

Catalyst Academy Charter School
English Language Learners Policy

INTRODUCTION

The Board is committed to providing meaningful and appropriate education for all scholars. English as a second language or English language learners are included in Title 22, Chapter 4 of the Pennsylvania Code. The law reads as follows:

§ 4.26. ESOL.

Every school district shall provide a program for each student whose dominant language is not English for the purpose of facilitating the student's achievement of English proficiency and the academic standards under § 4.12 (relating to academic standards). Programs under this section shall include appropriate bilingual-bicultural or English as a second language (ESL) instruction.

In accordance with the Board's philosophy to provide a quality educational program for all Catalyst Academy scholars, and to increase the English language proficiency of scholars who are English Learners (ELs), Catalyst Academy shall provide an effective Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP) that meets the needs of ELs.

The purpose of the LIEP shall be to demonstrate success in increasing English language proficiency and student academic achievement so that EL scholars can attain the academic standards adopted by the Board and achieve academic success. EL scholars shall be identified, assessed, and provided appropriate instruction in accordance with the LIEP, and shall be provided an equitable opportunity to achieve their maximum potential in educational programs and extracurricular activities, consistent with federal and state laws and regulations.

AUTHORITY

Catalyst Academy shall approve a LIEP to provide English Language Development (ELD) instruction to EL scholars as part of the approved curriculum, in order to develop the English proficiency of EL scholars. Catalyst Academy shall provide EL scholars with both planned ELD instruction and modifications in content instruction and assessments for all curricular areas, based on the provisions of the LIEP. The LIEP shall be thoughtfully and deliberately planned and evaluated in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations and shall meet the needs of Catalyst Academy's EL scholars. The LIEP shall be based on sound research-based education theory, implemented with sufficient resources, staffed by appropriately prepared personnel, and meet the following requirements:

1. Align to state academic content standards for the appropriate grade levels of EL scholars.

2. Include ELD instruction delivered by properly certified English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers and other certified content area teachers working in conjunction with ESL certified teachers.
3. Incorporate the use of state assessments and ELD criteria.
4. Provide equitable access to content for EL scholars at all proficiency levels.
5. Provide equitable access to enrollment in courses or academic programs for which EL scholars are otherwise eligible.

The Board directs the LIEP to be evaluated for effectiveness based on student outcomes at least annually, and the results documented in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations and state guidelines.

Catalyst Academy's LIEP and evaluation results of the LIEP shall be made available to District staff working with EL scholars and parents/guardians of EL scholars.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or designee shall implement and supervise a LIEP that meets the legal requirements for LIEP compliance.

The CEO or designee shall ensure that Catalyst Academy complies with all federal and state laws and regulations, and program requirements, for ELD program funding, including required reports in the form prescribed by the state.

The CEO or designee, in conjunction with appropriate stakeholders, shall develop and disseminate guidelines and procedures regarding the LIEP and provision of services to EL scholars, as needed.

PROCEDURES

Identification and Placement of EL scholars

Catalyst Academy shall establish procedures for identifying and assessing the needs of scholars whose dominant language is not English. In order to identify which scholars are potential English Learners, the Home Language Survey shall be completed for each student upon enrollment in Catalyst Academy and shall be maintained as part of the student's education records. The information reported on the Home Language Survey shall also be recorded in the Student Information System (SIS) for each enrolled student.

EL scholars shall be appropriately placed in accordance with the LIEP within the first thirty (30) calendar days of the school year, or within fourteen (14) calendar days of enrollment.

Program Access

EL scholars shall have equitable access to and be encouraged to participate in all academic and extracurricular activities available to District scholars.

Assessment

Catalyst Academy shall annually administer required assessments to EL scholars to measure scholars' English Language proficiency and progress in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and understanding. Assessment results shall be maintained in the student's education records. Parents/Guardians may not opt scholars out of English language proficiency assessments.

EL scholars shall participate in all annual state or locally required assessments, with accommodations where applicable, and meet established academic standards and graduation requirements, in accordance with law, regulations and Board policy.

Program Exit

Catalyst Academy shall include uniform provisions in the LIEP, in accordance with state required criteria, for:

1. Reclassifying EL scholars as former EL scholars when they attain English language proficiency, including reclassification criteria applicable to scholars with disabilities.
2. Actively monitoring and reporting the progress of former EL scholars for a period of two (2) years following reclassification and program exit, and reporting scholars to the state in a monitor status for an additional two (2) years, to ensure scholars are meeting academic standards.
3. Redesignating former EL scholars as active EL scholars if they struggle academically based on persistent language barriers.

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

Certified employees and appropriate support staff, when necessary, shall provide the LIEP. Catalyst Academy shall ensure that all teachers providing ELD instruction hold the appropriate certification and can demonstrate academic language proficiency both in English and in the language used for instruction in their classroom.

Non-ESL staff shall incorporate ELD into all classes for EL scholars, as well as provide supports, modifications, and accommodations for curricular content to enable EL scholars to achieve academic standards.

Catalyst Academy shall provide appropriate training in ELD for all professional staff as part of the appropriate departmental Professional Development Plan(s).

Special Education and Gifted Education Services

EL scholars may be eligible for special education services when they have been identified as a student with a disability and it is determined that the disability is not solely due to lack of instruction or proficiency in the English language.

EL scholars may be eligible for gifted education services, when identified in accordance with law, regulations, and Board policy. Catalyst Academy shall ensure that assessment of a student for gifted education services screens for intervening factors, such as English language proficiency, that may be masking gifted abilities.

Scholars participating in ELD instruction who are eligible for special education services shall continue receiving ELD instruction, in accordance with their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP), at the appropriate proficiency and developmental level, and as determined by the student's IEP or GIEP team.

Parent/Family Engagement and Communication

Communications with parents/guardians shall be in the mode and language of communication preferred by the parents/guardians.

Within thirty (30) days of the beginning of each school year, or within fourteen (14) days of enrollment during the school year, Catalyst Academy shall notify parents/guardians of scholars identified as EL about the process for identifying their children as EL, the results of that process, and the recommended program placement. Catalyst Academy shall also provide parents/guardians with detailed information regarding the LIEP, the benefits of ELD instruction for their children, and an explanation of the program's effectiveness.

Parents/Guardians shall be regularly apprised of their child's progress, including achievement of academic standards and assessment results.

Catalyst Academy shall maintain an effective means of outreach to encourage parental involvement in the education of their children.

Parental Right to Opt Out of ELD Programs and Services -

Parents/Guardians of EL scholars have the right to refuse specialized programs and services that may be part of the LIEP for their child. A parent's/guardian's decision to refuse programs or services must be informed and voluntary; Catalyst Academy shall not influence a parent's/guardian's decision in any way, or make any program or placement determinations without parental notification and an opportunity to opt the student out of programs and services.

Catalyst Academy shall make a parental waiver form available for parents/guardians to opt their EL child out of ELD programs and services. The information contained in the parental waiver form shall be provided in the mode and language of communication preferred by the parents/guardians.

Catalyst Academy shall document all notifications made to parents/guardians regarding assessment and recommended placements and programs for EL scholars, and whether or not a parental waiver form is

received. When a waiver form is not received from the parent/guardian, Catalyst Academy shall proceed with the recommended placement.

EL scholars who have a parental waiver for ELD programs and services shall be assessed on English language proficiency annually and shall be provided with supports and accommodations to participate in general curricular and extracurricular programs, in order to meet academic standards and graduation requirements.

Parents/Guardians of EL scholars who have been opted out of ELD programs and services shall be notified of their child's progress, including achievement of academic standards and assessment results, and shall be provided with opportunity and a form to opt their child back into ELD programs and services.