



# ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER (ELL) PROGRAMS

## Mission

Building brighter futures for students through a strong foundation in English.

## English as a Second Language (ESL) K-12

ESL is a broad term used to describe the diverse educational approaches that use English as the language of instruction for ELLs. ELLs receive instruction in English with native language support, particularly for emergent ELLs, when possible. The level of English used during instruction is tailored to students' proficiency (students may be grouped by proficiency level), and students in the classroom may or may not share the same native language. Teachers of ELLs present content according to students' individual needs and learning styles. While it is not necessary for an ESL teacher to speak his/her students' native language, it is important for schools to maintain a culturally diverse staff—all students need social, emotional, and academic support which is strengthened when ELLs have someone to identify with culturally.

The ELL department of Saint Paul Public Schools offers *content-based ESL programs* to help ELLs achieve rapid English proficiency while mastering academic content, by integrating content and language objectives. Content-based ESL programs differ from *pull-out* programs, in which a special curriculum is often used and the sole focus is on development of English proficiency. As leading scholars in the areas of biliteracy and bilingual education David and Yvonne Freeman argue, "Because people learn language as they use it, it is logical to have them learn English as they study meaningful content, rather than to have them study English language as a separate subject apart from meaningful content" (*ESL/EFL Teaching: Principles for Success*, p. 32).

In Saint Paul Public Schools, general education (at the elementary level) or content area (at the secondary level) and specially licensed ESL teachers collaborate to deliver content-based ESL instruction. ELL teachers focus instruction in literacy and math but may also provide support in other content areas. Teaching teams plan instruction, co-teach lessons, assess students, and reflect on their practice to meet the varying needs of their students. School leaders support this collaboration by providing time for planning and reflection, ensuring adequate instructional space, allocating appropriate resources, creating a strategic plan for classroom placement of students, and providing professional learning opportunities for teaching teams. At the elementary level, ESL students are taught in the homeroom with their native English-speaking peers with varying amounts of support. At the secondary level, ESL students may enroll in a combination of self-contained sheltered content-area ESL classes, co-taught content-area ESL classes, or mainstream classes with their native English-speaking peers, depending on their level of English proficiency.

## Latino Consent Decree (LCD) K-12

The Latino Consent Decree program in SPPS is specifically designed for Spanish-speaking students who need additional support. LCD students are taught in English and Spanish, and coursework is aligned with district standards to ensure that students learn the essential skills in the subject areas needed for graduation. LCD students also learn about their Latino culture and history.

# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

# OFFICE OF ACADEMICS



**SAINT PAUL PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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## **Specialized Elementary Programs**

### **Language Academy (LA)**

Language Academies are designed for newcomer students in grades 1-6 who speak very little English. Each Language Academy classroom is comprised of both English language learners and native English speakers. ELL students work on the same academic material as their classmates, with adaptations and assistance from ELL teachers and bilingual educational assistants. ELL and mainstream teachers integrate language development across all subject areas.

### **Dual Language Programs**

Dual Language Programs are available for students who wish to become bilingual, bi-literate and cross-culturally competent individuals by the time they complete sixth grade with the option to continue through the secondary level. Dual Language programs offer instruction in both English and a target language across curricular areas. The ELL department works closely with Spanish-English Dual Language programs at Adams (K-6), Homecroft (K-6), Riverview (K-3), Vento (K-3), and Wellstone (K-2). Jackson Elementary offers a Hmong-English Dual Language program for students in grades pre-K-2 grade (this program will expand every year until it includes grades pre-K-3). Although these programs may differ in structure, they all have the same goal.

Cherokee Heights and Roosevelt offer Spanish literacy and language support in Kindergarten and first grade with the goal of helping Spanish-speaking students more easily transition into an all-English curriculum.

## **Specialized Secondary Programs**

### **English Language Center (ELC)**

The English Language Centers provide intensive social and academic language support to recently-arrived English language learners in grades 7-12, easing the transition for newcomer students while allowing them to work toward graduation standards. ELC students spend approximately 75% of the school day in intensive language classes, developing English skills while they study challenging content material such as geography, science, health, and math. As students develop English language proficiency, they progressively spend more and more time in mainstream classes.

### **International Academy – LEAP (IA-LEAP)**

International Academy-LEAP is an optional alternative program designed for recently-arrived English language learners aged 14 to 21. Students take English language and content-area classes to improve their English skills and content knowledge and earn a high school diploma. While English is the main focus of classes at IA-LEAP, native language support services are available to students and parents.

SEPT 2007