



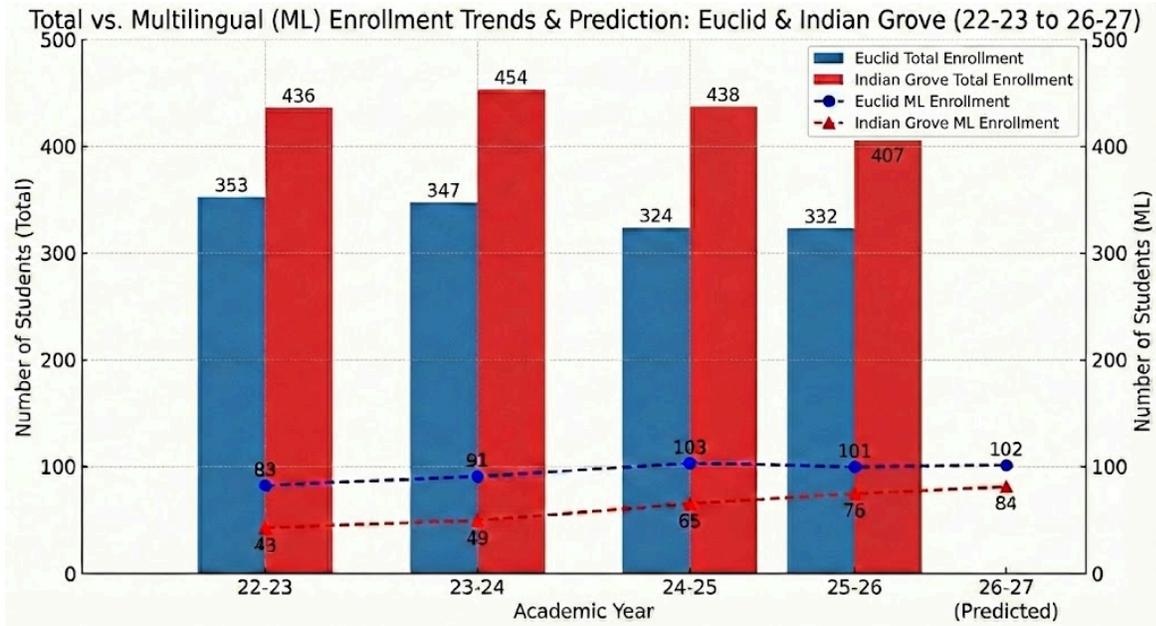
River Trails

SCHOOL DISTRICT 26

To: River Trails Board of Education
From: Kristine Seifert - Assistant Superintendent Teaching & Learning; Natalie Hudson - Director of Multilingual Programs
CC: Ryan Berry - Assistant Superintendent Business Services
Re: Multilingual Staffing Recommendation Indian Grove Elementary 26-27

Purpose & Recommendation

This memo updates the Board of Education on the status of the multilingual staffing plan and requests authorization for an additional 1.0 FTE Multilingual (ML) Teacher at Indian Grove Elementary School. Indian Grove currently has 3.0 dedicated ML Teachers. Euclid has 4.0 dedicated ML Teachers. This recommendation is based on projected enrollment growth and a critical analysis of current staff certifications required to support our service delivery model.



Background

Our district is committed to a "Fluid" service delivery model that adapts to the specific needs of our multilingual students throughout the year. While Euclid Elementary has maintained a steady population of ML students, Indian Grove is currently experiencing a shifting demographic trend.

River Trails School District 26 ML Service Delivery Model

Belief Statements
<p>We believe Collaborative Teacher Practices are best for ML students <i>English proficiency cannot be seen as a prerequisite to meaningful participation in the core curriculum; instead, language must be viewed as something that is developed in the process of learning, when students are supported and have access to the richest curriculum our schools have to offer. Therefore, all teachers need to share responsibility for both engaging all learners in the core curriculum and developing essential language skills.</i></p>
<p>We believe Phonics Instruction coupled with a Reading Workshop Structure are vital for ML learners' English language development <i>Systematic phonics instruction can be very effective in helping MLs, even those at fairly low levels of language proficiency, learn to decode words. However, this skill does not facilitate reading comprehension if students' oral language proficiency is not developed to the level of the texts they are expected to read. For this reason, reading instruction should be combined with intensive development of the oral language needed to understand the text. The most effective reading programs for ELLs combine systematic phonics instruction with a print-rich environment that provides exposure to appealing reading materials in varied genres. Skills practice that is embedded in meaningful texts helps ensure that decoding skills don't progress beyond students' ability to comprehend the text.</i></p>
<p>We believe exposure to language models is imperative to success of the program <i>MLs cannot develop phonological awareness in English until they are familiar with the sounds of English. This means that before explicit instruction in phonological awareness begins, children should have extensive experiences with fun and appealing songs, poems, chants, and read-alouds that will allow them to hear and reproduce the sound patterns of English. Language models are imperative.</i></p>
<p>We believe in a FLUID service delivery model that may change throughout the course of the year depending on the specific needs of our students.</p>

Current data analysis indicates that while Euclid's ML population is stabilizing, Indian Grove's ML population is projected to grow steadily over the next three academic years based on current trend data. To maintain our high standards of service, specifically the "Integrated Program" and "Collaborative Teacher" models, staffing adjustments are necessary to ensure equitable support for students at Indian Grove.

Rationale

The recommendation to increase staffing at Indian Grove is driven by three primary factors: a significant disparity in classroom teacher certification, projected student growth, and the requirements of our service spectrum.

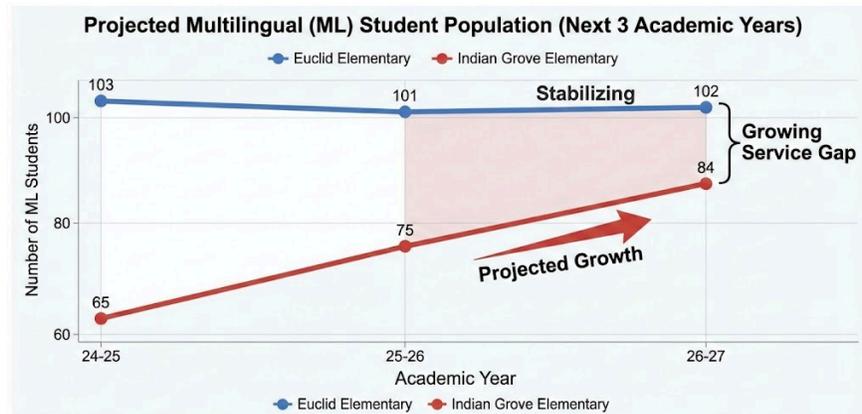
1. Critical Disparity in ESL-Endorsed Classroom Teachers: Our district believes that "Collaborative Teacher Practices are best for ML students" and that all teachers should share responsibility for language development. However, the capacity to deliver this model varies significantly between schools due to staff credentials.

- **Euclid Elementary:** 87% of classroom teachers hold an ESL endorsement/certification. This allows the majority of ML students to receive "Homeroom placement in a regular education classroom" as recommended in our Service Spectrum.
- **Indian Grove:** Only 55% of classroom teachers are ESL certified.
 - Staff endorsements at Indian Grove have increased by nearly 100% since 2021-22, however, even with this significant increase, the growth of the multilingual population is outpacing our ability to support it given current staffing.

It is important to note that increasing this percentage has been a strategic priority for the district. For the last several years, hiring candidates with ESL certification has been the norm, and we have utilized tuition reimbursement and special grants from ISBE to encourage existing staff to obtain the endorsement. It typically takes 18-24 months to complete the endorsement program. Despite these sustained efforts to build internal capacity, the current certification rate at Indian Grove remains significantly lower than at Euclid where this has been a necessity for decades. The current staffing levels at Indian Grove cannot sustain the required level of support given this certification gap.

2. Projected Growth of ML Population at Indian Grove: While Euclid's ML enrollment is plateauing, Indian Grove is entering a growth phase.

- **Euclid:** Projected to remain flat (103 students in 24-25 to 102 in 26-27).
- **Indian Grove:** Projected to increase from 65 students (24-25) to **84 students** (26-27).
- **New Enrollments:** New ML enrollments at Indian Grove have increased significantly (8 new ML students 24-25; 13 new ML students 25-26). Of the 13 students enrolled in 25-26, 7 different languages were spoken. In 25-26, 7 were newcomers to the country with little to no English.



This upward trend requires proactive staffing to prevent caseloads from becoming unmanageable as the population expands.

3. Adhering to the "High Needs" Service Model: Our district utilizes a strategic grouping model to deliver the most effective instruction. Ideally, we group our "High Needs" students (WIDA <3.1) into classrooms led by an ESL-certified general education teacher. We then pair this teacher with a dedicated ML co-teacher.

- This model allows us to group our ML students by need, placing the lower needs students in classrooms with ML certified teachers who can address the needs of the students organically.
- This allows for the ML teacher to support classrooms serving predominantly high-needs ML students in collaboration with an ML certified classroom teacher.
- Because Indian Grove has fewer ML certified teachers, there are fewer options in sectioning.
- When limited by sectioning, it is very difficult to maintain the ideal service delivery model.

Benefits

1. **Ensuring Fidelity to the Collaborative Model:** Adding 1.0 FTE will allow Indian Grove to faithfully implement the "Collaborative Teacher Practices" we believe are best for students. It ensures that despite fewer classroom teachers having ESL endorsements, students will still receive the quality of instruction they deserve.
2. **Equitable Workload and Student Support:** This position will bridge the gap between Indian Grove and Euclid. It ensures that a student at Indian Grove receives the same level of certified support as a student at Euclid. It allows for the necessary flexibility required for student success.

Summary

Indian Grove is currently experiencing a distinctive shift in demographics, with Multilingual enrollment projected to grow significantly while other schools stabilize. To effectively manage this expanding population, we must also address the reality that fewer classroom teachers at Indian Grove hold ESL certifications compared to other buildings. Approving this 1.0 FTE request is essential to meet this rising demand and ensure that, regardless of classroom placement, every student receives the high-quality, legally required support outlined in our ML Service Spectrum.