**English Learner Education**

As a school system, we value diversity and welcome students whose native languages are other than English. Our English Learner Education (ELE) program provides services to students whose primary language is not English and who are not yet proficient in English. The program provides support at each school, with services focused on children’s English language acquisition, literacy development, and academic achievement

*English Immersion Model*

Massachusetts state law mandates that all classes must be taught in English. In the immersion model, teachers shelter their instruction to meet the needs of English Language Learners. In all grades, English Learners (ELs) are placed in their grade-appropriate class. However, depending on their language needs, they will receive direct instruction by an ELE teacher in or out of class to promote English language development.

English Learners participate in the ELE program to strengthen academic vocabulary across the content areas, access or build background knowledge, read for comprehension, and convey their thoughts in writing. This program supports English Learners in participating in and passing state competency tests along with native English peers.

The ELE Program is not a Special Education program; however, English Learners and former English Learners have the right to special education services, when appropriate. Before referring an English Learner for a special education assessment, all general education supports and interventions should be used to support language, literacy, and other learning needs. Each school is committed to the following practices to support English Learners:

\* Informing and engaging parents in their native language, when appropriate

\* Testing English Learners using their native language and culturally unbiased test instruments and procedures, when appropriate

\* Providing culturally aligned instruction that is consistent with the principles of the “Sheltered English Immersion” model for classes that include English Learners.

*ELE and “Sheltered English Immersion”*

“Sheltering” English is an approach of modifying curriculum, instructional strategies, assessment, and materials for all levels of English learners in the general education classroom. In Massachusetts, all classroom teachers and other professional staff are required by DESE to complete courses that are aligned to the RETELL initiative in order to meet licensure requirements.

*New Student Registration*

The family of every registering student is given a Home Language Survey to complete. The ELE Director identifies any student whose first language is other than English. The student’s reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills in English are assessed using the WIDA screener. The student’s performance on the screener indicates whether a student is eligible for English Language services.

*Communication*

The Abington Public Schools will conduct all communication to a family whose first language is other than English in the primary language of the home. Additionally, Abington Public Schools provides for oral translations of meetings (including Special Education Team Meetings) for individuals who may require it. Abington Public Schools has a standing relationship with a translation agency for this purpose.

Communications with parents are in clear and commonly understood words and are in both English and the primary language of the home if such primary language is other than English. Any interpreter used in fulfilling these requirements is fluent in the primary language of the home and familiar with special education procedures, programs, and services. If the parents or the student are unable to read in any language or are blind or deaf, communications required by these regulations are made orally in English with the use of a foreign language interpreter, in Braille, in sign language, via TTY, or in writing, whichever is appropriate.

If the district provides notices orally or in some other mode of communication that is not written language, the district keeps written documentation (a) that it has provided such notice in an alternate manner, (b) of the content of the notice, and (c) of the steps taken to ensure that the parent understands the content of the notice.

**English Learner Education District Contact:**

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