YAA English Language Learners (ELL) Policy K-12

ACADEMIC YEAR 2024-25

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1.0   Mission statement

At Yas American Academy (YYA) we recognize the uniqueness of each child through a program of learning that promotes challenge and personalized education at all levels. Through this, we encourage creative and critical thinking alongside stimulating and meaningful learning experiences. We guide students in strengthening language skills that will assist them in accessing the curriculum across all subjects. We are committed to providing English support to our vibrant community and love sharing in our diverse traditions and cultures to develop tolerance and understanding of our differences.

The ELL strategy is a shared responsibility among all key stakeholders to learn the English skills necessary to thrive academically, and socially, and grow as multilingual global citizens.

2.0   Purpose of policy

The purpose of the ELL policy is to define and communicate the management of English Language Learning at YAA to optimize the recognition of and provision for English Language Learners so that ELL children learn, succeed, are happy in school, and leave fully prepared for college, career, and civic preparation.

3.0   Guiding Principles

- We believe that every teacher is an ELL teacher. Reading, writing, and vocabulary development must be consistently integrated across the content areas for students to make the reading growth required for students to be college and career-ready, as well as engaged citizens.
- Foundational skills, including phonological awareness, phonics, and word recognition, print concepts, and fluency, are key components of learning to read. Students develop a foundational set of skills in K-2 that set them up for success in future grades.
- For students in middle school who are significantly below grade level, developing these skills can be an essential part of intervention depending on students' needs.
- Frequent and systematic academic vocabulary instruction in all content areas is essential to students' development as readers, writers, and speakers. Students need to significantly expand their vocabulary each school year to access complex texts, improve comprehension, and enhance their writing and speaking contributions.
- Teaching reading is an interdisciplinary effort and applying background knowledge during and after reading enhances reading comprehension in all subjects.
- For students to meet the demands of the Common Core Standards and the demands of college-level texts, they need to have significant opportunities to grapple with both fiction and non-fiction texts.
- Reading, writing, speaking, and listening should span the school day from K-12 as integral parts of every subject. Oral and written English language instruction must be included in content-area teaching.
- Placing students who are learning English as an additional language alongside proficient users of English provides good language and learning as role models.
- Robust use of data for intervention ensures students who have the largest gaps in their language development are supported to get maximum practice.
- ELL learners need to be provided with small-group instruction and targeted language interventions to foster rapid language acquisition.
- Learning English as an additional language should not be considered as a 'special need' and bilingual and multilingual learners should not be automatically identified for Special Needs support, as this is likely to be inappropriate to their specific needs.

4.0   Definitions

English Language Learner (ELL)
An English Language Learner (ELL) is identified as a student who is unable to communicate proficiently or learn effectively in English.

Students often come from non-English speaking homes and backgrounds and require specialized modifications to access the curriculum successfully. Although some ELLs may have basic interpersonal communication skills, they may struggle to access academic language across the curriculum.

Note that at YAA, the majority of our student body (75%) are learning English as an Additional Language (EAL). All students are assessed and identified by our team through The New Group Reading Test (NGRT) and identified ELL learners undertake a WIDA (World-class Instructional Design and Assessment) screener and summative assessments.

5.0   Evidence-Based Practices

In consideration of international research into best practices from the US and UK (Educational Endowment Foundation and the What Works Clearing House report), we have adopted seven evidence-based practices that teachers and leaders must implement across all areas of content instruction to improve language proficiency:

1. Prioritize 'disciplinary literacy' across the curriculum, teaching subject-specific literacy, and adapting this to the context of each subject.
2. Provide targeted vocabulary instruction in every subject, teaching a set of academic vocabulary words intensively across several days using a variety of instructional activities.
3. Develop students' ability to read complex academic texts.
4. Break down complex writing tasks.
5. Combine writing instruction with reading in every subject, providing structured opportunities to develop written language skills
6. Provide opportunities for oral and written
7. Provide high-quality, small-group literacy interventions for struggling students.

6.0   Identification of ELL students

6.1   Assessment Frameworks and Screening
Existing students at YAA, and as a part of the enrolment process for new students, NGRT assessments are conducted to establish reading skills, providing information about sentence completion and comprehension skills. This data is used for regular monitoring of reading progress and to benchmark students' reading ability using the Standardized Age Score (SAS), students reading age, and their mean SAS score. If a student has a SAS score below 90 and/or reading age 3+ years below their age, they are invited to participate in a WIDA screener assessment for ELL intervention.

This data will categorize students into three overarching tiers, aligned with the Bell Foundations categories in the table below.

- Tier 1 includes high-quality classroom-wide instruction and support for all students.

- Tier 2 provides targeted class-based support to address a student's gaps in skills.
- Tier 3 involves intensive support usually provided more often and in smaller groups.

YAA Levels of Provision	WIDA Categories	Bell Foundation Categories	Description
Tier 1	6 (Reaching)	E- Fluent	Quality first classroom instruction and support for all students. Students receive appropriate stretch and challenge to engage in extended writing and essays for coursework and projects in addition to language development and academic research through debates and talks (e.g. MUN and TedTalks)
	5 (Bridging)		
Tier 2	4 (Expanding)	D- Competent	Teachers are expected to accommodate language abilities through adaptive instructional strategies. ELL scaffolded support strategies are planned and embedded into lessons by the classroom teacher (writing frames, word banks, visual cues etc.). Classroom teachers and ELL teachers collaborate to ensure that students' needs are being met.
	3 (Developing)	C - Developing competence	
Tier 3	2 (Beginning)	B- Early Acquisition	Student is enrolled in the ELL program and meets regularly with the ELL teacher in small groups for specific, targeted language instruction (pull out and push in interventions). In class support could include co-teaching, working with a small group within the classroom, or providing scaffolds for the student and teacher to use in class.
	1 (Entering)	A- New to English	

6.2   World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)

The WIDA International School Consortium is a community of accredited, PreK-12 international schools that use WIDA's research-based standards and assessments. WIDA Screener Paper is an English language proficiency assessment given to new students in grades 1–12 to help teachers identify whether they are English learners (ELs). The assessment is also used on a termly basis for current students enrolled in the ELL program to assess progress made against baseline assessment data. The assessment takes up to 85 minutes broken down into 4 sections:

1. Entry Task (Up to 5 minutes)

2. Speaking (Up to 15 minutes)

3. Writing (Up to 25 minutes)

4. Listening and Reading (Up to 40 minutes)

A score of 4.5 or below as an overall score, or in any of the 4 domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) indicates an ELL need.

Through the admissions process, the ELL team will collaborate with the admissions team to ensure that those students with language needs are quickly identified and assessed. A recommendation is made and shared with the YYA team as well as the family seeking acceptance.

6.3   Exiting the program

It is important to triangulate all data before a student is no longer in need of intense ELL support. Using one data point does not allow us to look at the whole child. Therefore, the following must be considered:

- WIDA scores of 4.5 or above- all domains and areas are to be considered
- MAP scores- student needs to demonstrate expected growth
- Students who exit cannot be more than two grade levels below expectations
- Teacher feedback that considers student's ability to understand and follow directions, communicate with teachers and peers, complete tasks and assignments, and access the curriculum successfully

7.0   Reading Programs

Online Reading programs are used in both the Elementary and Secondary sections of the school to enhance students' reading skills such as reading comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency. These tools are robustly tracked, and the data is used with staff across the curriculum to drive forward the next steps in instruction.

Accelerated Reader Program (Grades 6-8)

Accelerated Reader is used to complete comprehension quizzes after reading a book. The program encourages a love of reading by producing engaging activities that help hone students' reading skills with authentic practice and encourage growth. YAA uses this to tie into house competitions and rewards to encourage students to read more frequently, inside, and outside of school.

Raz Plus- Elementary

Raz Plus is a comprehensive online reading product that provides a collection of leveled books and resources to support guided reading. All students in the Elementary school have taken benchmark tests to place them on the correct reading level and utilize the leveled readers assigned to them by their teachers.

8.0   Roles and Responsibilities

8.1   Principal
- Ensure that this policy is adhered to and regularly reviewed and evaluated with all key stakeholders.
- Ensure that responsibility for ELL is distributed appropriately and effectively line-managed
- Ensure that the provision for ELL is regularly reviewed and revisions are made accordingly
- Ensure that all staff have allocated time to analyze assessment data and know how to act on the results.
- Ensure that school resources are targeted toward the ELL framework and instructional goals
- Ensure a specific budget is in place to support all teachers with receiving ongoing PD on all components of supporting ELL learners
- Ensure the school library has a wide variety of literary and informational texts that are high interest, culturally appropriate and span multiple reading levels
- Ensure whole school rituals and routines regularly build in opportunities for students and staff to showcase reading, writing, and speaking skills

8.2   SLT
- Line manages all aspects of performance of ELL provision
- Collaborate with the ELL Lead teacher to identify staff development needs and facilitate workshops relating to ELL development for teachers

- Oversee the action plan, and PD plan relating to ELL and review the ELL policy and program in collaboration with the ELL lead teacher and HoI
- Work with SLT to participate in school-wide observation of teaching and learning to monitor the implementation of appropriate scaffolding for ELL across the different phases of the school.
- Ensure whole school rituals and routines regularly build in opportunities for students and staff to showcase reading, writing, and speaking skills
- Ensure the school regularly provides enrichment opportunities for students to showcase reading, writing, and speaking skills outside of school.

8.3   ELL Department

ELL Lead Teacher:
- Oversee the classification and placement of ELL students and lead in the planning, coordination, development, monitoring, and evaluation of the effectiveness of the ELL program.
- Supervise the ELL program teachers and line manage their performance.
- Work with SLT, HoI, and other ELL staff to identify staff development needs in best practices in ELL instruction and plan/deliver workshops to meet those needs.
- Coordinate, schedule, and ensure ELL team administers WIDA tests accurately and provide accommodations for ELLs on school-wide assessments.
- Participate in multi-disciplinary meetings, ILP meetings, and any other meetings pertaining to ELL student achievement.
- Ensure that the ELL team members assess the accomplishments of ELL students regularly (mid-term and end-term) to inform appropriate support and to monitor the impact of the support provided.
- Maintain accurate and complete tracking and monitoring records. Provide thorough and timely reports, data, and information, and ensure the ELL department has effective and efficient record-keeping procedures.
- Work with SLT to participate in school-wide observation of teaching and learning to monitor the implementation of appropriate scaffolding for ELL across the different phases of the school. Provide coaching for staff where necessary.
- Collaborate with Homeroom and content-based teachers to ensure that classroom environments and learning provisions support ELL.
- Plan an ELL curriculum that meets the individual needs, interests, and abilities of ELL students.
- Teach English language development to assigned students through small group instruction and in-class support.
- Employ appropriate ELL instructional methods and materials for meeting stated objectives.
- Collaborate with families of ELL students and make provisions for being available to students and parents for education-related purposes outside of the instructional day when required or requested to do so under reasonable terms.
- Attend and participate in faculty meetings and serve on the staff ELL committee as required.
- Maintains files for all beginner ELL students including yearly assessment information, copies of parent notification letters (initial and change of programming), year-end reviews for all students on the program which summarize the termly Reviews and testing performance, copies of LEP plans, and letters of exit to parents.
- Maintains inventory of materials ordered for the ESL/ELL program
- Makes annual requests for materials needed for the ESL/ELL program
- Meet professional obligations through efficient work habits such as: meeting deadlines, honoring schedules, coordinating, etc.
- Act professionally and ethically and comply with school policies, procedures, and expectations.
- Perform other duties and responsibilities as assigned by their line manager.

ELL Teacher

- Support with initial identification of students through WIDA assessment. This involves testing the child's proficiency level and notifying the parents, school counselor, teachers, and placing appropriate documentation in the school management system.
- Provides weekly supplemental pull-out and push-in instruction to students identified as beginning English Language Learners including reading, spoken and written English, and assistance with other issues as needed.
- Confers with teachers to determine student needs and scheduling for ELL pull-out or classroom assistance. Develop initial LEP plans for students.
- Provides ongoing training and support for teachers across the curriculum with developing materials to support ELL with accessing the mainstream curriculum.
- Performs ongoing conferencing with teachers regarding student progress and appropriate accommodations for student success.
- Serves as an overall advocate for ESL students including assistance in social and emotional adjustment
- Collaborates with the ELL Lead teacher to ensure the ordering of all necessary resources and test materials for ELL
- Conducts termly and end-of-year reviews of the status of each previously identified beginner ELL student to determine continued participation in the program. Completes documentation for the school management system
- To meet student's needs through small group instruction and in-class support
- To document and constantly review students' needs to provide appropriate support
- To administer WIDA assessments when necessary
- To collaborate with homeroom or content teachers
- To collaborate with families

8.4 Middle Leaders and Teachers
- To advocate for ELL students who were not identified during the admissions process
- where measurable progress has been made and discuss strategies and resources
- To monitor progress and refer any child not making expected progress to the ELL team for further investigation.
- To collaborate in building a bank of information resources and strategies and share these with the team and specialists to support ELLs in the classroom.
- To embed speaking and listening in active learning
- To be familiar with Bell Foundation can-do descriptors and apply them in scaffolding and differentiating for students
- To utilize TAs and LSAs in providing in-class support for ELLs.
- To differentiate appropriately for students' needs

8.5 Families
- To support students in their language journey
- To understand school policy, identification of need, and exit criteria.
- To seek support or clarification when necessary

9.0   EAL Descriptors.

The following descriptors are used on teachers' data tracking documentation to inform supportive strategies, progress tracking, and class details.

Non – EAL	Non-EAL	This student's first language is English. They speak, read and write English as expected for a first language learner. They do not have English as an additional language.
New to English	Code 'NE'	May use first language for learning and other purposes. May remain completely silent in the classroom. May be copying / repeating some words or phrases. May understand some everyday expressions in English but may have minimal or no literacy in English. Needs a considerable amount of EAL support.
Early acquisition	Code 'EA'	May follow day-to-day social communication in English and participate in learning activities with support. Beginning to use spoken English for social purposes. May understand simple instructions and can follow narrative / accounts with visual support. May have developed some skills in reading and writing. May have become familiar with some subject specific vocabulary. Still needs a significant amount of EAL support to access the curriculum.
Developing competence	Code 'DC'	May participate in learning activities with increasing independence. Able to express self orally in English, but structural inaccuracies are still apparent. Literacy will require ongoing support, particularly for understanding text and writing. May be able to follow abstract concepts and more complex written English. Requires ongoing EAL support to access the curriculum fully.
Competent	Code 'C'	Oral English will be developing well, enabling successful engagement in activities across the curriculum. Can read and understand a wide variety of texts. Written English may lack complexity and contain occasional evidence of errors in structure. Needs some support to access subtle nuances of meaning, to refine English usage, and to develop abstract vocabulary. Needs some/occasional EAL support to access complex curriculum material and tasks.
Fluent	Code 'F'	Can operate across the curriculum to a level of competence equivalent to that of a pupil who uses English as his/her first language. Operates without EAL support across the curriculum