

Transitional Bilingual Instruction

The following statements and procedures have been instituted for purposes of implementing an effective Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program.

Mission Statement

English Language Learners (ELLs) will meet state standards and develop English language proficiency in an environment where language and cultural assets are recognized as valuable resources to learning.

Burlington-Edison School District Values Bilingualism and Biliteracy

Knowing more than one language is a skill to be valued and encouraged. Studies have shown that when children continue to learn their native language, this does not interfere with learning English. In fact, past and current research continually provides evidence that fluency in one's native language is the best predictor of fluency in a second language (English).

Additionally, OSPI sites the benefits of bilingualism:

- **Intellectual:** The best way to ensure academic success and intellectual development is for parents and children to use the language they know best with each other. Also, bilingual children have greater mental flexibility and use those skills to their advantage in math.
- **Educational:** Students who learn English and continue to develop their native language do better in school than those who learn English at the expense of their first language. It is much easier to learn to read in a language you already know. Once you can read in one language, it is easier to learn to read in another.
- **Personal:** A child's first language is critical to his or her identity. Continuing to develop this language helps the child value his or her culture and heritage.
- **Social:** When the native language is maintained, important links to family and other community members are preserved and enhanced.
- **Economic:** The demand for bilingual employees throughout the world is increasing. The ability to speak, read, and write two or more languages is a great advantage in the job market.

Program Models

School districts must ensure that students with limited English proficiency are able to participate meaningfully in school and are not denied access to equal educational opportunities. Since knowing and using English well is necessary for success in school, it is important that students who need additional help learning English get the help they need.

Language acquisition programs are required to have:

- Sound educational theory
- Effective implementation
- Program evaluation and modification

A Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program, as defined by state law, means a system of instruction which uses two languages, one of which is English, to build upon and expand language skills to enable the pupil to achieve competency in English.

The district will provide English language learners appropriate core academic instruction with embedded language instruction, in addition to specific English language proficiency support. The district's Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program is a supplement to core academic instruction.

Program Application and Description

Annually, and prior to August 1 of each year, the district will submit an application to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction requesting funding to support its Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program. In its application the district will provide a description of its research-based program models including staffing and implementation strategies.

Eligibility

At the time of registration, the parents/guardians of each student shall be asked to complete a home language survey which identifies the child's primary language. Students that indicate on the home language survey a primary language other than English will be assessed within ten school days of enrollment and attendance using the WELPA (Washington English Language Proficiency Assessment) to determine eligibility for the transitional bilingual instruction program. Any student who scores a level one (beginning/advanced beginning), two (intermediate) or three (advanced) will be eligible for the program. Students who score at level four (transitional) are transitioned out of the program but are monitored for an additional two years to insure they are succeeding academically. If a level four student is struggling academically, they are eligible for services from the ELL staff. Staff will determine the appropriate instructional program for each eligible student.

Parent/Guardian Notification

Parents/guardians will be notified, in writing, of their child's initial eligibility and notified annually of their child's continuing eligibility in the Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program. At a minimum the parent/guardian notification will contain:

- How the child's eligibility was determined and the child's current level of English proficiency;
- A description of the district's program and how it will meet the child's educational needs;
- The specific exit requirements for the program; and
- Information on the parent's right to refuse services.

Communication with parents/guardians should be provided, when feasible, in the parents' primary language.

Continued Eligibility/Annual Assessment

Each eligible English language learner must be assessed annually, using the state-approved language proficiency test to determine continued eligibility.

Expected Graduation Year

For eligible English language learners who require extended time to meet high school graduation requirements, the district may set an expected graduation year beyond the typical four years of high school or through the school year in which a student turns 21.

Record Keeping and Documentation

The district will maintain records of eligible students and comply with state reporting requirements. Original documents will be kept in the student cumulative folder and copies in the program folder if applicable. These documents include the home language survey, parent notification letters, parental waiver (if applicable), and language proficiency test assessment data.

Communication Plan

The district will develop and provide to parents/guardians, district staff and interested stakeholders a user friendly description of the Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program offered in the district. The description will include the process for identifying and serving English language learners and provide contact information for the district's transitional bilingual instruction program manager.

Report to the Board

The superintendent or designee will report annually on the status of the district's Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program prior to the board of directors' program approval.

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