

English Learner Program

SAGE Academy Charter School provides services for many students who speak a primary language other than English in their home. The district also serves students who are immigrants. Our services include:

- o Evaluations,
- o Direct instruction in small groups,
- o Consultation with other teachers,
- o Alternative testing, and
- o Monitoring of progress

The purpose of this document is to share the context and components of our English Learner (EL) program and recommendations for future planning with staff and administration. This follows the suggested elements for effective EL programming as noted by the Minnesota Department of Education.

Summary

The enrollment of our EL students has been stable from 2012-2013 to 2014-2015. The EL population is approximately 14% of the student body each year. This is leading to a marked increase in the proportion of our students who are learning both English and the school curriculum. The Brooklyn Park area, where SAGE Academy is located is the largest core of Liberian families in Minnesota. Within the 14%, SAGE is seeing an increase in the number of Liberian students served in our EL Program. The families are attracted to SAGE Academy due to the smallness of our student body (approximately 85 students) and the family-like feeling within our school's community, as well as the individual programming SAGE provides.

Classroom teachers have primary responsibility for all students, including those with English language learning needs. In addition:

- EL teacher provides direct English language instruction to students in four domains of instruction: Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing;
- EL teacher provides consultation support to classroom teachers and student support staff, based on each student's English language learning needs. In addition, she has provided staff development in the areas of differentiation, Reading Strategies, and interpretation of the ACCESS Consortium testing results;
- In rare cases, students are referred to North Hennepin Community College for their EL courses with SAGE Academy paying the cost;
- Support staff (guidance counselors, health assistant) provide resource services to EL students and their families;
- Teacher assistants are used in limited ways to support the direct instruction provided by the licensed teachers;

EL teachers align their curriculum and program with the district's curricula in English literacy, ACCESS national standards, and Minnesota state content standards. SAGE Academy Charter School offers the following EL program models:

- Pullout English Instruction;
- Collaborative Teaching Model;
- EL direct instruction Reading class
- Cultural Development direct instruction class

Demographic Construction of LEP

An analysis of the demographics of the LEP students in the Brooklyn Park area reveals a rich and complex picture of diverse life and educational experiences. Students interested in SAGE Academy who are unable to speak, read, or write the English language do not generally choose SAGE. SAGE Academy's English Learner Program strives to address the needs of those students who at least speak, read, and write at a below level. This need affect their academic performance in the English language that is affecting their academic performance. Demographic variables of interest for the purposes of individual student planning include:

- School of enrollment
- Grade
- Previous Formal Schooling
- First Language Literacy Levels
- English Proficiency
- Other Services (Title 1, Special Education, Honor classes)
- Free and Reduced Lunch Status

Funding

Being a school of approximately 85 students, SAGE Academy has received the minimum amount of EL funding from the MN Department of Education funding. These monies are used to buy textbooks and other curriculum items, provide the instruction of the two SAGE EL classes, and the teacher assistant for the reading class.

Critical Element 1: *The district must develop, identify and place EL in appropriate programs.*

1.1 Evidence that the district equitably applies the use of a home language questionnaire and developmentally appropriate measures with all student to identify English language learners (ELs). Evidence of the district procedure is to appropriately identify immigrant and refugee students.

Entrance Criteria for SAGE Academy

A Home Language Questionnaire is given to all families upon registering their children at SAGE Academy. This information is given to the EL teacher in conjunction with the Administrative Director for planning purposes for the SAGE EL program.

Current Criteria for a student to be accepted in the SAGE EL Program: "A 'pupil of limited English proficiency' means a pupil in any of the grades of Grade 9 through Grade 12 who meet the following requirements:

1. Home Language Questionnaire – According to Minnesota Statute 124D: A student is identified as an EL if...
 - A. the pupil first spoke a language other than English,
 - B. the primary language spoken in the home of the pupil is not English; or
 - C. the language most often spoken by the pupil is not English.
2. Program Entrance Screening Methods—SAGE qualification for EL service is based on...
 - A. Home Language Questionnaire and English proficiency measures including (but not limited to):
 - B. Combination of MAP, ACCESS, Woodcock Munioz and local assessments

- C. W-APT for any new students who designated on the Home Language another language besides the English Language
 - D. At any time other developmentally appropriate measures may complement the formal measures including, but not limited to
 - i. Observations
 - ii. Teacher judgment
 - iii. Parent recommendations
3. Annual Proficiency Judgment—SAGE uses a combination of tools including, but not limited to:
- A. Attainment of English proficiency is defined as a student with a composite achievement level score greater than or equal to 5.0 with all four domains having achievement level greater than or equal to 4.0.
 - B. Academic Achievement Tests
 - i. Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) for Reading, Mathematics and Science. To qualify, students should fall below the 50th percentile for SAGE norms in Reading. Students either “Do Not Meet, or “Partially Meet” the MN State Standards.
 - ii. MAP (NWEA) testing in Reading, Grammar, Mathematics and Science: To qualify for the SAGE EL Program, students fall below their grade level.

1.2 Evidence that the district has written policies and procedures regarding identification, program entrance and placement.

Through a clerical error, the MARSS Coordinator did not submit to MDE a start date for each identified EL student. This error generated a loss of EL funding to SAGE for 2012-2013. It was after the closing date for MARSS revisions on December 30, 2013, that our Business Manager identified English Learner program as the source of lost funding.

This updated 2014-2015 SAGE English Learner Program Plan will be submitted to the Board of Directors for approval at the August 28, 2014 board meeting.

1.3 Evidence that the district has written policies and procedures regarding EL program exit and reclassification as no longer LEP.

SAGE Exiting EL and Reclassification

The decision to exit a student from EL and service is based on multiple measures, including teacher recommendation, parental input, and assessments of speaking, listening, reading and writing. SAGE will include state assessments such as the ACCESS, MCA, MAP and GRAD among its multiple measures. SAGE EL students who reach a level of English proficiency may be exited from the EL program. MARSS status will be changed from EL to non-EL only after the student has scored in the proficient range on the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (ACCESS).

All SAGE EL students who have earned an ACCESS composite score of 5.0 with all four domains having achievement level greater than or equal to 4.0 will cause consideration of the student exiting from the EL Program. Also, if a student "Meets" or "Exceeds the Standard" on the MCA test and has passed all SAGE classes with full credit, that EL student will be considered for exiting from the EL program.

State Guidelines applied to the procedures in the SAGE Academy Charter School - "School districts need to have a specific and consistent procedure in place by which the EL students are identified, assessed, and placed into appropriate service options . . . It should include the following: Home Language Questionnaire, oral interview in English and first language if possible, oral proficiency test, reading test or inventory, writing sample, information re: native language skills and educational background, determination of migrant or immigrant status."

Critical Element 2: The district must implement programs that address the needs of all levels of English proficiency.

2.1 Evidence that the district has in place a written plan of services based on scientific research and proven effective.

SAGE Instruction

Instruction for ELs in SAGE Academy Charter School takes many forms. The EL teacher, along with classroom teachers, counselor, teacher assistants, physical education, art teachers, special education staff, and volunteers provide instruction to EL students.

Our EL students receive the greater part of their instruction in the general education classroom. Classroom teacher accommodations, collaboration with the EL teacher, and pullout by EL teachers and Paras are some of the instructional approaches that support the learning of EL students.

Our EL teacher concentrates her instruction on language acquisition, moving from Level 1 (Entering level) to Level 5 (Bridging) as her students progress. Pullout (from the general education classroom) model allows for EL students on Levels 1 through 3 of the ACCESS to practice using English in situations where they are comfortable and receive one-on-one support by a para. Classroom and the EL teacher collaborate on instruction designed to meet content and language objectives for ELs in the mainstream (Echevarria, Vogt and Short. 2009).

Responsibilities of the EL teacher extend beyond direct instruction, consultation and scheduling. Those responsibilities include:

- *TESTING:* Administration, evaluation of the entrance and exit criteria testing, and for the administration of the state's English Language Proficiency Test.
- *REFERRAL TO SAGE's Student Assistance Team (SAT):* participation as a SAT team member.
- *PROGRESS REPORTS/CONFERENCES:* Attendance at parent conferences. Narrative reports for each student are entered into the student's cumulative file at the end of the year.
- *COMMUNICATION:* Communication with staff and families on a regular basis. Often act as liaison between family and school. Consultation with teaching staff to schedule, in-service on need for accommodations, monitor progress, share materials, etc.
- *INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT:* Send communications to families, order instructional supplies, etc.

2.2 Evidence of appropriate and effective EL curriculum and curriculum implementation.

SAGE Academy Charter School uses Minnesota state content standards and ACCESS national standards in our instructional design for English Learners.

SAGE Academy strives to maintain a collaborative model of EL instruction. Appropriate classroom materials for ELs are important and thus are provided.

Sheltered Content teachers in the areas of English, Math, Science, and Social Studies also implement curricula designed to meet the content-knowledge and academic language needs of English Learners. Much of the instructional materials used in the sheltered content classes are teacher-created or modified, to meet student needs and instructional standards through a differentiation process.

2.3 If Applicable, evidence of implementation of specific programs for immigrant and refugee children and youth.

SAGE Academy employs bilingual liaisons when situations arise that show the need for one. SAGE Academy also uses a phone system that translates English messages to the parents' spoken language.

Critical Element 3: The district must have appropriate staff to serve EL.

3.1 Evidence teachers are licensed and highly qualified in their teaching assignment.

In order to meet the needs of students who require support in language acquisition and fluency, the SAGE Academy has attempted to employ a teacher licensed in the area of English as a Second Language and teacher assistants with special training. No licensed applicants have ever applied. For 2011-2012 through the current school year, SAGE Academy has hired a teacher licensed in Language Arts and Counselor who has a background of EL instruction in Arizona. She taught at the Intermediate level Structured English Immersion class for 8th grade Language Arts at Cartwright School District in Phoenix, AZ second semester of 2007-2008. She earned a certificate for 90 hours of Structured English Immersion Training through the Cartwright School District in Phoenix, AZ. She also received additional training in English as a Second Language through Community Education.

In addition, at the present time SAGE Academy has three teachers and another staff member who can speak Spanish and one who can speak Japanese.

Staffing Guideline

1. Funding for EL teachers and teaching assistants are allocated appropriately.
2. Using the end-of-year number of EL students reported in MARSS, SAGE administration in conjunction with the EL instructor annually projects the number of EL students who will need EL services the following year.
3. Staffing assignments are made in the spring and modified as needed throughout the following school year.

3.2 Evidence that the district's program teachers and paraprofessionals assisting in instruction are proficient in the language of instruction, if applicable.

Our EL teacher has gone through training, and holds other relevant licensures in Language Arts and Counseling licensures, Those who teach in sheltered content classes are required to hold current teaching licenses for the content area in which they are teaching, thus meeting Highly Qualified requirements. Ongoing professional development is now required of the EL teacher, sheltered content teachers, and paras who work with EL students. Our EL para holds a college degree.

Teachers are responsible for designing and delivering instruction. They are also accountable for designing instruction to be delivered by teaching assistants. Our EL teaching assistant is used to supplement classroom or EL teacher instruction but not to replace it.

3.3 Evidence that long-term and scientifically based professional development is designed to improve the instruction and assessment of EL.

Our SAGE EL teacher participates in staff development and often facilitates them.

Critical Element 4: The district must collaborate and coordinate its EL program with other programs to maximize impact of resources.

4.1 Evidence that the EL program is coordinated with other programs in the district for maximal use of resources.

EL students at SAGE Academy may also be eligible for Title One and Special Education. Curriculum and staff development for the SAGE staff and faculty is co-developed and implemented with our EL instructional professional

4.2 Evidence that the district has policies and/or procedures in place to allow ESL/bilingual staff to communicate, meet, visit other classes and plan among themselves and with mainstream staff for maximal effectiveness.

EL and classroom teachers have been given release time for collaboration training, common planning times and mentoring opportunities.

Critical Element 5: The district must involve parent and community in the planning, development and implementation of the language instructional program.

5.1 Evidence that the district has an environment and policy that is inviting and welcoming to parents and families.

Each year, the SAGE school assemblies center around cultural diversity. We have had a Mexican Theater, African Song, and this year SAGE is having a multi-cultural music group coming in October.

Our mission centers on the celebration of diversity. SAGE stands for Students Achieving Global Excellence.

5.2 Evidence that parents and community members are involved in the planning, development and implementation of the EL program.

Each school year, the SAGE EL instructor holds an English Learner Advisory Council (ELAC) meeting. Every parent of a SAGE student participating in the EL Program is invited.

5.3 Evidence that effective means of outreach to parents of EL are implemented.

Each school year, the SAGE EL instructor holds an English Learner Advisory Council (ELAC) meeting. Every parent of a SAGE student participating in the EL Program is invited.

5.4 Evidence that the district communicates with parents regarding their children's participation in the language instruction education program in an understandable and uniform format and to the extent practicable in a language that the parents can understand.

The EL teacher reports to parents of EL students using report cards for the first and third trimesters. A conference format is used for the second trimester. Bilingual liaisons are used as necessary by families and staff to facilitate ongoing communication.

Critical Element 6: The district must adhere to state and federal fiduciary requirements and student achievement accountability measures.

SAGE Academy Charter School follows all the guidance at the state and federal level related to fiduciary planning for the EL program. Primarily, the funding source for the EL program is the general education revenue generated through the Average Daily Membership function with the Minnesota Department of Education.

6.1 Evidence of EL assessment, policy and procedures.

When a new family registers at the District Center, the W-APT is administered (or previous year's test records found) to decide placement in the EL program.

If a student's cum folder contains current (from that school year) standardized test scores that student was previously in, such as those from MAP, MCA-II, or other recognized EL tests, AND that student was previously identified as an EL, SAGE staff can forego the administration of an intake test.

6.2 Evidence of required Annual Measurable Achievement Objective (AMAO) improvement planning activities.

Each year, the EL instructor reviews the Annual Measurable Achievement Outcomes in the context of all academic progress data for our students.

6.3 Evidence of policies and procedures related to individual student data collection, which adhere to state and federal requirements including Plyer v Doe.

The SAGE Board Policies can be found at 222.sageacademy.org. Policy 505 under the "Student" section pertains to the safeguard of individual student data.