

## **IDENTIFICATION PROCESS OF LONG TERM ENGLISH LEARNERS (ELs)**

### **Introduction**

English learners (ELs) are expected to exit the language program after they have achieved academic fluency in English, as determined by performance on state-mandated or approved assessments for English proficiency and content-area knowledge. Research has shown that the average EL takes approximately three to five years to acquire grade-level academic English. ELs who do not exit within this period are considered long-term ELs.

### **Characteristics of Long Term ELs**

- They have been in the US for seven or more years
- They are at an intermediate level of English oral proficiency (WIDA Level = Developing) or below, despite English tending to be the language of students' preference.
- They are below grade level in reading and writing.
- They have some passable proficiency, but score low on standardized tests.
- They are deficient in oral and literacy skills needed for academic success.
- They struggle in all content areas that require literacy.

### **Identification of Long Term ELs (ELs)**

Long-term ELs are students' who have been in an English language acquisition program (ESL and/or Bilingual) for six or more academic years. They are typically found in grades 6-12; however, they can be identified as early as the fourth grade if students have been in a language program since Pre-K or Kindergarten. The English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher identifies students at the beginning of each school year and develops an intervention program that addresses the skills in which the EL student has not demonstrated proficiency.

### **Providing School and Classroom Support to Long Term ELs**

- Build supportive environments that respond to the immediate social, cultural, and linguistic needs of students.
- Increase sheltered instruction - English instruction that is modified so that subject matter is more comprehensible to students with limited vocabularies.
- Teach students learning strategies that they can use daily in all content areas (how to recognize cognates, looking for the heading of a chapter in pre-reading exercises, using a dictionary, or how to take effective notes, etc.).

## **IRVINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Pedro J. Ruiz, Ph.D., Supervisor, Department of ESL/Bilingual/World Language Programs**

**1 University Place, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Irvington, NJ 07111**

**Phone: (973) 399-6800 Ext. 1672**

- Recognize and encourage students' prior knowledge in the classroom.
- Use community resources to support immigrant students' acculturation process.
- Provide a print rich environment in both English and student's native language.
- Engage students in hands-on-learning, so students are physically involved.
- Be mindful of the new vocabulary ELs are exposed to in order not to overwhelm them.
- When assessing understanding, be open-minded. Provide multiple opportunities to demonstrate understanding (instead of writing: point, explain, act out, discuss, defend, draw, compare, predict, etc.).
- Allow students to work in cooperative groups in order to learn from each other.
- Keep high, but realistic, expectations throughout the year.

### **Reference:**

- [https://www.nea.org/assets/docs/15420\\_LongTermEngLangLearner\\_final\\_web\\_3-24-14.pdf](https://www.nea.org/assets/docs/15420_LongTermEngLangLearner_final_web_3-24-14.pdf)
  - <http://www.nj.gov/education/bilingual/policy/immenrol.htm>
  - <http://www.state.nj.us/education/bilingual/resources/newcomer.htm>
- <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap2.pdf>