

MEMORANDUM

TO: Arlington School Board
FROM: ESOL/HILT Citizens Advisory Committee
DATE: February 15, 2014
SUBJECT: Non-Recommendation Year Report

The ESOL/HILT¹ Citizens Advisory Committee presents this Non-Recommendation Year Report with the purpose of providing the Advisory Council on Instruction and the School Board with important background information and data related to meeting the educational needs of English Language Learners (ELLs). The Committee's analysis and discussion of ELL data and ongoing issues will serve to lay the foundation for next year's recommendations. We fully appreciate the staff of the Office of ESOL/HILT for the time and energy devoted to supporting the work of the CAC and, most importantly, for their attention to recommendations made last year by this CAC and those of the ELL Evaluation. The CAC also appreciates the time taken by APS staff from various offices to meet with the advisory committee.

Following an introductory section providing historical background on linguistic diversity and a brief reminder of the nation's legal foundation to provide equal access to public education, the report has three main sections: the first section provides data on ELL enrollment throughout APS schools as well as some of the latest ELL achievement data presented by APS to the School Board; the second section describes the activities carried out this year; and the final section of the report provides the status update of the CAC's recommendations made in 2012-13.

Historical background on linguistic diversity

The history regarding linguistic diversity in the United States is as rich as it is polemic. The very founding of this nation was preceded by native settlements where hundreds of languages were spoken and by explorers who spoke Spanish, Portuguese, and French. The initial colonial settlements added an additional stream of languages including English, Flemish, and German. This linguistic mosaic is integrally and intricately linked to our nation's history.

¹ ESOL means English for Speakers of Other Languages and HILT means High Intensity Language Training. The CAC members collectively speak 8 languages, in addition to English (Spanish, Arabic, Italian, Portuguese, three African languages, and French).

For example, Philadelphia and its adjoining area were rich in linguistic diversity during the colonial times. Still a small village in 1700, its population was mostly English and Welsh, but this area also included Danes, Dutch, Finns, French, Germans, Irish, Scots, and Swedes. This diversity was representative of the diversity of the settlers in Pennsylvania, making it a challenge to assemble a jury where all the members spoke the same language. In 1766, Benjamin Franklin reported to the House of Commons that the Germans and Scots-Irish each comprised one third of Pennsylvania's population.²

Virginia was the most populous state of the Southern Colonies and where two fifths of all slaves in the region lived.³ The African population in the Southern Colonies came from Angola, Gold Coast, Nigeria, and Senegambia, representing many tribes and languages. This diversity was even greater with approximately 40,000 Native Americans living in these colonies. While this diverse population made these colonies the most racially diverse (in comparison to New England and the Mid-Atlantic Colonies), the English were the dominant group in terms of control and power with the English comprising only 37%. The non-White population was about 42 percent (African slaves comprised 39%); about 21 percent of the inhabitants were non-English Whites, mostly Scots, Scots-Irish, Germans, Irish, and French Huguenots.⁴

Since the early colonial days our nation has continued to receive individuals who speak languages other than English. In Virginia the linguistic diversity today is due to the internal migration from other states, the international community working in the nation's capital and also due to active hiring of foreign labor by sectors of Virginia's economy.

The Virginia Agricultural Growers Association has used the H-2A program to provide a steady stream of hired hands to assist in the production of high-value crops that are among the most profitable in agriculture: tobacco, fresh fruits and vegetables. Harvesting approximately 93,100 acres of tobacco, fruits, vegetables, and nursery crops results in approximately \$284 million in annual cash receipts.

The H-2A seasonal labor program has been used for decades by many Virginia growers because the seasonal nature of the work and the harsh conditions make it difficult to find workers for the harvest.⁵ Studies have documented this source of labor and

² Vincent N. Parrillo, *Diversity in America* (SAGE Publications Inc. 2009) and Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible: Social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979).

³ Total approximate population about 500,000 in 1776 U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Part II, Series Z 20-132* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1976).

⁴ Parrillo, *ibid.*

⁵ "Virginia Apple Grower Urges Congress to Act on Immigration Reform, Cites Economic Danger to Agricultural Communities," *CF-Grower*, October 29, 2010.

quantified the resulting contribution towards Virginia's economy.⁶ In addition, under the H-2B program, Mexican and Jamaican workers have been recruited to work in Virginia's crab meat industry, while under the H-1B program high-tech workers come to work in many of Virginia's high-tech companies.

Diversity, equal access, and the courts in our schools

Our nation's school system has had a long history of racial, ethnic, and linguistic isolation for a number of groups. Our legal system has had a history of intervening to prohibit such actions. While there were no state laws in the Southwest that required segregation of children based on ethnicity, segregation practices were widespread and even the norm for black and Mexican Americans. The Federal courts ruled in favor of parents demanding equal access to education; for instance, in the Federal 1945 court case *Mendez et al v. Westminster School District of Orange County et al* in which the judge ruled in favor of the parents and enjoined the school district from continuing to segregate children that were of Mexican or Latin American descent. In the 1948 *Delgado v. The Bastrop Independent School District* case in Texas, the Federal court ruled that segregation of Mexican American children was illegal. The landmark Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* upheld that State laws that segregated students on the basis of race are unconstitutional. The promise of educational opportunity for groups who are struggling against forces of poverty, racism and prejudice, became a legal obligation of schools thanks to the passage of this landmark case as well as other civil rights laws.⁷

While the Supreme Court decision prohibited segregation by race, this integration did not necessarily equate to equal access to education since the language minority children could not understand the instruction provided. The 1974 landmark Supreme Court ruling in *Lau v. Nichols* based on Title VI of the Civil Rights Law, sought to bring an end to the exclusion in education for language minority groups. The ruling declared "...there is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers and curriculum...for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education...."⁸ The Supreme Court decision in the *Lau* case created a 'class' of students labeled "Limited English Proficient" (LEP) and the legal requirement for school districts. In other words, the public school legal requirement to meet the need of LEP students originates from the 1974 landmark

⁶ Paul Trupo, Jeffrey Alwang, David Lamie. The Economic Impact of Migrant, Seasonal, and H-2A Farmworkers on the Virginia Economy. Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, Virginia Tech. <http://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/14836/1/rr980036.pdf> accessed 12/28/13

⁷ U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Report on Ethnic Isolation of Mexican Americans in the Public Schools of the Southwest, April 1971. <http://www.law.umaryland.edu/marshall/usccr/documents/cr12m573rp1.pdf> Accessed 12/28/13

⁸ *Lau v. Nichols*, 414 U.S. 563, vs. Supreme Court, January, 1974. The *Lau* case was filed in CA, a state with a long history of linguistic diversity, starting in 1542 and including a Spanish-English bilingual state constitution when it first became US territory.[See <http://www.monterey.org/museums/MontereyHistory/ConstitutionalConvention.aspx>]

Supreme Court case (*Lau*), and not from Title III federal law provisions so regardless of whether or not schools receive Title III funds, schools must abide by the *Lau* ruling.

The Supreme Court decision did not specify for school districts how to meet their legal obligation to provide access to equal educational opportunity for English Learners but the decision did stipulate: “*Any system employed to deal with the special language skills needs of national origin minority group children must be designated to meet such language skills needs as soon as possible and must not operate as an educational dead-end or permanent track.*”⁹ This statement is particularly relevant to the concerns the CAC has discussed related to the ongoing achievement gap.

The linguistic diversity in Arlington Public Schools began in earnest in the late 1970s when the community welcomed significant numbers of refugees from Southeast Asia, as a result of the Vietnam War. Given its geographical location, Arlington has been home to an international community serving the embassies located in the nation’s capital as well as international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund and the Inter-American Development Bank. Arlington, as part of the metropolitan DC region, has welcomed subsequent waves of refugees and immigrants as a result of US foreign policy and refugee resettlement efforts.¹⁰

The enrollment of English learners in Arlington Public Schools has not dropped below 25% since the 1970s but the number of languages has increased, Spanish being the most prevalent at this time. The passage of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) federal law in 2001 brought in a new era of accountability that shed light on how well districts across the nation were serving particular students groups, including LEP. While APS began its ESOL/HILT program to serve ELLs about 30 years ago, the NCLB accountability requirements provided new insights as to the achievement and success of ELLs. The 2012 comprehensive review of APS programs and services for ELLs signals the continued commitment of APS to meet its legal obligation to provide equal access to education for ELLs and the commitment to continuous improvement of all of its programs, as well as its goal to close the achievement gap. Finally, the explicit attention to the needs of ELLs is fitting response to the 37 percent of Arlington students who speak a language other than English, at home.¹¹

Enrollment of English Language Learners

Due to calendar changes in the CAC reporting schedule, this report was prepared prior to the public release of ELL enrollment, as compiled by the ESOL/HILT Office and

⁹ As quoted in Laurie Olsen, Ph.D., *Reparable Harm. Fulfilling the Unkept Promise of Educational Opportunity for California’s Long Term English Learners*

¹⁰ For example, Salvadoran came to the U.S. as political asylum seekers due to the atrocities of the U.S. backed Civil War. The number of applicants who were granted asylum was directly affected by our nation’s foreign policy. See Susan Gzesh *Central American and Asylum Policy in the Reagan Era*. University of Chicago April 2006. Migration Policy Institute <http://www.migrationinformation.org/usfocus/display.cfm?ID=384> Accessed 12/28/13

¹¹ ESOL/HILT Office Power Point Presentation to the School Board

published in the LEP Survey. We appreciate the staff's efforts to make available embargoed figures so the CAC could provide summary data. Given that the figures were not publicly available, this year's report does not provide school-by-school figures. The count taken towards the end of September, 2013 indicates that 6,755 students out of the 23,539 students in Arlington Public Schools are either currently classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) or have exited this status within the past two years. About 4,064 LEP students are currently receiving direct services from the ESOL/HILT program. Data related to LEP students or English Language Learners includes the following categories:

- **ELL enrollment in pre-K programs.** The school division does not have an ESOL/HILT staff planning factor for this grade level, thus they do not enter into the total students receiving direct services.
- **ELLs or LEP students who are at English proficiency levels 1-5 are students who are deemed not proficient in English.** Federal law requires that schools provide instructional support to ensure these students have equal access to the curriculum.
 - ELLs receiving direct instructional services through the ESOL/HILT Program are those at levels 1-4 of English proficiency.
 - ELLs at Levels 5 do not receive direct ESOL/HILT services but their achievement is monitored and they might receive support as determined by each school.
- **Opt-out.** This category includes students for whom parents have chosen to decline ESOL/HILT services for their child. A parent's decision to opt out, however, does not rid the school division of its legal obligation to ensure equal access to education for these students.
- **ELL students at Level 6,** These students have exited from the Limited English Proficient status but are monitored for 2 years for federal accountability purposes.¹²

¹² ELLs who reach Level 6 of WIDA (based on a 1 through 6 scale of English proficiency developed by the World Class Instructional Design and Assessment) are designated as "Reaching". In addition to taking the initial English proficiency assessment (W-APT), all LEP students must take annual assessments of their English proficiency, using ACCESS (developed by WIDA). Students reach Level 6 when they have obtained Overall and Literacy Proficiency Levels of 5.0 or above on Tier C of the ACCESS or Overall and Literacy Proficiency Levels of 5.0 or above on the W-APT or Model (WIDA assessments). These students have exited direct ESOL/HILT services.

Our table below reflects the totality of these various groups to provide an accurate picture of the ELL enrollment in Arlington schools. Overall, 29 percent of enrolled students are currently designated as ELL or were Limited English Proficient at one time.

Table 1. English Language Learner Enrollment in APS, 2013-14

	Elementary K-5	Middle School	High School	APS Total
LEP Receiving Direct Services (Levels 1-4)	2851	470	743	4064
Exited from Direct Services (Level 5)	84	194	361	639
Opted out of Services	39	13	22	74
Total LEP K-12 Enrollment (1-5)	2974	677	1126	4777
<i>Total K-12 Enrollment</i>	<i>11801</i>	<i>4659</i>	<i>6039</i>	<i>22499</i>
<i>LEP as a % of APS K-12 Enrollment</i>	<i>25%</i>	<i>15%</i>	<i>19%</i>	<i>21%</i>
Pre-K LEP (do not receive direct services)	617	na	na	617
Former LEP within two years (level 6)	586	309	466	1361
Grand Total LEP/ELL Students	4177	986	1592	6755
<i>Total Enrollment Pre-K to Grade 5</i>	<i>12841</i>			
<i>LEP/ELL as a % of APS Pre-K through 12 enrollment</i>	<i>33%</i>	<i>21%</i>	<i>26%</i>	<i>29%</i>

Source: 2013-14 LEP Survey Arlington Public Schools

It is vitally important to include ELL enrollment at the Pre-K level in budget and instructional plans, since such children will eventually enroll in K-12 grades in APS. Research on child and language development highlights the critical importance of these early years; however, Arlington Public Schools currently does not provide literacy instruction in primary language or explicit English language development instruction for ELLs enrolled in Pre-K. In 2013-14, a total of 1,040 students were enrolled in Pre-K programs and 617 (59%) were identified as LEP. In at least seven schools the LEP enrollment in Pre-K is between 70 and 87 percent, thus making it particularly important that the overall instructional program be responsive to the particular needs of ELLs. If the instructional program is not tailored to meet the needs of ELLs, not only is there a significant opportunity lost to close the achievement gap, the school division could be found out of compliance with providing equal access to ELLs to its publicly supported educational program.

- At the elementary level, ELLs comprise 33 percent of enrollment when Pre-K and recently exited ELLs are included
- At the middle school, 21 percent of enrollment is composed of ELLs or recently exited ELLs
- At the high school level, 26 percent of enrollment is composed of ELLs or recently exited ELLs

Instructional Supports for ELLs at Different Levels of Proficiency

In APS the HILT or ESOL program targets *direct services* for students who are at levels 1 through 4 of English proficiency. ELLs who are at Level 5 do not necessarily receive direct services but are, instead, closely monitored by ESOL/HILT staff at the school level. These students receive varying levels of instructional supports, depending on the school. The evaluation of ELL services and programs indicated that there was an inconsistency with the level and the type of instructional support provided to ELLs at Level 5.

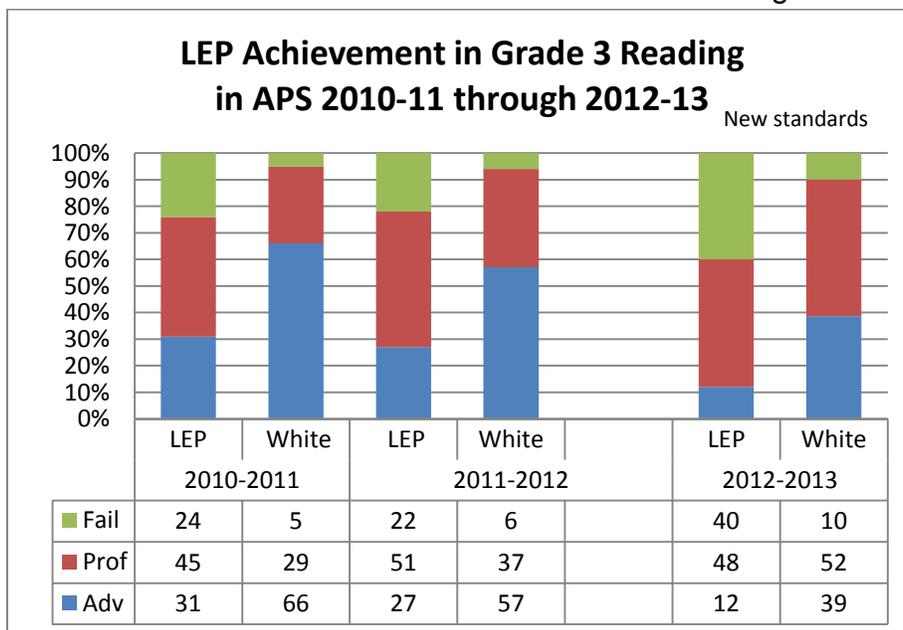
The CAC has ongoing concerns with how ELLs at Level 5 are supported when, in the course of close monitoring, staff discover that a student is academically struggling. In 2013-14, 30 percent of ELLs in middle and high school are at Level 5, thus exacerbating the CAC’s concerns since at the secondary level, the language load required for successful content learning is markedly higher than at the elementary level and ELLs are racing against time available for them to both master Academic English and the content required for graduation.

ELL Achievement

This section highlights a few areas to illustrate the ongoing need to increase achievement for ELLs and to show some promising signs of improvement.

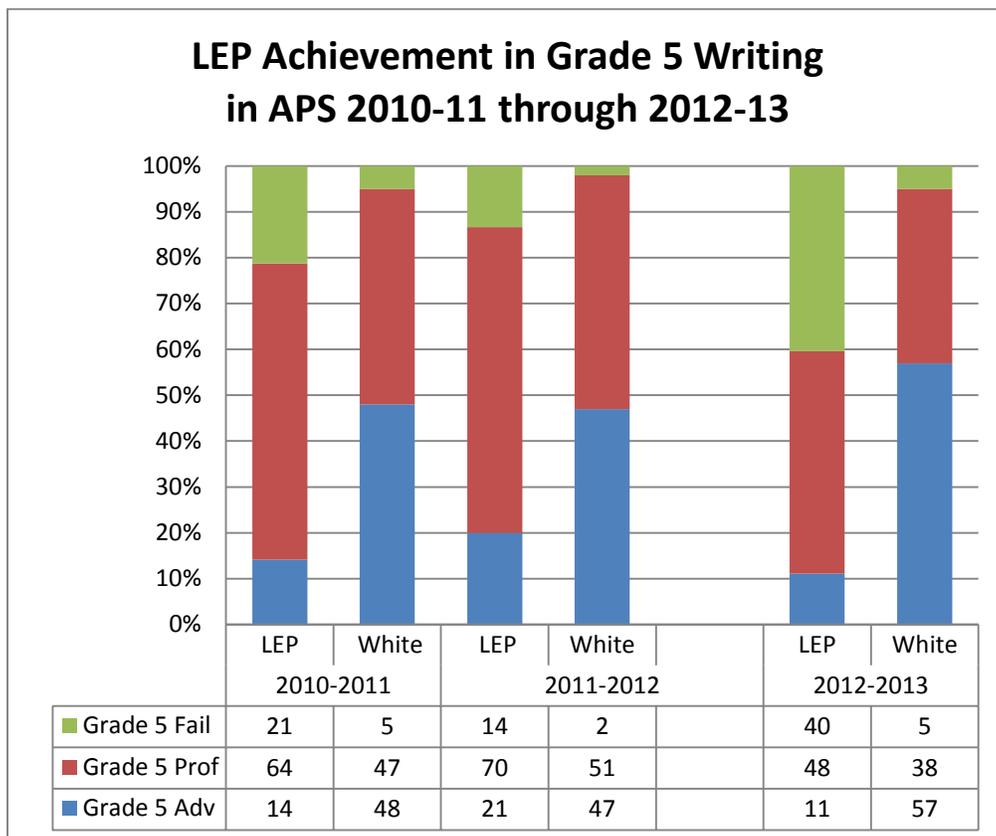
New Standards Exacerbate Achievement Gap in English Language Arts (SOL results). The CAC’s analysis of VADOE data show that from 2010-11 to 2011-12 the increase in passing rates for ELLs in Grade 3 Reading came from more ELLs scoring proficient but fewer scoring advanced (See Exhibit 1.) The English Language Arts standards set a very low base line in 2012-13 with 40% of ELLs failing (up from 22%), and cutting by more than half the percent of ELLs scoring advanced.

Exhibit 1. LEP Achievement Grade 3 Reading



The CAC’s analysis of Grade 5 Writing SOL results shows similar trends as those for Grade 3 Reading. ELLs improved their scores from 2010-11 to 2011-12 increasing both the percentages for those passing advanced as well as proficient. The new standards, however, more than doubled the percentage of ELLs failing the Grade 5 Writing SOL and cut almost in half the percentage of ELLs scoring advanced.

Exhibit 2. LEP Achievement in Grade 5 Writing



ELLs participate in AP courses at significantly lower rates but participation rates for Former ELLs look promising. The ESOL/HILT Office has undertaken a methodical and proactive approach to analyzing ELL performance data by level of proficiency to identify, for schools, ELLs that would likely succeed in AP courses. Table 2 shows figures for the 2012-13 school year. Students who are referred to as Formerly LEP in the table participated in AP courses at rates that are commensurate with their total enrollment rates (16%). The committee looks forward to examining actual figures that show improvements related to the proactive efforts from the ESOL/HILT staff and hope that schools adopt these practices as common practice.

Table 2. ELL Access to AP Courses

Subject	ELP 1-6 %	Formerly LEP %	Non ELL %	Total
Arts Total	3%	13%	85%	119
Computer Science Total	13%	19%	69%	16
English Total	3%	16%	81%	973
World Languages Total	18%	30%	52%	372
Math Total	4%	11%	84%	409
Science Total	5%	17%	78%	909
Social Studies Total	5%	15%	81%	2,138
AP Course Enrollment	5%	16%	79%	4,936
Total Enrollment at High Schools Offering AP Courses	20%	16%	65%	5,362

Source: ESOL/HILT Office Status Update Presentation to the School Board, January 2014

ELLs in APS surpassed the state EOC pass rates. For the 2012-13 school year, ELLs in APS outperformed their state counterparts in the End of Course Reading and Writing SOLs. Scores shown in Table 3 are significant because they show that ELLs are passing these EOC SOLs despite not taking Transitional English. The committee and staff concur that it would be important to understand what contributed to this favorable outcome in order to further replicate it across the system.

Table 3. LEP Achievement in End of Course SOLs

2012-13 EOC Reading SOL		
Status	Virginia LEP Pass Rate	APS LEP Pass Rate
LEP	65%	67%
2012-13 EOC Writing SOL		
Status	Virginia LEP Pass Rate	APS LEP Pass Rate
LEP	69%	82%

Current Year Activities

By the end of the 2013-14 school year, the Committee will have met ten times during which guest presenters will have provided information about APS programs relevant to the ESOL/HILT student community and CAC areas of interest. Given the newly determined ACI calendar, the ESOL/HILT CAC is reporting out after four meetings, to provide a general sense of the direction of its work during the 2013-14 year. The CAC

is considering this year's work foundational to the recommendations that will be developed for next year's recommending year.

Topics and issues discussed to date have included: ELL participation in PSAT; updates on ATSS and implementation of ELL recommendations; description of ESOL/HILT courses and progression; comprehensive presentation on the new online assessment system of common formative assessments (developed by Interactive Achievement--IA) for use at elementary and middle schools in the core subject areas (K-8 English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies);¹³ and preliminary achievement data for ELLs. Overall, the CAC's work has been driven by the goal to understand the various reform and improvement efforts in APS and how they specifically support ELLs and focus on improving achievement for such students.

Ongoing issues discussed by the CAC include: (a) pathways to graduation for ELLs, especially now that APS has developed a comprehensive and user-friendly academic planning map; (b) need for improved communications with ELL families about academic decisions and educational offering in APS; and (c) continuing achievement gap.

Update on Recommendations from 2012-2013

This section provides an update for each of the CAC recommendations submitted for 2012-13. Please note that we have summarized our recommendations below. If you would like to read the full text of the recommendations you can access our complete report at <http://www.apsva.us/Page/1275> under the section entitled "2012-2013 Committee Reports."

Recommendation #1:

Ensure that the design of the new data system includes components and coding protocols that capture critical data of ELL achievement and schooling experiences and that allow for longitudinal analyses.

The coding in the data system should allow comparisons between ELLs and non-ELLs, in order to determine the division's capacity to meet the needs of ELLs and its obligations to ELLs, defined under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Relevant student data elements include: grades, assessment scores, participation in advanced courses and gifted and talented programs, participation in remedial courses or interventions, PSAT and SAT scores, Special Education services, disciplinary actions, specific ESOL/HILT services received, native language literacy and prior schooling (if student enrolls in late elementary and beyond), English Language Proficiency Level, participation in choice schools, course attempts/failures, counselor assignments, high school completion, type of diploma, and college attendance.

¹³ Staff described for the CAC the online assessment system to provide elementary and middle school administrators and instructional staff with common quarterly formative assessment data about the performance of students which will be used to inform and differentiate classroom instruction, identifying areas of additional support.

STATUS

The roll-out of the new data system, SYNERGY, has hampered some of the ELL data collection and analyses effort but nonetheless staff from ESOL/HILT Office have conducted important analysis of ELL data and presented findings to principals and content area supervisors. Staff report that the sharing of these data have led to in-depth discussions with school level leaders to support ELL and other students in areas that show requiring improvement. For example, ESOL/HILT staff presented ACCESS data that showed that the writing portion has a significant impact on the percentage of students who achieve proficiency. Based on this information, schools used various resources (including resources produced by the ESOL/HILT office) to focus instruction aligned to the writing portion of the ACCESS test. The CAC is pleased to see these data-driven discussions are taking place and would like to see how these practices become widespread across the division.

The ATSS process in APS has included discussion of the ELL data that should be included in the data used to monitor student success and trigger intervention. The CAC looks forward to learning later in the year, how the recommended data elements appear in the SYNERGY system and are to be used in the ATSS being developed.

Recommendation #2:

Develop a comprehensive plan to improve division's personnel policies, programs and practices affecting the recruitment, hiring, training, and promotion of all instructional personnel including principals, counselors and teachers to meet the needs of ELLs.

The plan's development should be driven by the need to recruit, hire, and retain staff with the necessary expertise and qualifications, so that APS can make lasting/enduring/marked improvements in its instructional services and academic outcomes for ELL students who comprise a third of APS enrollment. Teachers with ESL/Bilingual Education Certification are among the hardest positions to fill in districts across the nation, making it necessary to have a dedicated recruitment plan. Job announcements for teachers working with ELLs should explicitly seek such qualifications by requiring that applicants have:

- certification in ESL and/or bilingual education, and foundational knowledge about second language acquisition
- experience in working with ELLs and other language minorities
- bilingual skills, in addition to English, in one of the five most frequently spoken languages by students in APS.

A comprehensive plan would include components that support the continuum of the development of instructional human capital in APS, from recruitment and hiring to support and promotion.

STATUS

Staff update is pending for later in the year.

CAC discussed positive signs related to linguistic diversity and assets in recent hiring. Recent hiring of principals and assistant principals has included several who speak Spanish, or other languages. These school-level leaders in addition to central office staff who have been recently hired and who speak additional languages, have sent a very positive message to the ELL families. In particular, CAC members have attended division wide forums and school level meetings in which school leaders conveyed information speaking Spanish and thus engaged in more direct discussions with Spanish-speaking families, strengthening a direct bond with them. Working with Human Resources, the ESOL/HILT Office has improved their critical role in the screening process to increase the likelihood of identifying potential candidates for ESOL/HILT.

Recommendation # 3:

Conduct an internal school-by-school self-assessment exercise to inform and develop a multi-year implementation plan for the strategies the division will pursue to ensure that ELLs excel in the Arlington Public Schools.

A school-by-school self-assessment would provide vital information about best practices to build upon and the program deficiencies that require differing levels of support for improvement. Both quantitative and qualitative indicators, drawing on APS' own and those used in the ELL Program Evaluation, would be used in schools' self-assessments. The school-based examination would look at fidelity of program implementation, student progress in English acquisition, content-area progress, and the ability to sustain gains over time. The school-focused examination would also look at the resources available in the building, including staffing levels, qualifications and leadership knowledge of ELL issues. The results would provide key information for the cross-functional team to determine how to prioritize and differentiate support for schools.

STATUS

It is evident to the CAC that many of the efforts by the ESOL/HILT Office are directly in response to the recommendations made in the ELL Evaluation. It is less evident to the committee that the ELL evaluation has led to specific efforts being taken by other departments or to specific elements of the ATSS development to address the needs of ELLs.

Recommendation # 4

Articulate at the highest leadership levels an explicit, clear, and consistent vision for ELLs, using internal and external communication tools to ensure this vision is clearly understood throughout the school division and the community.

The vision for ELLs should bring these students fully and explicitly into the school division's Strategic Plan and be consistent with the current mission of the ESOL/HILT program--"to ensure that ELL's achieve their fullest linguistic, academic cognitive and social potential."

STATUS

The strategic plan incorporates ELLs needs into the desired outcomes and relevant data sources under the Eliminate the Achievement Gap Goal. The plan also mentions as a desired outcome that students learn a world language but is silent about ELLs who come with a world language successfully learning English and succeeding academically. The Strategic Plan's specific references, alone, are limited and thus, fail to convey the leadership's commitment to ensuring equal access to ELLs.

The CAC review of the APS website, the division's most public document, revealed an ongoing need for improvement, particularly in pages beyond those of the ESOL/HILT Office. In fact, the CAC was pleased to see that since last year's CAC recommendations, the ESOL/HILT Office has made improvements to its website—providing more comprehensive information about its pedagogy, programs and supports and making sure there is a link to the ESOL/HILT page in the A to Z directory. The items that still require attention, however, include:

- **No visible starting point for ELL families.** The drop down menu of Parents' tab does not list ELLs, ESOL/HILT or any resources for ELL families, and has no links in other languages. This tab does not list the Language Services and Registration Center which is a starting point for ELL families to register their children.
- **ESOL/HILT and other relevant services are difficult to find or not listed.** In order to find the ESOL/HILT page, one must know to click 'About Us', then click 'Departments' and scroll down through Instruction to find ESOL/HILT. The Quick Links for parents on the Instruction webpage do not include any related to ELL needs or ESOL/HILT services. The Programs and Services page does not list any that are specifically helpful for ELL families, such as translation and interpretation.
- **The ESOL/HILT webpage provides a description of the program but not of the vision or mission of APS for its English Language Learners.** The ESOL/HILT Office indicates they are currently working on expanding the mission and vision to reflect the notion of shared responsibility among instructional departments for the academic success of ELLs. In contrast,
 - Gifted services described the APS philosophy towards such students and how the APS recognizes the particular needs of these students, and

- the Office of Special Education provides both the general APS vision related to students with special needs and an approach supportive of integrated services.

Recommendation # 5

Conduct an internal, division wide, examination of the activities, role and functions of Bilingual Family Resource Assistants and Bilingual HILT Resource Counselors to ensure they have support from their leaders and administrators as well as the training necessary to meet the needs of the ELL community.

This examination should include the views of ELL families across the various schools, and would be used to delineate ELL-specific improvements as part of a larger, division-wide, multi-modal family and community communication plan. Such an examination would be conducted in collaboration with the Department of Student Services to allow APS to replicate effective practices in schools across the system and to improve its communication with families, particularly regarding division-wide, important policies. In recent years, several controversial and far-reaching APS policy proposals did not receive feedback from significant segments of the APS community because of the absence of an effective communication plan for non-English-language background stakeholders.

STATUS

The Committee was pleased to hear that at the request of Dr. Emma Violand-Sanchez, a parent engagement working group has been formed and includes a member of the ESOL/HILT CAC. The work of this group is being intentional in considering the needs of the ELL families as they develop recommendations for the board with regard to a family engagement policy and action plan. We hope their work can provide helpful context to better define the role and function of Bilingual Family Resource Assistants (BFRAs) and HILT Resource Counselors.

There is an ongoing need to improve the consistency across the schools with regard to the role that BFRAs play in strengthening ELL family engagement with the schools. As ELL parents are becoming more engaged in schools, some are finding resistance or lack of support from school staff, adversely affecting the development of improved and direct communication with school leaders. In other schools, ELL parent groups are making significant progress with ensuring families receive timely and important information, strengthening the bonds with school staff, and developing parent leadership competencies.

Recommendation # 6

Charge a cross-functional team that includes Senior Staff [now called Executive Leadership Team] from the Departments of Instruction, Student Services, School and Community Relations and staff from the offices of Minority Achievement and ESOL/HILT to develop a district-wide guide for communication with ELL families.

This team would draw from the examination of current practices to prioritize information that must be communicated to ELL families and determine the most effective means for doing so. The Team would determine concrete supports schools would receive in carrying out these communication functions, as well as clear guidelines regarding which communications would come directly from central office and which would be handled at the school level. The communication plan would include important topics such as pre-k opportunities, school choice, special education services, gifted services, graduation requirements, instructional program options (IB, Immersion, etc.), college pathway and opportunities.

STATUS

Update to be provided later in the year.

Recommending year. For next year's recommendations, the CAC will explore issues related to meeting the needs of ELLs enrolled in Pre-K and those who have reached Level 5 of English proficiency.

ESOL/HILT Citizens Advisory Committee Members 2013-2014:

Cyntia Cocuesta (Chair)
Moira Lenehan-Razzuri
Fred Millar
Zinah Raooof

Frank Balz
Gabriela Rivas
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Liaisons

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