Raising the Achievement of English Language Learners in the Providence Public Schools: An Update

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Providence Schools
OUR SCHOOLS. OUR FUTURE.

Agenda

- Reflecting on the work to date - CGCS recommendations

- Lessons Learned

- Challenges

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Reflecting on the Work to Date – CGCS Recommendations

CGCS Recommendation	Recommendation Status				
	Complete	Ongoing/ In Progress	Complete by 6-30-14	Complete by 1-31-15	Planning for 2015-2017
A. Leadership and Strategic Direction					
1. Foster…collaborative working relations with the Office of the Mayor…		X			
2. Develop and adopt a school board policy…to recognize the community's diversity as an asset.			X		
3. Reaffirm the Providence Schools policy of ensuring full access for ELLs to the general education program…	X				
4. Restore staff and community confidence in the ability of the school district leadership to work collaboratively on behalf of ELLs		X			
5. Charge the school board with requesting and receiving regular status reports…		X			
6. Increase the number of staff members assigned to the Office of ELLs	X	X			

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B. Goals and Accountability					
7. Charge the ELL office with defining ELL program goals…	X				
8. Charge the working group with developing…measurable academic performance and programmatic goals…					X
9. Charge…working group…with reviewing and revising curricula frameworks…to ensure they include ELL components.		X			
10. Charge working group with devising mechanism and procedures for evaluating all senior staff and principals, in part, on the academic achievement of ELLs.					X
11. Charge the working group with including representation from the ELL office, Advanced Academics, Title I, PD, the content areas, and others. Further, charge the group with developing steps to strengthen cultural competence among staff and teachers.		X			

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C. Curriculum & Instruction					
12. Charge the working group with developing an ELL walkthrough tool…	X				
13. Charge the ELL office with developing and implementing and ELD instructional strategy across the content areas…		X			
14. Charge the ELL office and the Title I office with developing a subset of SES providers that have a proven record in working with ELLs…					
15. Charge the ELL office and the guidance and counseling office with developing a graduation pathway for ELLs…				X	
16. Review the senior-exhibition graduation requirement to ensure that it is not imposing unrealistic barriers for ELLs.	X				
17. Develop and implement opportunities for ELLs to earn FL credits…	X				
18. Improve the process for including ELL staff and teachers on all materials selection committees	X				
19. Charge the…working group with revising and updating the curriculum…to reflect the new CCSS and ELL extensions.		X			
20. Conduct gap analysis between standards, curriculum, and commercial instructional materials to identify differences and supplement accordingly for all students and ELLs.	X				
21. Integrate WIDA standards and ACCESS results into the development of documents, tools and resources…		X			

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D. Program Design and Delivery System					
22. Name an advisory panel of external and internal experts and stakeholders to help staff with program design	X				
23. Charge the ELL office with creating a framework for the strategic use of native language…				X	
24. Include research-based practices in bilingual, ESL and dual-strategies as part of the redesign of the ELL program frameworks.					X
25. Revive the idea of a Newcomer Academy or Center				X	
26. Strategically locate ELL programs in schools with receptive leadership…					X
27. Charge the ELL office with leading a team of teachers and ELL experts to redesign the dual language program				X	
28. Charge the ELL office with revising the LIFT Administrative Handbook…		X			
29. Charge the…working group with designing instructional supports for ELLs exiting into mainstream classes.					X
30. Identify and provide flexible models to support the instruction of ELLs with disabilities.				X	

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E. Program Support and Monitoring					
31. Develop a system of support for ELL instructional strategies and program implementation					X
32. Re-establish LIFT or ELL lead teachers to support instruction for ELLs in language programs…		X			
33. Charge the ELL office with revising the LIFT Manual Handbook…	X				
34. Provide incentives to anchor schools to build ELL programs…					X
35. Design a process for teacher feedback to principals and to the central office regarding ELL program implementation.	X				

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F. Data and Assessments					
36. Develop priorities and milestones for strengthening the Office of Research, Planning and Accountability.		X			
37. Designate a person in the Office of RPA to work closely with the ELL office and be responsible for regular ELL program evaluations.		X*			
38. Charge the upgraded RPA office with designing regular reports on the status of ELLs...		X*			
39. Revise the data codes to allow for the maintenance of historical data trends on ELLs...					X*
40. Revise data systems to allow school-level ability to manipulate student data, including data on ELLs					X*
41. Charge the RPA office with providing ELL achievement data by WIDA level.	X				
42. Charge the Office of RPA with conducting an analysis of the predictive power of the ELL exit criteria.					X*
43. Determine how the existing district assessment framework is responsive to the instructional needs of ELLs.	X				
44. Build staff capacity to use and interpret assessment information for sound decision making on referrals, services, and ELL placements.		X			

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G. Program and Student Placement					
45. Redesign and streamline the student registration process					X
46. Overhaul several key documents the district currently uses in the registration process.	X				
47. Establish a timeline and communications plan for rolling out to the public changes in and clarifications to the registration procedures.					X
48. Establish a system for projecting enrollments that would aid seat availability for ELL programs...					X
49. Phase in the guaranteed ELL program placement at the early elementary grades from K through grade 3					X
50. Improve the identification and assessment process for ELLs	X				
51. Charge the Office of Student Registration and Placement with leading a working group along with the ELL office to develop an improved registration and placement process for ELLs.		X			
52. Charge the Office of Student Registration and Placement, the ELL office, and the Office of FACE with creating a communication and training plan...		X			
53. Charge the ELL office and the office of RPA with conducting an in-depth study of...waivers...					X*
54. Have a team of stakeholders, including the ELL office and the Office of Special Education, review and improve the registration process for ELLs.				X	
55. Charge staff members from general education, ELL, special education, and the schools to develop a services model that is flexible enough to support the education of ELLs with disabilities				x	

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H. Human Capital and Professional Development					
56. Charge the human resources office and the ELL office with developing and incorporating qualifications and competencies for teaching ELLs...		X			
57. Charge the ELL office with devising a new staffing plan that maximizes the use of current staff.				X	
58. Charge staff members...with developing a plan for better aligning the district's professional development with its instructional priorities...		X			
59. The professional development plan should specify which training will be provided by the central office and which will be school-based.	X				
60. Make instructional rigor and classroom lessons and strategies a priority in the redesigned PD.	X				
61. Ensure that the PD for teachers, principals and staff includes the use of the revised pacing guides...	X				
62. Implement a tiered coaching and professional development strategy...				X	
63. Ensure the district's professional development plan and tiered coaching and support include...elements for ELLs...				X	
64. Consider adding sessions to the "Turn-Around Principal and Teacher Leader Academy" on instruction for ELLs...		X			
65. Consider coupling job-embedded PD with extended-learning opportunities for ELLs, such as summer programs.					X
66. Charge the CAO with implementing cultural-competency training and create a cadre of trainers...					X
67. Institute a new teacher induction program for new teachers and/or teachers new to a grade or program.	X				
68. Provide additional PD on ELL strategies for instructional assistants, and create a career ladder for assistants...					X

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I. Parent and Community					
69. Charge a team…with building on the successful "Conversations with the School Board" program.					X
70. Charge the ELL office with coordinating a local advisory committee…	X				
71. Charge the FACE office and the ELL office with developing a joint plan for outreach to Latino and other minority families.		X			
72. Strengthen and formalize support and outreach to refugee families in the community.		X			
73. Ask the director of the office of FACE to provide quarterly updates to the school board on the progress of outreach efforts.		X			

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J. Funding and Compliance					
74. Charge the CFO, the Office of School Improvement, the Office of Federal Programs, and special populations staff with developing a funding framework to support ELL instructional improvements across the district for ELLs					X
75. Design the composition and roles of Title I/ELL support teams that could assist schools to use Title I and Title III funds strategically and ensure that the needs of ELLs are built into SIP.		X			
76. Charge the budget office with investigating the possibility of adjusting funding allocations for schools based on the number of ELLs...					X
77. Charge the budget office and the Title I and ELL offices with developing a plan that would expand the number of ELL coaches supported through Title I funds...				X	
78. Charge the ELL office with developing a system-wide staffing model...				X	
79. Charge the ELL office with working with the RIDE Title III office to seek additional state support for refugee students.		X*			

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Lessons Learned

- The recommendation report is not a checklist – Prioritizing the recommendations is essential
  - Early, small wins are important
  - Many of the recommendations are never "complete"

- Leverage the community to move the work
  - ELL Community Leaders Advisory Panel
  - Latino Policy Institute Report

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Lessons Learned

- Strategic partnerships are key in moving the work forward
  - Roger Williams University
    - PRIME ELL (mathematics & language acquisition K-5)
  - Providence Education Research Consortium
  - US Department of Health & Human Services

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Challenges

- Keeping the momentum going

- Having to re-address recommendations

- Appropriately certified & trained personnel
  - Lack of fully certified ESL/Bilingual teachers
  - District and school based professional development is optional
  - Teacher & TA collective bargaining agreements

- Lack of resources to support the significant, ongoing enrollment of new arrivals
  - 431 New Arrivals to the US since 07/01/13
  - Seats – building capacity to enroll and appropriately service students
  - Changing demographic of ELLs
  - Current RIDE high school graduation requirements

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