



*Multilingual Learner Program  
Policy and Procedure Manual*

2021-2022

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# Introduction

## Our Vision

- UP Education Network's (UP or the Network) goal is to be a leader in the fiMLLd of Multilingual learning where all teachers collaborate to support Multilingual learners by implementing innovative practices that:
  - Utilize rigorous, higher-order thinking and data-driven differentiation to meet the linguistic and academic needs of all learners;
  - Empower MLLs as global citizens and real-world problem solvers, while celebrating their multilingual and multicultural identities; and
  - Promote the acquisition of academic discourse and content knowledge necessary for MLL scholars to be successful in mainstream classrooms, high school, college, and beyond.

## Our Guiding Principles

- **Learning Language Through Rigorous Content** - We believe students learn language best through rigorous academic content that is relevant and meaningful and by engaging in higher-order thinking tasks. We analyze the academic language demands specific to each content and grade level and use the WIDA standards in conjunction with content standards to plan rigorous content instruction with embedded language supports.
- **Scaffolding Access** - We combine our knowledge of students' English language development levels and the second language acquisition process with the WIDA standards to plan differentiated scaffolds and accommodations that provide all MLLs with fair entry points into grade level content and support them in making appropriate academic progress.
- **Integrating Language Practice** - In all lessons, we integrate reading, writing, listening, and speaking to provide students with ample opportunities to use and interact with language. We design our lessons so that language learning and deep robust thinking happen simultaneously. We deliver language-rich lessons that foster meaningful student collaboration, build academic discourse through oral interaction, and allow all students multiple opportunities to practice academic language in different capacities appropriate to their English language development levels.
- **Sharing Responsibility** - We share the responsibility of teaching language. We believe that all teachers should support one another by coordinating and collaborating in planning for language and content instruction. We draw on ESL teachers' knowledge and expertise in advocating for MLLs and build the capacity of content teachers to teach the academic language of their discipline.
- **Using Data to Drive Instruction** - We consistently use both formal and informal measurements of students' language development across all four language domains and analyze this data to inform our instruction and differentiation.
- **Fostering Cultural Responsiveness & Multilingual Identities** - We value and seek to understand the home languages and cultures of our students by partnering with families. We incorporate those languages and cultures into our classroom communities and daily instruction. We empower our students to embrace their multilingualism and multiculturalism and see this part of their identities as an asset to society.
- **English Immersion** - Multilingual learners learn the language quickly when they hear English used by proficient speakers and when they use English to do meaningful academic work. At the same time, we believe in and reinforce the value of bilingualism and multiculturalism. Teachers do this by learning the unique knowledge Multilingual learners bring to a lesson and prompting students to use that knowledge to better understand the lesson.

- **Everyone Teaches Language** - Every teacher who works with multilingual learners is responsible for helping students develop their language skills. Teachers design daily lesson language objectives that show students how to use the language in the content area in one small way. Students practice the language objective throughout the lesson, and the teacher assesses students' language growth daily and over time.
- **Everyone Scaffolds Language** - Multilingual learners learn English through content when the content is made meaningful to them. It is impossible for teachers to teach every aspect of language that Multilingual learners might not know in a given lesson. Instead the teacher scaffolds the language and provides accommodations so students can understand the lesson. Teachers do this by identifying the challenging language in a lesson that will not be taught and providing individualized scaffolds and accommodations to MLLs. Not all students need language scaffolding, and not all lessons require language scaffolding.

## **Description of the Manual**

This manual serves as a resource for UP Academy Dorchester's (UP Academy) staff, faculty, and administrators. It is designed to provide tools and information to create a strong program for its Multilingual learners . It includes policies and procedures required by law and describes best practices within the Network and UP Academy.

## **Equal Access**

Up Academy does not segregate MLL students from their native English speaker peers, except where programmatically necessary to implement English Language Education (ELE.) UP Academy ensures that MLL students participate fully with their native English speaker peers in academic and extracurricular activities. Students have the same opportunities to receive support services, such as guidance and counseling, in a language that the student understands. UP Academy ensures that MLL students are taught to the same academic standards and curriculum as other students. UP Academy uses grade-appropriate content objectives for MLL students based on district curriculum taught by qualified teachers. MLL students have access to the same special education services, Section 504 accommodation plans, and Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) as their native English speaker peers.

## MLL Coordinator Responsibilities

There is an MLL Coordinator in each of the UP Academies. At UP Academy Dorchester, the MLL Coordinator's duties include:

- Ensure the MLL procedural requirements comply with federal, state, and Network requirements
- Create, update, and maintain folders with all MLL documentation for each student
- Coordinate and manage ACCESS testing
- Support school administrators in meeting the needs of English Language Learners
- Conduct meetings with MLL staff to coordinate district-wide activities including disseminating and receiving information, planning and implementing activities/events, addressing operational issues, etc.
- Observe and confer with MLL staff regarding instructional techniques, organization of practices, etc. for the purpose of providing guidance, coaching and mentoring
- Coordinate language proficiency testing (e.g. WIDA Screener, W-APT) to identify students who qualify for English Language Development programs.
- Facilitate and attend meetings, professional development, and trainings to convey and/or gather information required to meet the needs of English language learners
- Prepares reports and written materials, including Individualized Learning Plans, to document activities and ensure compliance
- Respond to inquiries from staff seeking MLL related information, assistance and/or direction related to the grade level or special MLL area activities
- Re-classify MLL students as FEL, or re-classify FEL students as MLL, as applicable
- Identify students who have not met their annual benchmarks on ACCESS testing and lead the process for developing and monitoring individual learning plans
- Participate in or ensure that another ESL teacher participates in any MTSS or IEP meetings for an MLL student
- Hold team members accountable for completing compliance-related and other identified tasks
- Lead or co-lead professional development to share best practices

# Identification and Placement

State and federal laws require that school districts assess the English proficiency of all newly enrolled students whose home language is other than English. The purpose of this assessment is to identify students' English language proficiency and to determine if they require direct instruction and support to complete ordinary class work in English. Based on the results of a linguistic evaluation, if students are identified as MLL, they qualify for language support services.

## Identification

- Enrollment in Boston Public Schools (BPS), including UP Academy, requires registration through Welcome Services, where families must complete a Home Language Survey. If the answers to the survey indicate that a language other than English is spoken at home, the school in which they enroll must evaluate the student for language proficiency/dominance.
- For students who arrive at UP Academy without an English proficiency score but who live in a home where a language other than English is spoken, ESL teachers at UP Academy evaluate them in the first few weeks of school using the WIDA Screener.
- Some students arrive at UP Academy from other BPS schools and have already been evaluated for MLL status. If a student arrives at UP Academy from another school in the United States, ESL teachers will review the cumulative file from the sending school and analyze prior language testing results.
- Any student who is administered the WIDA Screener and scores an overall composite proficiency level of 4.0 and a composite literacy (reading/writing) proficiency level of 4.0 or below is considered to be an MLL and is eligible for MLL services. Only students who achieve a 4.5 composite proficiency level as well as 4.5 composite literacy (reading/writing) proficiency level are considered English proficient.
- The MLL Coordinator places a copy of the test results in the student's file and enters the MLL designation data into ASPEN.

## Placement

- UP Academy's MLL Coordinator analyzes the WIDA levels and needs of each student. Based on those results, the school may recommend placement in a Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) classroom, or they might determine the student does not need ESL services. UP Academy's ESL staff then shares the test results and recommended placement with the student's family, in their home language, no later than 30 days after the screening has been administered. They also place a copy of the results in the student's cumulative folder. If the parent agrees to the placement, UP Academy sends a Parent Notification Letter, written in the family's home language, and places a copy of the letter in the student's cumulative folder.
- A parent may decline to enroll their child in the recommended English language program by signing an opt-out letter. If a parent opts out, the student will not receive ESL services, and a copy of the letter is maintained in the student's cumulative folder and the ESL folder. These students are still considered MLL students until they meet the exit criteria. UP Academy will administer ACCESS annually to determine their English language proficiency development.

## Annual Assessments

- UP Academy tests the English proficiency of all MLL students annually.
- Students take the WIDA ACCESS Test (ACCESS) in January of each year, which measures their proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking English. ACCESS is administered by staff who have completed WIDA's ACCESS Administration training. UP Academy considers the results to drive programming for the following academic year and shares the results with families.
- MLL students also participate in the same standardized and curriculum-based assessments as their non-MLL peers.

## Benchmarks Toward Proficiency

Each year, based on a student's ACCESS score, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education determines a target for the following year. The target, or benchmark, is the minimum score needed by the student to remain on track to attaining English proficiency within six years.

UP Academy monitors the progress that students are making in meeting English proficiency benchmarks. For MLLs who are not meeting English proficiency benchmarks, the school will:

- identify areas in which the student needs improvement;
- establish personalized goals for the student to attain English proficiency;
- assess and track the student's progress in the identified areas;
- obtain and incorporate input from the parents or legal guardian of the MLL; and
- review resources and services available to assist the MLL.

Some of the steps the school might take include:

- evaluate strategies for improving instructional practices and routines for MLLs
- provide additional support to teachers of MLLs, including professional development and coaching
- examine the adequacy of the curriculum and materials available to teachers of MLLs
- obtain supplemental materials designed to assist MLLs who are struggling with attaining English proficiency
- establish language support teams that may include English as a second language (ESL) teachers, content teachers, school administrators, guidance counselors, and other relevant personnel
- support structured collaborative opportunities for teachers of MLLs (ESL teachers and content teachers) to review student performance data regularly

## FELs

- Annual assessments are also used to determine when an MLL student meet the criteria for exit from MLL programming. Those students become classified as a Former English Learner (FEL). Criteria for designation as FEL are as follows:
  - Overall Score of at least Level 4.2 on ACCESS
  - Composite Literacy Score of at least Level 3.9 on ACCESS
  - Ability to perform ordinary classwork in English as indicated by one or more of the following measures: grades, locally-administered academic assessments, written

observations and recommendations from the student's teachers, WIDA Performance Definitions and CAN DO Descriptors, and performance on MCAS content area tests

- Once a student has been re-designated as FEL, UP Academy will monitor him/her for four years to assess their academic progress without language support. If a FEL fails to make academic progress, as measured by his or her grades and content area assessments, and the school-based team determines that this failure is due to a lack of English language proficiency, then the student must be re-classified as an MLL. The student will be assigned to the SEI program with ESL services. The student will take ACCESS until he or she can demonstrate the ability to do class work in English without language support.

## **Our Program**

UP Academy operates an SEI program. Students designated as MLL are placed in a cohort that includes both MLL and non-MLL students. Classes in those cohorts are taught by SEI-endorsed teachers with licenses in the appropriate content area (or teachers on DESE waivers). They participate with their non-MLL peers in all content areas. Typically, these students are clustered to facilitate differentiation and service delivery. Depending on students' levels, as described below, they will receive pull-out services, push-in services, or a combination of the two.

When ESL teachers push into classrooms, they co-teach lessons with the general education teachers, usually during ELA. Both teachers have internalized the lesson and the needs of the students and are accountable for content mastery and language development. They meet at the beginning of the school year to establish a relationship, norm on classroom culture, and start to get to know the students on their rosters. They have common planning opportunities throughout the school year during which they plan for co-teaching.

When students are pulled out, their ESL teacher a deeper guided reading cycle that incorporates vocabulary, reading at their level, academic discussion, and writing at their level during a literacy block.

# Participation in State and District Wide Testing

## MCAS – All Students

All MLL students participate in the grade-level determined administration of the MCAS exam, as required and in accordance with DESE guidelines. There is one exception: students who are in their first year of enrollment in U.S. schools do not need to participate in MCAS. If they do participate in MCAS, their scores do not count towards the school's statistics. MLL students (current and former) students may use approved bilingual dictionaries with word-to-word translations but not definitions during testing. They are also entitled to extra time to complete the assessments.

## Multilingual learners with Disabilities

Many students with disabilities, including Multilingual learners, are allowed accommodations on state and district wide testing, including MCAS. Their allowable accommodations are listed in their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Accommodation Plan (504 Plan).

A student's IEP or 504 team must also determine how the student will participate in ACCESS testing and document this information in the IEP or 504 plan. Accommodations for MCAS are available for ACCESS testing, with the following exceptions:

- Accommodation 12 (Braille)
- Accommodation 18 (Electronic Text Reader, except ELA Reading Comprehension test, which is nonstandard accommodation 28)
- Nonstandard accommodation 26 (Test Administrator Reads Aloud the MCAS ELA Reading Comprehension Test). This accommodation is not available for use on the Reading portion of the ACCESS for MLLs test, per WIDA consortium policy. Students may attempt the test without the accommodation to receive an overall score.
- Nonstandard accommodation 28 (Electronic Text Reader for the ELA Reading Comprehension Test)
- Speaking and Listening are presented together, alternating between a listening task and a speaking task.
- The test administrator scores all components as test is administered.

# Records of MLL Students

UP Academy's MLL Coordinator maintains a folder specific to MLL documents for each MLL and FEL student. Those records are stored in the MLL Coordinator's office. Those folders include:

<b>Annual Documentation for MLLs or FELs</b> <i>One copy in each file per year</i>
<b>Assessment &amp; Data</b>
ACCESS Results and Report
MCAS Test Results & Accommodations <i>(if applicable)</i>
Individualized Learning Plan <i>(if applicable)</i>
<b>Program Placement &amp; Updates</b>
Annual Notification of Program Placement Letter
Waiver Forms <i>(if applicable)</i>
Opt-out Forms <i>(if applicable)</i>
Add/Restore MLL Status Form <i>(if applicable)</i>
<b>Teacher Documents</b>
Copy of Class Schedule
Copies of MLL Reports/Report Cards in English and Native Language
<b>Parent Documents</b>
Parent Notification of W-APT or ACCESS
Parent ACCESS Scores Report
<b>SPED Documentation (if applicable)</b>
IEP or 504 Plan Meeting Minutes <i>(Initial or Annual)</i>
Testing Accommodations for MCAS and ACCESS
<b>FMLL Documentation (if applicable)</b>
Reclassification to FEL Document / Meeting Form
Parent Notification of FEL Reclassification
FEL Monitoring Checklist
<b>SLIFE Documentation (if applicable)</b>
Pre-Screener
SLIFE Interview Form
SLIFE Literacy and Numeracy Tests
SLIFE Individualized Learning Plan

## Licensure Requirements

UP Academy takes steps to ensure that every teacher who teaches MLL students holds an appropriate license or current waiver issued by DESE. UP Academy has taken steps to ensure that each administrator who supervises or evaluates such teachers obtained SEI Administrator endorsement.

## Contact Information

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