

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

POLICY: MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

DATE ADOPTED: December 17, 2024

POLICY STATEMENT

The School Board recognizes that students with non-English language backgrounds bring diverse cultural, educational, and linguistic background experiences to our schools. The Colchester School District enrolls all students residing in Colchester without regard to their or their parents' actual or perceived citizenship status. The District has an obligation to identify the multilingual learners in our system and provide them with access to academic and extracurricular school programming as required by law.

It is the policy of the Colchester School District to ensure that all students who are multilingual learners receive the supports and services necessary to provide them an equal and meaningful opportunity to participate in the District's educational programs and services. This includes but is not limited to services from appropriately trained and experienced staff for consistent identification, appropriate assessment, and effective programming that supports progress toward English language proficiency and evaluation of and accountability for student progress toward English proficiency.

I. DEFINITIONS AND COMMONLY USED ACRONYMS

For purposes of this policy, the term multilingual learner (ML) is defined as a student with a home language other than English and who has limited English language proficiency based on results from an English language proficiency assessment approved by the state of Vermont.

Multilingual learner: The term "multilingual learner," when used with respect to an individual, means an individual:

- A. Who is aged 3 through 21;
- B. Who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school;
- C. Who:
 - 1. was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English;
 - 2. is a Native American or Alaska native, or a native resident of the outlying areas; and comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; or
 - 3. is a migratory, whose native language is a language other than English,

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- and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and
- D.** Whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual —
 - 1.** the ability to meet the challenging State academic standards;
 - 2.** the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or
 - 3.** the opportunity to participate fully in society.

Historically, a variety of terms have been used to describe ML students. The term ML is inclusive of students who fall into all of these categories.

- A.** English as a Second Language (ESL)
- B.** English Language Learner (ELL)
- C.** English Learner (EL)
- D.** Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

II. IMPLEMENTATION

The Superintendent or their designee will develop and maintain a Multilingual Learner English Language Program that complies with state and federal laws. This program will be periodically evaluated to make modifications when necessary. The ML Program will be adequately staffed with licensed personnel who have regular access to further professional training in order to implement ML programming. The Superintendent or their designee will oversee the ML program which is established to:

- A.** Administer state required ML assessments in order to identify and assesses students whose primary language is not English, and are in need of language assistance, in a timely, valid and reliable manner.
- B.** Refer ML students with suspected disabilities to special education or a 504 team for disability-related identification, evaluation, and where indicated, services, and provide language support in evaluation, programming, and service delivery.
- C.** Evaluate and monitor ML students for progress toward English language proficiency and grade level content. Maintain records of progress and make records available to appropriate staff and to ML students' guardians.
- D.** Objectively assess the progress of ML students in order to track and respond to the results of ML services, to ensure that language barriers are being overcome within a reasonable period of time, and to determine when transfer to fully English proficient programs is appropriate. Exit standards should be objectively based and should be designed to determine whether ML students are able to read, write, and comprehend English well enough to participate meaningfully in the District's programs.

- E.** Monitor ML students after they exit ML services, to ensure that they did not exit prematurely.
- F.** Provide support to meet the educational needs of an ML student if the student opts not to participate in offered ML services.
- G.** Ensure that ML students will be provided equal opportunity for participation in curricular and co-curricular activities, including core curriculum, graduation requirements, specialized and advanced courses and programs, sports and clubs. No student shall be excluded from, or not be admitted to, any CSD program on the basis of their English language proficiency.
- H.** Ensure that ML programming is designed to avoid unnecessary separation of ML students from the general student body. The District will take appropriate affirmative steps to rectify the English language deficiency in order to open the educational programs to these students.
- I.** Ensure that there is ongoing meaningful communication with all ML parents in a language they can understand. The District provides translation services for families to support access to their child's educational program.