FREIRE CHARTER WILMINGTON

Multilingual Learners Policy

Policy 220

UPDATED 5/16/2018, 10/16/2025

Policy Statement

The Board of Directors of Freire Charter School Wilmington (the Charter School) recognizes that charter schools are bound by federal law and the Delaware Administrative Code. Under federal law, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, the Equal Educational Opportunity Act (EEOA), the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and related regulations and case law, all public schools, including public charter schools, must ensure that Multilingual Learners (MLLs) can participate meaningfully and equally in educational programs, and this obligation extends to limited English proficient parents of such students. In furtherance of this mandate, Delaware has adopted the WIDA English Language Development Standards to develop and implement educational standards and assessments for MLLs. In accordance with WIDA, the Charter School shall provide a program for each student whose dominant language is not English and/or who is an MLL, with the purpose of facilitating the student's achievement of English proficiency and Delaware's academic standards. Accordingly, the Charter School shall provide students with a planned program of English Language Development (ELD) to support MLLs in meeting grade-level academic standards. The Charter School shall document that children with limited English proficiency, who are in need of programs and services, are identified and evaluated through an initial intake survey. The Charter School shall conduct systematic screening activities that lead to the identification and evaluation of children with limited English proficiency. The Charter School shall use the most current and appropriate versions of the WIDA Screener to assess students for placement in the language instructional program for MLLs.

The information included herein is intended to generally guide the design, staffing, and evaluation of the effectiveness of programs for MLLs.

TO THE EXTENT THAT ANYTHING IN THIS POLICY COULD BE CONSTRUED TO CONFLICT WITH APPLICABLE STATE AND/OR FEDERAL LAWS, THE APPLICABLE STATE AND/OR FEDERAL LAWS CONTROL.

ELD Program Summary

The Charter School's ELD program provides both push-in and pull-out services. Students will attend regular content areas classes as much as possible. In these classes, the student will work with both the content teacher and an ELD staff member to address learning goals required to achieve passing grades.The student will also receive additional ELD-specific instruction.

MLLs receive instruction in the same manner as for other curricular areas. ELD support is built into their weekly schedule and is intentionally planned at the administrative level to ensure that students are not removed from other core content classes in order to receive English language instruction.

As a student's proficiency advances, the student may require only minimal ELD instructional time, which may take the form of ongoing support as needed. The language instructional program provides MLLs with meaningful, comprehensible access to instruction in all content areas as required by academic standards.

The Charter School supports collaboration between ELD teachers and content-area teachers by providing common planning time as appropriate. In accordance with Delaware academic standards, the Charter School monitors the progress of MLLs and provides appropriate accommodations within content areas to ensure achievement of academic standards and curricular goals.

Identifying Multilingual Learners

To ensure the Charter School meets the needs of MLLs, all parents of students new to Delaware complete a comprehensive Home Language Survey (HLS) during registration. The Charter School also reviews files from previous schools to determine whether students are already identified as MLLs.

If a new-to-Delaware student is a potential MLL, the ELD Coordinator conducts a family interview to determine if WIDA screening is needed. Once scored, the results determine whether the student should receive ELD support.

Parent Notification of Placement

For new students, schools have up to 25 school days after enrollment to identify MLLs and notify parents of program placement. Schools must also send annual notifications to parents of enrolled MLLs to inform them of the continued or changed program status of their students within the 25 school days after the beginning of the school year. Required annual notifications include:

- A continued program placement letter that outlines a description of the program, available services, and parent's right to refuse services.
- A program exit notification.

  All program notifications are sent home in the parents' preferred language and English.

Option to Waive Services

Parents/guardians may request in writing that their child be withdrawn from language services. Written notice must include the parent's signature and date and shall be maintained in the student's cumulative record. All students who have been withdrawn from language services by a parent/guardian request must:

- Receive an equal opportunity to education based on language needs
- Still be administered the annual state language proficiency test until the student reaches language proficiency
- Still be administered state required assessments and counted towards the Charter School's progress for academic and graduation outcomes in the MLL subgroup.

ELD Staff

MLLs are supported by certified ELD/MLL teachers. These teachers receive professional development focused on second language acquisition and instructional best practices, including integration of language development across content areas in alignment with WIDA's English Language Development Standards.

Grading of MLLs

In general content classes, MLLs are graded in accordance with the general education grading policies. A MLL may not be retained in a grade level based solely on lack of English language proficiency. Before retention is considered, the ELD Coordinator must demonstrate that all appropriate modifications to instruction and assessment were made to provide the student with meaningful access to grade-level content and ELD instruction. In ELD classes, students are graded based on mastery of work appropriately aligned to their English language proficiency levels.

MLLs with Disabilities

MLLs are eligible for the full range of Special Education services as appropriate.

Annual Assessment of MLLs

Throughout the year, individual student progress is continuously evaluated by both ELD and classroom teachers, and learning plans are modified as needed to ensure academic success. Delaware state assessments are administered annually to all MLLs to measure progress and determine English language proficiency for each domain (Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening/Understanding). The Charter School assessment processes for MLLs comply with all state and federal requirements. MLLs take the ACCESS, and other state required assessments as is appropriate to their grade level annually with allowable accommodations.

EXIT PROCEDURE

MLLs must meet the Delaware State mandated criteria to exit the program. MLLs are assessed annually and will exit based on their score on WIDA's ACCESS for MLLs. The specific exit criteria are listed below. Once a student has met the required exit criteria, a Parent Notification Letter will be sent to notify parents that their child no longer qualifies for ELD services.

Exit Criteria

Students who achieve a composite proficiency level of 4.7 or higher on the ACCESS assessment will be exited from MLL status in the database and move to post-transition monitoring. This transition occurs automatically in the MLL database after the student advances to the next grade.

After exiting the MLL program, the Charter School monitors academic progress for at least two years to ensure that:

- students were not prematurely exited,
- any academic deficits resulting from participation in the ELD program have been addressed, and
- students are meaningfully participating in the standard instructional program alongside non-MLL peers.

If, during the two-year monitoring period, an exited student is still hindered by English language proficiency, the student will be re-screened. If re-testing qualifies the student as an MLL, the Charter School shall notify parents/guardians and re-enroll the student in services.

Parent Involvement

Parents of MLLs have the right to meet with school staff, with the assistance of an interpreter, to understand the Charter School's program and provide input. All information disseminated to students and families is provided in the parents' preferred language or mode of communication. The MLL program is evaluated annually to determine whether it is meeting its goals for students.