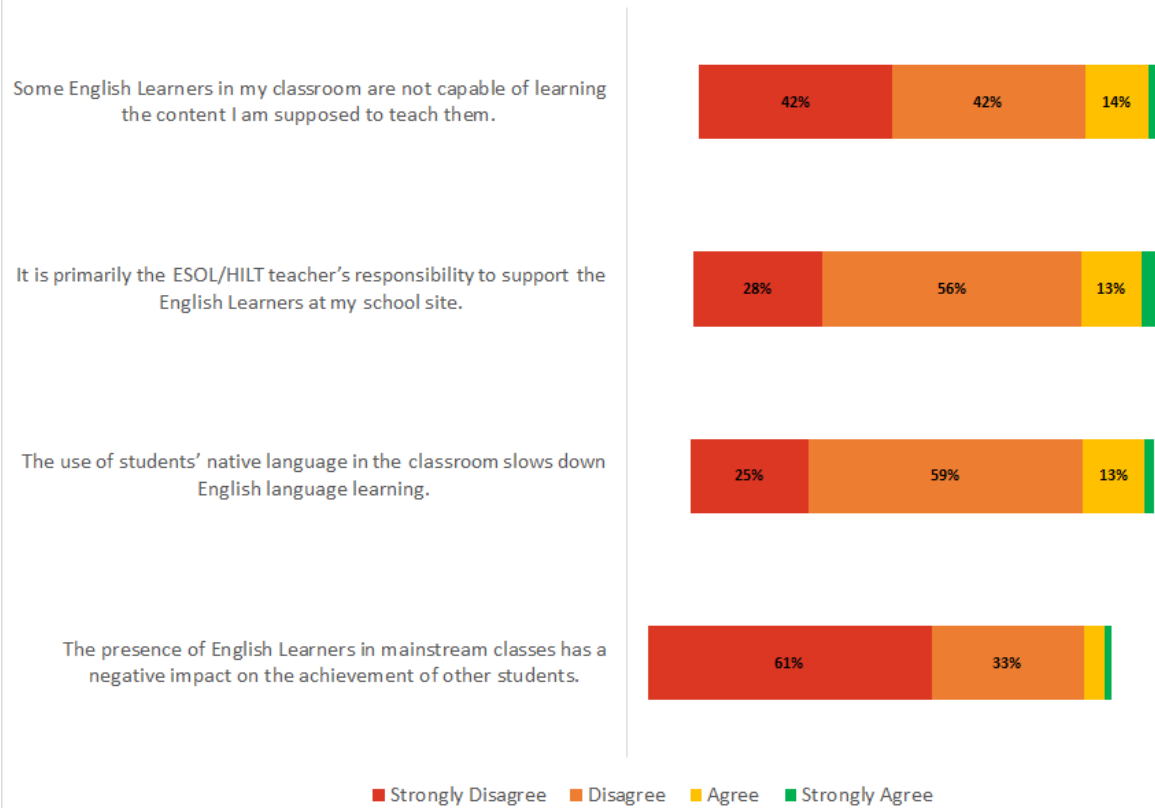


Figure C.4 Non-EL Teacher Beliefs, Part II

Appendix D: Bilingual Liaison Survey

APS Survey on Services for English Learners (Bilingual Family Liaisons)

As part of the evaluation of programs and services English Learner programs in Arlington Public Schools, the Quality Teaching for English Learners initiative at WestEd is conducting a survey of staff in the district.

Your responses will be kept anonymous and confidential. Individual responses will not be shared with APS staff and WestEd will not report responses for any group less than 10. This means that, for example, if only 9 librarians respond to the survey, their responses will be included in the district-level report, but will not be reported out separately.

We thank you in advance for your input.

1. At what school do you work?

Mark only one oval.

- Abingdon Elementary
- Arlington Science Focus
- Arlington Traditional
- Ashlawn Elementary
- Barcroft Elementary
- Barrett Elementary
- Campbell Elementary
- Carlin Springs Elementary
- Claremont Immersion Elementary
- Discovery Elementary
- Drew Model Elementary
- Glebe Elementary
- Henry Elementary
- Hoffman-Boston Elementary
- Jamestown Elementary
- Key Immersion Elementary
- Long Branch Elementary
- McKinley Elementary
- Nottingham Elementary
- Oakridge Elementary
- Randolph Elementary
- Taylor Elementary
- Tuckahoe Elementary
- Gunston Middle
- H-B Woodlawn Secondary
- Jefferson Middle
- Kenmore Middle
- Swanson Middle
- Williamsburg Middle
- Arlington Community High
- Wakefield High
- Washington-Lee High
- Yorktown High
- Arlington Career Center (& Arlington Tech)
- Langston High School Continuation
- New Directions
- Stratford Program

The best ways I can support English Learners at my school are to....

2.

3. **Mark the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.**
Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have ample professional learning opportunities to support me in my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Families and members of the community respond to our outreach.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The use of students' native language in the classroom slows down English language learning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The presence of English Learners in mainstream classes has a negative impact on the achievement of other students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
With our support, English Learners will be able to realize their potential and succeed in school and beyond.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am confident in my ability to interact with the parents and families of English Learners.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
English Learners feel emotionally supported by their teachers in their classes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents are frequently invited to come on campus and interact with school staff, students, and teachers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

One important belief for all teachers of English Learners to have is....

4.

**5. Please mark how often you do the following:
Mark only one oval per row.**

	More than two times a day	1-2 times a day	1-2 times a week	Once a month	Never/almost never
Talk with a parent in a language other than English.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Collaborate with a community-based organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Coordinate with teachers to communicate with families and parents.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Talk with students about their personal problems or needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discuss student support and needs with teachers or administrators.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lead learning opportunities for parents at school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communicate with parents about the personal problems or needs of students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. Is there anything else you would like us to know?

THANK YOU!

Bilingual Family Liaison Beliefs (n=26)

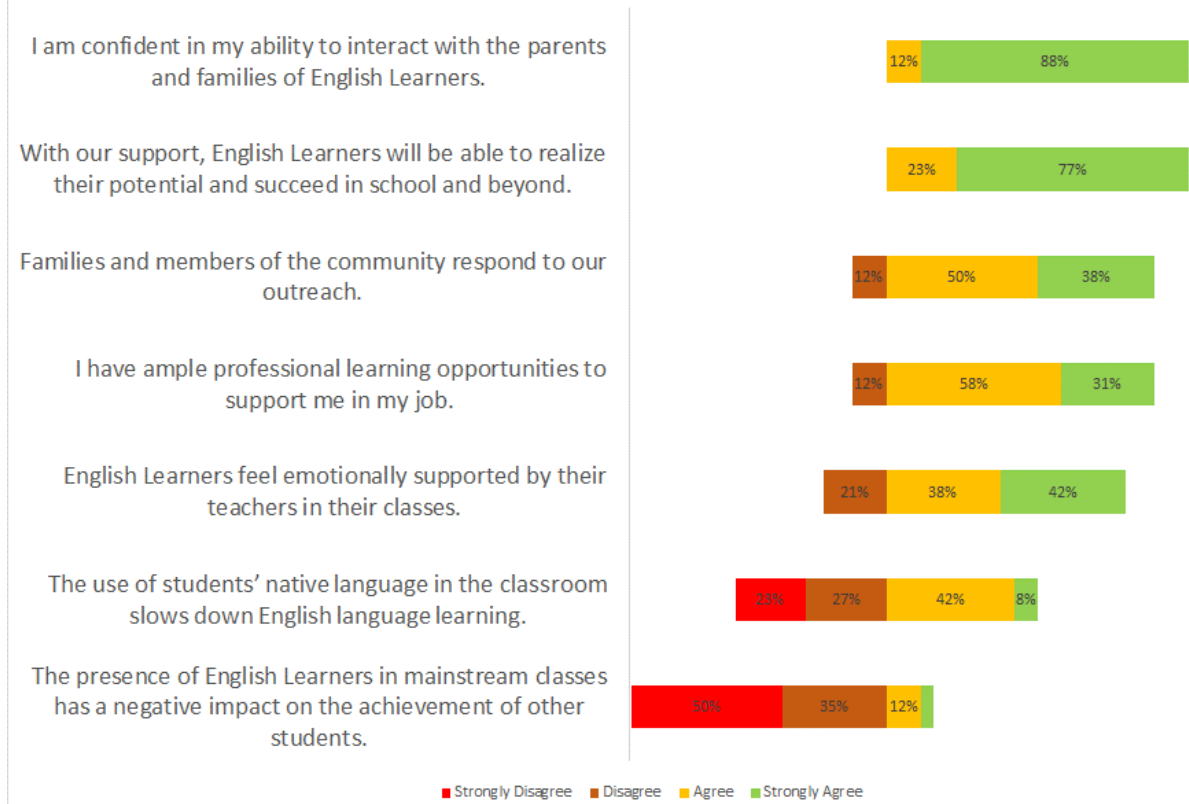


Figure D.1 Bilingual Family Liaison Beliefs

Appendix E: Site Administrator Survey

APS Survey: Instruction of English Learners (Site Administrators)

As part of the evaluation of program and services for English Learners in Arlington Public Schools, the Quality Teaching for English Learners initiative at WestEd is conducting a survey of all site leaders in the district.

Your responses will be kept anonymous and confidential. Individual responses will not be shared with APS staff and WestEd will not report responses for any group less than 10. This means that, for example, if only 9 principals respond to the survey, their responses will be included in the district-level report, but will not be reported out separately.

We thank you in advance for your input.

1. What is your job title?

Mark only one oval.

- Principal
- Assistant Principal
- Director of Counseling
- Other: _____

2. What grade level does your site serve? (For H-B Woodlawn, please select high school)

Mark only one oval.

- Elementary
- Middle
- High

3. Please describe the professional learning opportunities focused on English Learners your teachers and staff have access to.

4. What additional professional learning opportunities focused on English Learners would benefit teachers and staff at your site?

5. Please describe effective instruction for English Learners.

6. What are key indicators that English Learners' needs are being met?

7. Mark the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements with respect to your school site.

Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teachers have ample professional learning opportunities focused on English Learners.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The presence of English Learners in mainstream classes has a negative impact on the achievement of other students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The bilingual family liaison at my site serves an essential role in ensuring English Learner success.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
District policies and programs clearly communicate that English Learners are a top priority.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff at my site all believe that English Learners are just as capable of academic achievement as their peers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
English Learners are emotionally supported by their teachers in their classes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The large number of district initiatives makes it difficult to sustain an instructional focus on English Learners.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
District-wide initiatives include a focus on English Learners.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers are well-supported in teaching English Learners.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have access to information about English Learners at my site, such as English language proficiency levels.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is primarily the ESOL/HILT teacher's responsibility to support the English Learners at my school site.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. What professional learning opportunities would most benefit the leadership team at your site?

9. Is there anything else you would like us to know?

THANK YOU!

Administrator Beliefs (n=37)

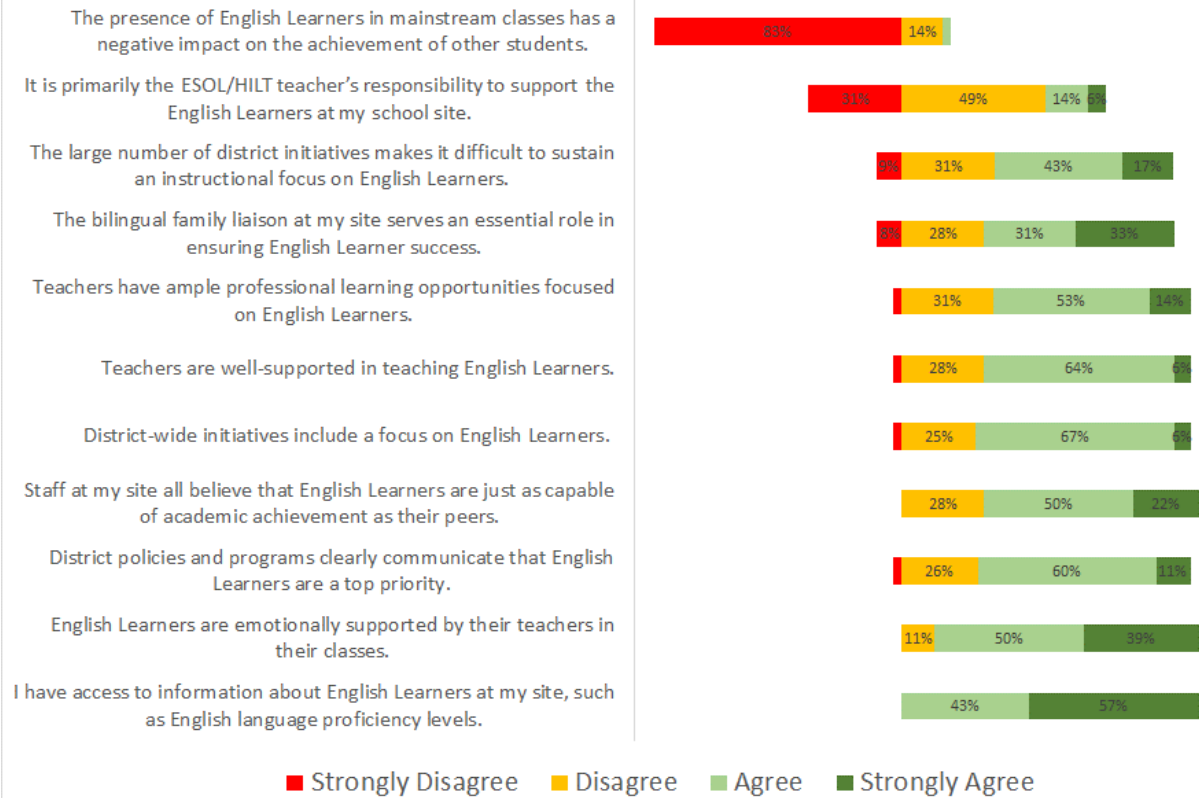


Figure E.1 Site Administrator Beliefs

Appendix F: EL Lead Teacher Interview Protocol

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. Before we start, I'd like to provide a little background on our work and answer any questions you might have.

As you may have already heard, Arlington Public Schools is undertaking a systemwide effort to strengthen its capacity to better serve the District's many English Learners.

We would like to hear the perspectives of EL teachers.

Do you have any questions for me?

Recording

If you don't mind, I'd like to audio-record this interview simply for note-taking purposes. No one outside of the WestEd team will hear the tape; it will just help me to check my notes. If you'd like me to turn off the recorder at any point, just let me know.

Is each of you okay with this? [Ensure everyone verbally consents.]

EL Lead Teacher Interview Questions

Staffing Model

How many EL staff full-time-equivalents do you have here at your school?

How are the staff assigned in terms of number of classrooms and English Learners served?

To what extent are English Learner allocations used to directly instruct English Learners with certified EL instructors?

What are the qualifications/certifications of teachers who teach content to English Learners?

Placement

Please describe the placement processes for English Learners. How are English Learners identified and placed?

To what extent do entering English Learners have key variables used in their placement missing?

Monitoring and Assessment

How do teachers and school leaders monitor and measure student progress? What interventions are in place when students are not making progress?

How are the assessments that measure English language proficiency and content knowledge used to make instructional and programmatic decisions for English Learners? How often are these decisions made? What processes are in place for cases that are on the cusp?

To what extent are English Learners provided appropriate accommodations during testing?

Models and Transitions

What is the model for instruction for English Learners at this school?

What supports are in place for English Learners as they enter this district/school? As they leave it? As they are “exited” from English Learner status?

How are the needs of Accelerated Literacy students, or newcomers who may have interrupted schooling, met?

Appendix G: Language Services Resource Center Staff Focus Group Protocol

Thank you for taking the time to speak with us today. Before we start, we'd like to provide a little background on our work and answer any questions you might have.

As you may have already heard, Arlington Public Schools is undertaking a systemwide effort to strengthen its capacity to better serve the District's many English Learners.

We want to get a better understanding of the role and work of the Language Resource Center in serving APS's English Learners.

Do you have any questions for us?

Recording

If you don't mind, we'd like to audio-record this focus group simply for note-taking purposes. No one outside of the WestEd team will hear the tape; it will just help us to check our notes. If you'd like us to turn off the recorder at any point, just let us know.

Is each of you okay with this? [Ensure everyone verbally consents.]

Language Resource Center Focus Group Questions

Placement

Please describe the placement and identification processes for English Learners.

How are incoming students assessed for their literacy and numeracy in their native language? What are those native languages and their relative frequency?

Coordination with School Staff

How does data and information follow students to the campuses they attend?

To what extent do you think school staff are aware of the processes here and who to contact?

How often do you get requests for information from school staff? What kind of information do they request?

Supports

How do staff support students' needs in a culturally sensitive manner?

Appendix H: Cross-Program Focus Group Protocol

Thank you for taking the time to speak with us today. Before we start, we'd like to provide a little background on our work and answer any questions you might have.

As you may have already heard, Arlington Public Schools is undertaking a systemwide effort to strengthen its capacity to better serve the District's many English Learners.

The cross-program focus group will serve as an opportunity to share perspectives from several critical program: EL, Special Education, Gifted Services, Student Services.

Do you have any questions for us?

Recording

If you don't mind, we'd like to audio-record this focus group simply for note-taking purposes. No one outside of the WestEd team will hear the tape; it will just help us to check our notes. If you'd like us to turn off the recorder at any point, just let us know.

Is each of you okay with this? [Ensure everyone verbally consents.]

Cross-Program Focus Group Questions

Collaboration and Coordination

Could you tell us about a process that is in place for collaboration between programs? To what extent is this process well-defined in the sense of:

- routine or periodic with established procedures,
- sources of data, and
- decision rules.

Please describe a specific case of a student for whom collaboration yielded a positive change.

Systems of Specific Supports

What systems are in place to support English Learners who are dually identified as being eligible to receive both English Learner services and special education support?

How effectively does the gifted referral and identification process appropriately identify ELs who are gifted?

What systems are in place to ensure that high school ELs are earning credits towards graduation?

How are long-term ELs defined and what is being done to support their English language development?

Questions about Coordination and Support

What information is made available to classroom teachers?

What kind of information do classroom teachers make available?

How often do staff confer or consult?

Appendix I: Parent Focus Group Protocol

Arlington Public Schools
Evaluation of English Learner Programs
Parent Focus Group

Interviewer:

Participants	Schools & Grades Your Children Attend
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

PARENT FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to speak with us today. Before we start, we'd like to provide a little background on our work, and answer any questions you might have.

As you may have already heard, Arlington Public Schools is undertaking a systemwide effort to strengthen its capacity to better serve the District's many English Learners.

We want to get your perspective on what *each of you* believes is working well in the district, and what needs to be strengthened. In particular, we'd like to hear your thoughts on what supports and opportunities you believe are needed to strengthen teaching and learning for English Learners. It's very important that we hear from you directly!

Also, this is *not* an evaluation of any school or individual. These focus groups are part of a much larger effort of collecting and analyzing data from many sources to create a composite picture of strengths to leverage, key challenges to address, and improvement strategies to prioritize.

Everything you say here will be kept **confidential and anonymous**. There are several focus groups taking place, and the notes from these will be aggregated and studied for emerging patterns of needs and identified strengths. Also, your participation is *voluntary*, and you can pass on any question that we ask.

Recording

If you don't mind, we'd like to audio-record this focus group simply for note-taking purposes. No one outside of the WestEd team will hear the tape; it will just help us to check our notes. If you'd like us to turn off the recorder at any point, just let us know. Is each of you okay with this? [Ensure everyone verbally consents.]

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Parent Focus Group Questions:

What are your hopes and dreams for your child? Is the school and district helping your child to achieve these dreams?

Can you tell us something about the quality of the education your child is receiving?

How does your school or district involve you in your child's education?

What is one good thing that your school is doing for your child?

What is one thing that you want your school to do for your child?

What else do you want us to know?

Thank you for sharing your thoughts with us today! You have each been extremely valuable in helping us understand more about the school and district.

Appendix J: Elementary Student Focus Group Protocol

I want to thank you all for coming to talk with me and each other today. I would like you to talk about your experiences here at school. I also want you to listen to each other, and I invite you to respond to each other too. I hope you can learn something from each other too.

Learning Opportunities

What are your learning experiences?

- What is the favorite part of your day? Why?
- Tell me about your teacher. What do you like about your teacher?
- Tell me more about how your teacher teaches you? What does your teacher do when s/he teaches you?
- Does the teacher ever want you to work alone at your desk? When?
- Do you ever get to work with other kids? A lot? A little? For what subjects (e.g., reading, math, science)?
- Does your teacher ask you to work on group projects with other kids? If so, a lot? On what kinds of projects? In what subjects (science, reading, math)?
- How does the teacher help you when you find something hard to do?

Caring & Collaboration

How does your school offer supportive relationships?

- Please tell me about another adult at the school who helps and cares about you a lot. What does this adult do?
- Can you think of a time when you felt that you belonged or fit in at school?
- Can you think of a time when you felt that you did not belong at school, or did not feel welcome?
- How does your teacher make you feel?
- How does your class make you feel? Does your teacher do anything to make you feel comfortable at school?
- Tell me about the student you talk the most to. What do you talk about?
- If you had a problem with another student, is there someone you could go to for help? Who would that person be?

Language

- What language does your teacher use when s/he teaches you?
- Do you get/does the teacher give you lots of chances to share your ideas with other students in class?
- When it is reading time, do you get to talk about what you are reading with the other kids?
- How about during math time? Does the teacher give you time to talk with the other kids about what you are learning or does s/he just want you to listen?

- What language/s do you use when you are in class? Do you ever get to use [Spanish or whatever the native language is] in class?
- What happens if you ever use [Spanish or whatever the native language is]? Do you get into trouble or does the teacher not get upset?

Appendix K: Secondary Student Focus Group Protocol

Secondary Student Focus Group Protocol

The goal of this focus group is to gather information, thoughts, and ideas from secondary ELs as to the ways in which teachers and school programs support their academic, linguistic, and social needs. The questions for the Student Focus Group are phrased so as to promote discussion and conversation; thus, they are not intended to be tightly structured. In this way, themes or specific topics that are presented by students can be further explored by the focus group facilitator.

What are your instructional experiences?

- Tell me about a teacher who is helpful to you. What does this teacher do?
- Tell me about a teacher who does not help you very much. What could this teacher do?
- How do your teachers teach you? How are they the same? How are they different?
- What expectations do your teachers have for you and other students? How do you know?
- In which classes are you the most supported as a student and as a language learner? How are you supported?

How does your school engage you?

- What activities do you engage in at school?
- In a typical school day, what are some of the things that you do?
- Do you belong to any programs or clubs at school? What are they, and what do you do there?

How does your school offer supportive relationships?

- Can you give me an example of a time when you felt that you belonged or fit in at school?
- Can you give me an example of a time when you felt that you did not belong at school, or did not feel welcome?
- If you had a problem with another student, is there someone you could go to for help? Who would that person be?

How does your school engage your parents?

- Can you think of a time when your parents came to school? Why did they come?
- Can you think of a time when your parents spoke to your teachers? Why did your parents speak to teachers?
- Are there special events at the school that your parents or family are invited to? Do they come, and do they enjoy these events? Why?