Title: English Language Learner Program Update

Type: Discussion

Presenter(s): Dr. Frannie Becquer, Director of Achievement Equity and Multilingual Learner Programming

Description: This report provides a comprehensive update on our English Learner (EL) population. It covers current enrollment figures, including the number of newcomers and predominant languages spoken. Student progress is highlighted, detailing those who have exited the EL program and overall advancement in English Language Proficiency in the 23-24 SY. The report also outlines ongoing support systems for EL students and their families.

Recommendation: No recommendation is being made at this time. This presentation is a report update for the board.

Desired Outcome(s) from the Board: Review the materials and prepare questions

Attachments:
🗒 **EL program update 10.7.24**

Overview of report:

This document provides a comprehensive overview of the English Language (EL) program within the school district. It begins by defining key terms and explaining the WIDA ACCESS assessment system used for EL students. The content then covers several crucial areas:

A. ***Student Enrollment and Demographics:*** Includes current EL student numbers, monitored students, prior year students, and newcomer statistics.Also detailing the linguistic diversity within the EL population.

B. ***Progress Metrics:*** Outlines the overall progress of EL students and the percentage meeting individual proficiency targets.
C. ***Academic Support Initiatives:*** Describes specific support programs implemented at elementary, middle, and high school levels.
D. ***Family Support Programs***: Details initiatives designed to enhance communication and engagement with EL families.

I. **Definitions**

   A. EL: English language (in report written as EL student)
   B. ELL: English Language Learner
   C. WIDA ACCESS for ELL students - (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners) is a standardized English language proficiency assessment given to Kindergarten through 12th-grade students who have been identified as English language learners (ELLs). Students must achieve a 4.5 composite score to exit services and be monitored for two years before changing the designation to a prior EL student.

II. **WIDA ACCESS Levels**
   A. Level 1 - Entering
   B. Level 2 - Emerging
   C. Level 3 - Developing
   D. Level 4 - Expanding

III. **Significance of 4.5 ACCESS Score in Minnesota**
   A. Represents the proficiency level at which students can exit EL services
   B. Indicates readiness for mainstream classroom success without additional language support
   C. Falls between "Expanding" (4.0) and "Bridging" (5.0) WIDA levels
   D. Students at this level can generally:
      1. Understand and produce specific and some technical academic language
      2. Engage in extended oral and written discourse
      3. Communicate with fewer errors in English

IV. **Student Enrollment and Demographics**
   A. EL Student Numbers
      1. Current EL students: 520
      2. Monitored EL students: 160 (After achieving a composite score of 4.5, students are reclassified as monitors for two years)
      3. Prior year EL students: 402 (After two years, students are reclassified as prior EL students)

B. Newcomers: Defined as students whose birth country is not the United States and who have enrolled in school in the United States within the last 365 days.
  1. Number of current EL students who are newcomers: 100
  2. Percentage of EL student population: approx. 19 %
     a) Not all EL newcomers have an ACCESS level of 1 (beginning). All four levels of English language Proficiency are represented among students.

V. **Exited Students**
  A. Number of current EL students who exited the program this year: 84

VI. **Language Diversity**
  A. Total number of languages spoken by EL students: over 50
    1. Top languages:
       a) Somali: 330
       b) Spanish: 284
       c) Chinese: 65
       d) Russian: 37
       e) Hindi: 35
       f) Tamil: 33
       g) Ukraine: 27

VII. **Progress Toward Proficiency**
  A. WIDA ACCESS Test Results
    1. Overall progress:
       a) 56.8% of EL students showed progress in English proficiency. Students made some growth but may or may not have met their individual language proficiency targets.
    2. Individual Target Achievement
       a) 39.5% of EL students met their individually set language proficiency targets

VIII. **Academic Support for EL Students**
  A. Elementary
    1. An English Language Literacy Coach was hired to work with Elementary English Language teachers and classroom teachers to bring best language practices into the classroom and provide embedded professional development on using English Proficiency levels in lesson planning to meet the needs of all students.
  B. Middle School
    1. The program model shifts to more co-teaching in ELA classrooms. English Language Development Teachers are also using the new ELA curriculum, which has an EL-specific component that aligns with the general education classroom curriculum.
       a) Co-teaching for English Learners (ELs) is an instructional approach where a general education teacher partners with

an English as a Second Language (ESL) specialist to teach a class that includes EL students. This collaboration combines content expertise with language support strategies. The teachers jointly plan lessons, deliver instruction, and assess students, ensuring that academic content is accessible to ELs while supporting their English language development. This model helps integrate ELs into mainstream classrooms while providing targeted language assistance and promoting inclusive education.

C. High School

    1. An additional teacher was added to the HS staffing formula to create better pathways to graduation. This included creating more co-teaching opportunities in ELA classes and courses that meet math, science, and social studies graduation requirements. Additionally, it allowed for the creation of sheltered EL classes in courses that meet graduation requirements and a newcomers-focused class.

        a) An EL sheltered class is a specialized course designed for English Learners, taught collaboratively by a mainstream content teacher and an EL specialist. This co-teaching approach combines content instruction with language support strategies, allowing ELs to learn grade-level material while developing their English skills in a supportive environment tailored to their needs. In this model, EL students are segregated from their peers in a class. This approach allows ELs to learn grade-level content while developing their English proficiency in a supportive environment.

IX. **Family Support Initiatives for EL families**

    A. Fulltime Somali Cultural Liaison added to the cultural liaison team with primary responsibilities at the High School.

    B. Implementation of monthly family affinity groups for Spanish and Somali, providing a bridge between the community and Edina Schools

    C. Liaisons assist with translating district-wide documents into the top two languages: Somali and Spanish.

    D. Language Line and Talking Points are utilized as interpretation solutions.

        1. Language Line: Language Line provides on-demand phone and video interpretation services in hundreds of languages, available 24/7. It allows schools to connect with qualified interpreters quickly. The connection rate to Edina Public Schools:

            a) 21.12 Seconds Spanish Connect Time

            b) 39.91 Seconds Next 9 Languages

            c) 35.87 Seconds All Other Languages

      d) 29.23 Seconds Overall Languages
2. Talking Points: TalkingPoints uses AI-powered translation to enable two-way text messaging between teachers and families in over 100 languages. The app allows educators to send personalized or group messages, share updates, and coordinate with parents while automatically translating messages into each recipient's preferred language