

Greetings from the new District ELL Instructor!

As we start the school year, I wanted to send out a brief note introducing myself to you, and letting you know a little bit more about our new ELL Program.

The _____ Schools ELL Program is designed to give support to students in our district whose first language is not English. The goal of this program is to help these students by developing and then further strengthening their English skills in order to be successful in the mainstream classroom. Ultimately, these students will be able to effectively listen, speak, read, and write fluently in English.

In order to adequately address the diverse needs of these English Language Learners, I will be working with them outside of their classrooms for a set period of time each school day. I will be providing these students with a combination of direct English language instruction, and content-based instruction designed to boost their vocabulary and comprehension skills in the various academic content areas.

Along with establishing a strong conversational level of English, I will also be working to expand our ELL students' knowledge of content-specific vocabulary. Appearances can be deceiving with these kids because often they have developed conversational English skills in order to "survive" in the classroom. At first, it may seem that these students are doing "just fine" when it comes to learning English. However, the level of English skill necessary to comprehend and apply new information from a math or science text is far greater than the knowledge necessary for basic communication. That is why I am taking a two-pronged approach to helping these students gain increased English proficiency.

I will be sending out an introductory note to all staff today, highlighting my services and making them aware of my presence in their buildings. I will also be sending out a handout next week to all teachers, laying out the order of operations for referring an ELL student to the program. Finally, I will be sending out a reminder to all building secretaries to check the Home Language Survey whenever a new student registers with our district. This survey is a key piece in identifying potential ELL students and must not be overlooked.

Over the next two weeks, I will be heading out to the various buildings to assess students for placement. Once I have gathered all testing information and evaluated student performance, I will be able to compile an accurate list of ELL students in our district. At that time I will set up a service schedule for all of the buildings. Currently, we have potential ELL students at all buildings, Pre-K through High School. I am eager to get started on assessments so that I can start serving our ELL kids as soon as possible.

If you have any questions for me, do not hesitate to ask. My "home base" is _____ school. You can call me there, or send me an e-mail if you prefer. I look forward to working with all of you this school year to help our ELL students develop the potential that they possess.

Sincerely,

District ELL Instructor