

An Assessment of Language Assistance  
Services Provided by MCPS to the School  
Community



OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT  
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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Under federal and State law, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) must provide limited English proficient (LEP) students equal access to educational services. This requirement includes providing opportunities for parents to be involved in the education of their children. MCPS has a long-standing commitment to meeting these obligations and provides a variety of programs and services targeted toward LEP students and parents.

This study by the Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) examines the various programs and services that MCPS provides to assist LEP students and parents access MCPS services. OLO's review focused on the ways that MCPS staff communicate with and otherwise support LEP parents and other LEP members of the school community. Evaluating MCPS' ESOL curriculum and other classroom-based activities was beyond the scope of OLO's assignment.

The 13,025 LEP students currently enrolled in MCPS' English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program represent nine percent of the school system's total enrollment. An even higher percent of students have limited English proficient parents or guardians.

During the past decade, MCPS' ESOL enrollment increased 83%, compared to non-ESOL enrollment growth of 16%. This year's ESOL students speak 144 different languages, although 60% speak Spanish. 41% of ESOL students were born in the United States with the rest from 160 other countries.

MCPS utilizes four primary language assistance strategies that help LEP persons access MCPS services: specialized student support services, multilingual parent outreach programs, interpretation and translation services, and telephone language assistance services. Feedback from LEP parents and community members indicates satisfaction with many of the programs and services MCPS provides for LEP students and parents. However, the feedback also points to opportunities for improving how MCPS staff communicate with parents who are limited English proficient.

The package of recommendations presented in this OLO report aim to improve MCPS' communication and supportive services for LEP parents. In sum, OLO recommends that the Council request that the Superintendent of Schools:

- Develop a written MCPS policy that establishes greater consistency across the school system in the use of language assistance services;
- In conjunction with the Chief Administrative Officer of County Government, examine the potential cost savings from interagency procurement of language assistance services; and
- Examine the cost and feasibility of implementing specific suggestions for improving how MCPS communicates with LEP parents related to multilingual staff, the use of telephone interpretation services, translation of written material, and expanding successful communication and outreach strategies used by individual schools.

**OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT REPORT 2005-6**

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MCPS TO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY**

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## **CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

### **A. Authority**

Council Resolution 15-710, FY 2005 Work Program of the Office of Legislative Oversight, adopted July 27, 2004.

### **B. Scope and Organization of Report**

This report by the Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) responds to the County Council's request to study the Montgomery County Schools' (MCPS) capacity to provide limited English proficient (LEP) persons access to school services.

The purpose of this OLO study was to examine the various programs and services that MCPS provides to assist LEP students and parents access MCPS services. OLO's review focused on the ways that MCPS staff communicate with and otherwise support LEP parents and other LEP members of the school community. Evaluating MCPS' English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) curriculum and other classroom-based activities was beyond the scope of OLO's assignment.

This report is organized as follows:

**Chapter II, Legal Framework**, provides an overview of the key federal laws, court cases, and State regulations that create the legal framework for the provision of school-related services to LEP students and parents.

**Chapter III, Relevant MCPS Policies and Regulations**, summarizes the Board of Education's LEP policy and MCPS' related regulation, as well as three other Board of Education policies that address the delivery of services to LEP persons within the context of serving MCPS' entire student and parent population.

**Chapter IV, Characteristics of Limited English Proficient Students**, provides data and information on MCPS LEP students, including current and historical enrollment data, information on country of origin, languages spoken, schools attended, and other characteristics.

**Chapter V, MCPS Programs – Assistance to LEP Persons**, estimates MCPS' FY 06 expenditures on services and programs for LEP students and parents, and explains the various MCPS programs and language assistance services that help LEP persons access school services.

**Chapter VI, Local Research**, presents highlights from studies, forums, and surveys conducted in Montgomery County that directly or indirectly address how MCPS can effectively communicate with LEP parents and students.

**Chapter VII, Feedback from the School Community**, summarizes the views expressed by various staff, parents, and community members interviewed by OLO on how effectively MCPS communicates with LEP persons.

**Chapter VIII and Chapter IX**, present OLO's findings and recommendations; and **Chapter X** contains the formal written comments received on the final draft of the report.

### **C. Definitions**

During the course of this study, OLO identified a number of different terms synonymous for persons not fluent in English. The three most common terms identified are defined below. For consistency, OLO uses the term LEP person throughout this report, except when quoting source documents or when describing students, parents, or services associated with specific MCPS programs. OLO also differentiates between interpretation and translation below.

**Limited English Proficient (LEP) person.** An individual who has difficulty in speaking, reading, writing or understanding the English language that may deny the individual the ability to meet the state's proficient level of achievement, to successfully achieve in classrooms where English is the language of instruction, or to participate fully in society.<sup>1</sup>

**ESOL Student.** English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is a specialized English language instructional program for non-native speakers of English that emphasizes the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.<sup>2</sup> An "ESOL student" does not speak English as their primary language and has difficulty – to various extents – reading, writing, speaking, or understanding English.

**English Language Learners (ELL).** English Language Learners are students whose native language is not English and who have sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English Language. Additionally, these difficulties may deny individuals the opportunity to learn successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English.<sup>3</sup>

**Interpretation.** The act of listening to something in one language (source language) and orally translating it into another language (target language).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> MCPS Regulation IO-RAD, *Placement for Limited English Proficient Students*, formerly Regulation 310-11, revised November 1982.

<sup>2</sup> BOE Policy IOD-RA, *Education of English Language Learners*, adopted January 21, 1980 (updated June 1, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title IX, General Provisions, Part A Definitions, Section 9101 (25).

<sup>4</sup> Department of Justice, *Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons*, Federal Register, June 18, 2002.

**Translation.** The replacement of a written text from one language (source language) into an equivalent written text in another language (target language).<sup>4</sup>

#### **D. Methodology**

Office of Legislative Oversight staff members Scott Brown, Craig Howard, and Karen Yoskowitz conducted this study. OLO gathered information through document reviews, general research, and interviews with MCPS staff, LEP parents, and various community members.

To solicit feedback and compile process, workload, budget, and other data, OLO worked with MCPS staff from the Office of the Deputy Superintendent of Schools, Office of School Performance, Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs, Division of Family and Community Partnerships, Office of Special Education and Student Services, Office of Strategic Technologies and Accountability, Kemp Mill Elementary School, Eastern Middle School, and Montgomery Blair High Schools.

To solicit feedback from the community, OLO conducted interviews with LEP parents by attending programs that serve LEP parents offered through MCPS. OLO also spoke with representatives from several community organizations interested in MCPS ESOL issues.

#### **E. Acknowledgements**

OLO received a high-level of cooperation from everyone involved in this study. OLO appreciates the many individuals who took the time to share their experiences, insights, and suggestions for improvements. In terms of specific individuals, OLO thanks:

- Dr. Frieda Lacey, Deputy Superintendent of Schools.
- Dr. Michael Cohen from the Department of Instructional Programs; and Lois Wions from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction.
- Dr. Karen Woodson, Vicki Medina, and Sokuntheray Kuch from the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs. OLO especially thanks Dr. Woodson for arranging many of the meetings with MCPS staff and Ms. Medina for assisting OLO to speak with Latino parents participating in MCPS' *Computer Access For Everyone* program. OLO also thanks Gadi Romem, chair of the ESOL/Bilingual Advisory Committee.
- Jane Butler, Susan Cutler, Amy Alonso, and Lynn Degroff from the Division of Family and Community Partnerships. OLO especially thanks Ms. Cutler for assisting OLO to speak with Latino parents participating in MCPS' *Conquista tus Sueños* program.

- Principal Nancy Evans and the ESOL team from Kemp Mill Elementary School; Diana Sayago from Eastern Middle School; and Joseph Bellino from Montgomery Blair High School.
- Daniel Rindfuss from the Office of Special Education and Student Services; and Nasser Zureick from the Office of Strategic Technologies and Accountability.
- The multiple ESOL teachers, ESOL counselors, Community Superintendents, and Directors of School Performance that participated in group discussions; and members of the MCEA/ESOL Joint Liaison Committee.
- Representatives of the following community organizations: Maryland Vietnamese Mutual Association, Asian American Education Association, Chinese American Parents and Students Association, Montgomery Blair High School PTA, Takoma Park Elementary School PTA, and Takoma Park Middle School PTA.

## **CHAPTER II: LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

This chapter provides an overview of the key federal laws, court cases, and State regulations that create the legal framework for the provision of school-related services to limited English proficient students and parents.

- **Part A** introduces the key federal laws and regulations that mandate equal access to educational services for limited English proficient (LEP) students;
- **Part B** summarizes two significant federal court cases that established guidelines to school systems for providing equal educational opportunities for LEP students; and
- **Part C** describes the State of Maryland regulations that establish requirements for how local school systems must provide services to LEP persons in order to comply with federal and State laws.

### **A. Federal Laws and Related Guidelines**

Four federal laws lay the groundwork for the provision of educational services to limited English proficient individuals: the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Educational Opportunity Act, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Each of these laws is summarized below.

#### **1. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964**

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination in programs that receive federal financial assistance. Specifically, the law declares that:

“No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color or national origin, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”<sup>5</sup>

According to the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights (OCR), regulations under Title VI provide that school districts receiving federal financial assistance may not, on the basis of race, color, or national origin:<sup>6</sup>

- Provide services, financial aid, or other benefits that are different or provide them in a different manner;
- Restrict an individual’s enjoyment of an advantage or privilege enjoyed by others; or
- Deny an individual the right to participate in federally assisted programs.

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<sup>5</sup> United State Code, 42 U.S.C. 2000d.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2000. *The Provision of an Equal Education Opportunity to Limited-English Proficient Students*, [www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/eeolep/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/eeolep/index.html)

OCR reports that these regulations link Title VI and limited English proficient persons within public schools. As stated by the Department of Education, “These Title VI regulatory requirements have been interpreted to prohibit denial of equal access to education because of a student’s limited proficiency in English. Title VI protects students who are so limited in their English language skills that they are unable to participate in or benefit from regular or special education instructional programs.”<sup>7</sup>

**Civil Rights Act Title VI Guidelines.** Since the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964, the federal Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights (OCR) has periodically issued guidelines that further clarify Title VI’s requirements related to limited English proficient students.

- In 1970, OCR issued a memorandum entitled *Identification of Discrimination and Denial of Services on the Bases of National Origin*.
- In 1985, OCR issued *The Office of Civil Rights' Title VI Language Minority Compliance Procedures*.
- In 1991, OCR issued a *Policy Update on Schools' Obligations Toward National Origin Minority Students with Limited-English Proficiency (LEP students)*.

These documents provide guidance on the relevant legal standards concerning the provision of educational services to LEP students at the elementary and secondary level. In sum, the guidelines require that school districts take “affirmative steps” to rectify language deficiencies and involve limited English proficient students in instructional programs.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, the OCR guidance states that Title VI is violated if:<sup>9</sup>

- Students are excluded from effective participation in school because of their inability to speak and understand the language of instruction;
- National-origin minority students are inappropriately assigned to special education classes because of their lack of English skills; or
- Parents whose English is limited do not receive school notices and other information in a language they can understand.

## **2. Equal Educational Opportunity Act of 1974**

The Equal Education Opportunity Act of 1974 requires that state and local education agencies take “appropriate action” to overcome language barriers confronting language-minority students. In particular, the Act states that:

“No state shall deny equal educational opportunity to an individual on account of his or her race, color, sex, or national origin, by...the failure by an educational agency to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by its students in its instructional program.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Education, 2000.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of Education, 2000.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Department of Education, 2000.

<sup>10</sup> United States Code, 20 U.S.C. 1703.

### **3. No Child Left Behind Act**

Signed into law on January 8, 2002, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) amends and reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. Title III of NCLB, *Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students*, specifically authorizes programs for LEP and immigrant students.

Under NCLB, States receive federal funds to pass onto school districts. The law holds states accountable for LEP and immigrant students' academic progress and English attainment. Specifically, Title III states that part of its purpose is:

“ . . . to hold State educational agencies, local educational agencies, and schools accountable for increases in English proficiency and core academic content knowledge of limited English proficient children by requiring —

- (A) demonstrated improvements in the English proficiency of limited English proficient children each fiscal year; and
- (B) adequate yearly progress for limited English proficient children, including immigrant children and youth”<sup>11</sup>

As part of meeting the English proficiency and adequate year progress requirements, NCLB requires school districts to:<sup>12</sup>

- Demonstrate adequate yearly progress for limited English proficient students based on statewide assessment tests in both reading/language arts and math; and
- Test LEP students in their native language for up to three years, after which time they should be tested in English.

Title III of NCLB also details parental notification and outreach requirements, which include:<sup>13</sup>

- School districts must notify parents if children are eligible for English language services, and allow parents to remove their child from a program for LEP children; and
- School districts must implement “effective means of parental outreach to encourage parents to become informed and active participants in their child’s participation in a language instruction educational program.”

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<sup>11</sup> No Child Left Behind Act, Public Law 107-110. <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/107-110.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> U.S. House Committee on Education & the Workforce, 2004. *Frequently Asked Questions About No Child Left Behind*, pg. 25. <http://edworkforce.house.gov/issues/108th/education/nclb/nclbfaq.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> U.S. House Committee on Education & the Workforce, 2004, pg. 26.

#### **4. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

In 1975, Congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, culminating the movement to affirm the rights of children with disabilities to a public education. This law, re-titled the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1991, establishes broad federal mandates for the delivery of special education and other related services to students with disabilities.

IDEA requires the provision of a free and appropriate public education, identification and referral of children, assessment for eligibility for services, individualized education programs, the provision of services in the least restrictive environment, and procedural due process safeguards. IDEA pertains to limited English proficient students in that school districts must ensure that students are not classified as having a disability based solely on the fact that they are limited English proficient.<sup>14</sup> Specifically, IDEA requires school districts to:

- Provide testing and assessment in the child's native language unless it is clearly not feasible to do so;<sup>15</sup>
- Develop individualized education programs that address language needs for limited English proficient students with disabilities;<sup>16</sup> and
- Provide oral and written information to parents in their native language to facilitate informed parental involvement in the special education identification, assessment, eligibility, and service delivery processes.<sup>17</sup>

#### **B. Court Cases**

Two significant federal court cases are cited as providing the legal foundation for providing equal educational opportunities to students with limited English proficiency.<sup>18</sup>

**Lau vs. Nichols, 1973.**<sup>19</sup> The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the Lau case that the San Francisco school system violated the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by denying non-English speaking students of Chinese ancestry a meaningful opportunity to participate in the public educational program. The decision stated that providing students the same desks, books, teachers, and curriculum did not ensure that they received an equal educational opportunity, particularly if the students did not speak English.

According to Lau vs. Nichols, if English is the mainstream language of instruction, then measures must be taken to ensure that English is taught to students who do not speak

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<sup>14</sup> United States Code of Federal Regulations, 34 CFR 300.532-534.

<sup>15</sup> United States Code of Federal Regulations, 34 CFR 300.532.

<sup>16</sup> United States Code of Federal Regulations, 34 CFR 300.346.

<sup>17</sup> United States Code of Federal Regulations, 34 CFR 300.503.

<sup>18</sup> English Language Learner Knowledge Base, *Guiding Federal Court Cases on Equal Educational Opportunity*, [http://www.helpforschools.com/ELLKBase/legal/Court\\_Cases\\_Federal\\_Equa\\_Educ\\_Opp.shtml](http://www.helpforschools.com/ELLKBase/legal/Court_Cases_Federal_Equa_Educ_Opp.shtml)

<sup>19</sup> 414 U.S. 563, 94 S. Ct. 786 (1974).



English or who are limited English proficient in order to provide equal access to educational opportunities.

**Castaneda vs. Pickard, 1981.**<sup>20</sup> The U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals established a three-part test in this case to determine whether a school district takes appropriate actions to overcome language barriers that confront language-minority students as required under the Equal Educational Opportunity Act of 1974. Under this standard, a program for LEP students is acceptable if it meets the following criteria:<sup>21</sup>

- *Theory*: The school must pursue a program based on an educational theory recognized as sound or, at least, as a legitimate experimental strategy;
- *Practice*: The school must actually implement the program with instructional practices, resources, and personnel necessary to transfer theory to reality; and
- *Results*: The school must not persist in a program that fails to produce results.

### **C. State of Maryland Regulations (Title 13A – State Board of Education)**

State of Maryland regulations (COMAR 13A.05.07) establish requirements for how local school systems must provide services to limited English proficient persons in order to comply with federal and state laws.

This regulation establishes guidelines for the provision of services to limited English proficient students in Maryland, State funding formulas, and reporting requirements. The regulations require that each local school system establish an English as a Second Language (ESL) or bilingual education program for students identified as LEP. The program must be established by means of a home language survey as well as an assessment of English listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.

The regulations establish broad program criteria that local school districts must include as part of their ESL program. Although school districts may adopt policies and procedures as they see fit, every program established must contain the following components:

- Goals
- Student identification
- Student placement
- Curriculum and instruction
- Personnel
- Materials of instruction
- Facilities
- Program organization
- Parent and community involvement
- Support services
- Program evaluation

In addition to receiving appropriate services, students identified as LEP must receive annual listening, speaking, reading, and writing evaluations to determine their LEP status.

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<sup>20</sup> 648 F. 2d 989 (5<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1981).

<sup>21</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition & Language Instruction Educational Programs. <http://www.ncele.gwu.edu/expert/faq/07court.htm>.

## **CHAPTER III: RELEVANT MCPS POLICIES AND REGULATIONS**

Over the past two decades, the Montgomery County Board of Education (BOE) has adopted four policies and MCPS has adopted one related regulation that address access to MCPS services by limited English proficient (LEP) parents and students. The Appendix contains the policies and regulation in their entirety, beginning at ©2.

This chapter summarizes the relevant BOE policies and MCPS regulation, and is organized as follows:

- **Part A** summarizes the BOE policy and related MCPS regulation that deal exclusively with limited English proficient students and their parents.
- **Part B** summarizes three other BOE policies that address the delivery of services to LEP persons within the context of serving MCPS' entire student and parent population.

### **A. Board of Education LEP Policy and Related Regulation**

One Board of Education policy and one related MCPS regulation exclusively address the provision of educational and associated services to limited English proficient students and their parents. This policy utilizes the term English Language Learner, which as described in Chapter I is synonymous with LEP student. For consistency purposes, OLO uses the term LEP student in this section except when directly quoting text.

#### **1. Board of Education Policy IOD – *Education of English Language Learners***

Originally adopted in 1980 and most recently amended in 1999, Board of Education Policy IOD – *Education of English Language Learners* outlines MCPS' commitment to providing equal educational opportunities for LEP students in MCPS. Policy IOD states that:

“...quality education is a fundamental right of every child. Language should not be a barrier that impedes ELL in their effort to secure equal education opportunities in Montgomery County Public Schools.”

The two stated purposes of Policy IOD are: 1) to reaffirm the education of English language learners as a high priority for MCPS; and 2) to ensure compliance with federal and state mandates regarding the education of English language learners.

The policy requires support programs (e.g., counseling, parent outreach, and bilingual assessments) to help eliminate barriers that may prevent LEP students from participating in educational programs. The policy also establishes the Board's policy on ESOL curriculum, programs and services for LEP students, LEP student identification and assessment, and annual reporting requirements.

**Curriculum.** The policy requires an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) curriculum that is research-based and reflective of the many cultural and linguistic backgrounds represented by LEP students.

**Programs and Services.** The policy requires that each school provide programs that respond to the range of needs of LEP students. The policy requires that MCPS take “appropriate, relevant, and culturally sensitive approaches to ensure that parents of English language learners are informed about and become involved in their children’s education.” It also requires the provision of ESOL counseling services and bilingual disability assessments.

**Identification and Completion.** The policy requires an English language proficiency assessment of LEP students at the time of enrollment to identify LEP students and determine their level of English proficiency.

**Review and Reporting.** The policy requires the superintendent to provide an annual report to the Board of Education that addresses the number of LEP students served as well as the academic progress of LEP students.

## **2. MCPS Regulation IOD-RA, *Placement for Limited English Proficient Students***

MCPS Regulation IOD-RA – *Placement for Limited English Proficient Students*, establishes procedures for identifying, assessing and placing LEP students, instruction and appropriate assistance, and evaluating and reporting LEP student academic progress.

For example, the Regulation requires that:

- LEP students must be referred to the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs for English proficiency testing before being placed in an ESOL or mainstream program;
- LEP students must be evaluated and graded in both ESOL classes and/or mainstream classes. The Regulation also outlines parent’s rights for a written evaluation of the student’s progress.
- Final exams in mainstream classes for LEP students must be based on the student’s level of English proficiency.
- Before exiting the ESOL program, LEP students must receive an English proficiency assessment from an ESOL program staff member.

## **B. Other Board of Education Policies Related to LEP Persons**

Three other Board of Education policies address the delivery of services to LEP persons within the context of serving MCPS' entire student and parent population. These are:

### **1. Board of Education Policy ABC – *Parental Involvement***

The stated purpose of Board of Education Policy ABC – *Parental Involvement*, is:

- To reaffirm MCPS' commitment to the role of parents as partners in their children's education and to promote and increase effective, comprehensive parental involvement; and
- To ensure that parental involvement efforts reflect the rich cultural and linguistic diversity of local school communities.

The policy calls for Board and school staff to work with PTAs, other parent organizations, and parent outreach personnel to ensure parental input from a broad range of culturally and linguistically diverse groups. The Policy also requires the Board to seek parental input on school system policies, including curriculum, facilities, and funding issues from the County's culturally and linguistically diverse community.

The Policy specifically requires central office staff to use interpretation and translation services, whenever feasible.

### **2. Board of Education Policy AEB – *Strategic Planning for Continuous Improvement***

Board of Education Policy AEB – *Strategic Planning for Continuous Improvement*, sets out the school system's commitment to strategic planning for continuous improvement. The policy requires that the strategic planning process be guided by MCPS' core values: "every child can learn and succeed; the pursuit of excellence is fundamental and unending; and an ethical school system requires fair treatment, honesty, openness, integrity, and respect."

In relation to LEP persons, the policy states:

"The Board will actively seek the participation of a broad range of internal and external stakeholders representing the rich cultural and linguistic diversity of the community in the strategic planning process."

### **3. Board of Education Policy ABA – *Community Involvement***

Board of Education Policy ABA – *Community Involvement* sets out MCPS’ position on gaining the school communities input on educational programs and policies.

The Policy states:

“That the principal and community should review the mechanisms existing in their school for community participation in decision-making in educational policies and programs and should propose any changes which will help to implement this policy and the associated guideline. The PTA should be the primary focal point for this review and for community involvement. The PTA and principal shall seek to have represented the educational viewpoints and socio-economic, racial and ethnic elements in the community...”

## **CHAPTER IV: CHARACTERISTICS OF LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS**

MCPS enrolls students assessed as limited English proficient (LEP) into the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program. Because of how students are enrolled into the program, the ESOL student data collected by MCPS represents data on the school system's LEP student population. This chapter is organized as follows:

- **Part A** provides ESOL enrollment data;
- **Part B** provides information on the countries of origin and languages of ESOL students;
- **Part C** provides data on ESOL students by high school cluster and lists the ESOL "priority" schools designated by MCPS; and
- **Part D** summarizes FARMS and mobility rate data on ESOL students compared to non-ESOL students.

### **A. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Enrollment**

In FY 05, 13,025 students are enrolled in MCPS' English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program. ESOL students currently represent nine percent of MCPS' total enrollment. Additionally, according to Maryland State Department of Education data, MCPS ESOL enrollment represents 44% of total Maryland ESOL enrollment.

Table 1 below shows the number MCPS ESOL and non-ESOL students by grade level for FY 95 and for FY 00 through FY 05. The data show that:

- ESOL enrollment increased 83% (5,890 students) between FY 95 and FY 05.
- During this same time period, total non-ESOL student enrollment only increased by 16% (or 17,520 students).

**TABLE 1: ESOL AND NON-ESOL ENROLLMENT – FY 95, FY 00-FY 05**

Type	Grade Level	FY 95 <sup>a</sup>	FY 00	FY 01	FY 02	FY 03	FY 04	FY 05 <sup>c</sup>
<b>ESOL Enrollment</b>	Pre-Kindergarten	0	1,044 <sup>b</sup>	1,083 <sup>b</sup>	608	763	964	1,107
	Elementary	5,113	4,602	5,389	5,970	6,885	7,075	7,552
	Middle School		1,393	1,543	1,715	1,781	1,797	1,663
	High School	2,022	2,121	2,179	2,354	2,532	2,631	2,703
	<b>Total ESOL</b>	<b>7,135</b>	<b>9,160</b>	<b>10,194</b>	<b>10,647</b>	<b>11,961</b>	<b>12,467</b>	<b>13,025</b>
<b>Non-ESOL Enrollment</b>	All grade levels	109,947	121,529	124,114	126,185	126,930	127,332	127,467

a) FY 95 enrollment was reported to the Maryland State Department of Education in the following grade bands: Grades K-8 and Grades 9-12. Pre-kindergarten was not yet implemented.

b) FY 00 and FY 01 pre-kindergarten data include all pre-K students who spoke a language other than English at home. Beginning in FY 02, pre-K ESOL enrollment was based solely on a test of English language proficiency.

c) FY 05 ESOL enrollment as of March, 2005. FY 05 non-ESOL enrollment as of September 30, 2005.

Sources: MCPS Operating and Capital Budget Documents, MCPS Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs

## **B. Countries of Origin and Languages of MCPS ESOL Students**

This section summarizes FY 05 data on the different countries of origin and primary languages of MCPS' ESOL students. Tables 2 and 3 on the following pages provide a complete listing of all the ESOL student countries of origin and primary languages. The data include ESOL students enrolled this year, and do not include students that have transitioned out of ESOL programming.

**Country of Origin Data.** MCPS' ESOL students were born in 161 different countries. Table 2 (page 16) shows that for the cohort of FY 05 ESOL students:

- The top five countries of origin are, in order, the United States, El Salvador, Peru, South Korea, and Ethiopia.
- Approximately 41% (5,279 students) were born in the United States.
- Approximately 11% (1,362 students) were born in El Salvador. El Salvadorian-born ESOL students are the only nationality other than the American-born ESOL students that represent more than 4% of total ESOL enrollment.
- 143 nationalities are each represented by fewer than one percent of ESOL students.

**Primary Language Data.** MCPS ESOL students cumulatively speak 144 different languages as their primary language, an increase of 25 languages from FY 04. Table 3 (page 17) shows that for the cohort of FY 05 ESOL students:

- The top five primary languages spoken are, in order, Spanish, French, Korean, English, and Vietnamese.
- Approximately 57% (7,387 students) speak Spanish as their primary language, and no single language other than Spanish is spoken by more than 5% of the students.
- 129 of the 144 different languages are each spoken by fewer than 1% of the students.
- For 3.4% (445 students), English is listed as their primary language. According to MCPS staff, these English speaking ESOL students generally come from other countries that speak varieties of the English language (e.g., Liberian English), but require additional instruction to improve their proficiency in Standard American English.

**TABLE 2: FY 05 LIST OF MCPS ESOL STUDENTS BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN**

Country	# and % of ESOL Students		Country	# and % of ESOL Students		Country	# and % of ESOL Students	
UNITED STATES	5,279	40.5%	CANADA	24	<1%	SINGAPORE	4	<1%
EL SALVADOR	1,362	10.5%	UNITED KINGDOM	23	<1%	ALBANIA	3	<1%
PERU	481	3.7%	UKRAINE	22	<1%	BENIN	3	<1%
SOUTH KOREA	370	2.8%	CAMBODIA	21	<1%	BURKINA-FASO	3	<1%
ETHIOPIA	324	2.5%	SENEGAL	21	<1%	CHAD	3	<1%
MEXICO	297	2.3%	GERMANY	20	<1%	GEORGIA	3	<1%
CHINA	287	2.2%	BURMA	19	<1%	ICELAND	3	<1%
HONDURAS	221	1.7%	CUBA	19	<1%	LAOS	3	<1%
JAPAN	180	1.4%	OTHER	19	<1%	LEBANON	3	<1%
COLOMBIA	178	1.4%	PORTUGAL	19	<1%	MACEDONIA	3	<1%
GUATEMALA	170	1.3%	HONG KONG	18	<1%	MOLDOVA	3	<1%
PHILIPPINES	165	1.3%	JORDAN	18	<1%	MONGOLIA	3	<1%
VIETNAM	157	1.2%	GABON	17	<1%	MOZAMBIQUE	3	<1%
BOLIVIA	155	1.2%	BULGARIA	16	<1%	NEW ZEALAND	3	<1%
BRAZIL	154	1.2%	GREECE	16	<1%	PANAMA	3	<1%
CAMEROON	150	1.2%	TURKEY	16	<1%	RWANDA	3	<1%
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	149	1.1%	GUYANA	14	<1%	SAINT LUCIA	3	<1%
INDIA	134	1.0%	POLAND	14	<1%	SLOVAKIA	3	<1%
ECUADOR	122	<1%	UGANDA	14	<1%	SLOVANIA	3	<1%
PAKISTAN	114	<1%	MOROCCO	13	<1%	UZBEKISTAN	3	<1%
LIBERIA	106	<1%	BELGIUM	12	<1%	ZIMBABWE-OBSOL	3	<1%
ARGENTINA	95	<1%	SOMALIA	12	<1%	AFGHANISTAN	2	<1%
RUSSIA	94	<1%	ZIMBABWE	12	<1%	ANGOLA	2	<1%
SIERRA LEONE	90	<1%	COSTA RICA	11	<1%	AUSTRIA	2	<1%
TAIWAN	87	<1%	NORWAY	11	<1%	BELARUS	2	<1%
GHANA	83	<1%	SUDAN	11	<1%	BURUNDI	2	<1%
HAITI	76	<1%	HUNGARY	10	<1%	CAPE VERDE	2	<1%
FRANCE	74	<1%	ALGERIA	9	<1%	CZECHOSLOVAKIA	2	<1%
CHILE	73	<1%	NETHERLANDS	9	<1%	FINLAND	2	<1%
TOGO	73	<1%	KUWAIT	9	<1%	IRAQ	2	<1%
ISRAEL	71	<1%	SOUTH AFRICA	9	<1%	SLOVENIA	2	<1%
IRAN	70	<1%	SWEDEN	9	<1%	UNKNOWN	2	<1%
NICARAGUA	69	<1%	SYRIA	9	<1%	YEMEN	2	<1%
INDONESIA	65	<1%	AUSTRALIA	8	<1%	ANDORRA	1	<1%
VENEZUELA	53	<1%	KYRZYZSTAN	8	<1%	AZERBAIJAN	1	<1%
CONGO	52	<1%	MALI	8	<1%	BARBADOS	1	<1%
COTE D'IVOIRE	51	<1%	SEYCHELLES	8	<1%	COMOROS	1	<1%
SPAIN	47	<1%	TRINIDAD/TOBAGO	8	<1%	FIJI	1	<1%
ERITREA	40	<1%	KAZAKHSTAN	7	<1%	GRENADA	1	<1%
NEPAL	40	<1%	TANZANIA	7	<1%	KYRGYZSTAN	1	<1%
BANGLADESH	39	<1%	DENMARK	6	<1%	LESOTHO	1	<1%
GAMBIA	38	<1%	ZAMBIA	6	<1%	MAURITANIA	1	<1%
JAMAICA	37	<1%	ARMENIA	5	<1%	MYANMAR	1	<1%
SRI LANKA	35	<1%	LATVIA	5	<1%	PALAU	1	<1%
EGYPT	34	<1%	LITHUANIA	5	<1%	PALESTINE	1	<1%
PUERTO RICO	34	<1%	MADAGASCAR	5	<1%	SERBIA	1	<1%
NIGERIA	33	<1%	MALAYSIA	5	<1%	ST. CROIX	1	<1%
GUINEA	32	<1%	NORTH KOREA	5	<1%	ST. MARTIN	1	<1%
THAILAND	30	<1%	ROMANIA	5	<1%	ST. THOMAS	1	<1%
ITALY	29	<1%	SWITZERLAND	5	<1%	SURINAME	1	<1%
PARAGUAY	26	<1%	AFRICA	4	<1%	SWAZILAND	1	<1%
NIGER	26	<1%	CENTRAL AFRICA	4	<1%	TUNISIA	1	<1%
KENYA	25	<1%	MALAWI	4	<1%	ZAIRE	1	<1%
URUGUAY	25	<1%	SAUDI ARABIA	4	<1%			

Source: MCPS Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs, April 2005.



**TABLE 3: FY 05 LIST OF MCPS ESOL STUDENTS BY PRIMARY LANGUAGE SPOKEN**

Language	# and % of ESOL Students		Language	# and % of ESOL Students		Language	# and % of ESOL Students	
SPANISH	7,387	56.7%	NORWEGIAN	11	<1%	CATALAN	2	<1%
FRENCH	629	4.8%	TELUGU	11	<1%	FINNISH	2	<1%
KOREAN	464	3.6%	YORUBA	11	<1%	ICELANDIC	2	<1%
ENGLISH	445	3.4%	MENDE	10	<1%	IGBIRRA	2	<1%
VIETNAMESE	440	3.4%	SESOTHO	10	<1%	KAIORO	2	<1%
CANTONESE	432	3.3%	BEMBA	9	<1%	KIKUYU	2	<1%
AMHARIC	383	2.9%	KRIO	9	<1%	KONKAN	2	<1%
MANDARIN	243	1.9%	MANDINGO	9	<1%	KUSAIEAN	2	<1%
HINDI/URDU	219	1.7%	SWEDISH	9	<1%	LUGANDA	2	<1%
PORTUGUESE	208	1.6%	EWE	8	<1%	MARATHI	2	<1%
TAGALOG	204	1.6%	HUNGARIAN	8	<1%	PIDGIN	2	<1%
JAPANESE	186	1.4%	PASHTO	8	<1%	SERBIAN	2	<1%
RUSSIAN	162	1.2%	ROMANIAN	8	<1%	SISWATI	2	<1%
ARABIC	141	1.1%	LATVIAN	7	<1%	SUSU	2	<1%
FARSI	125	1.0%	MINA	7	<1%	TSHIVENDA	2	<1%
FRENCH CREOLE	106	<1%	SHONA	7	<1%	VISAYAN	2	<1%
INDONESIAN	80	<1%	DANISH	6	<1%	BANTU	1	<1%
HEBREW	70	<1%	LINGALA	6	<1%	BETTE	1	<1%
BENGALI	58	<1%	MIZO	6	<1%	CHICHWEA	1	<1%
TIGRINA	53	<1%	PERSIAN	6	<1%	DARI	1	<1%
WOLOF	53	<1%	SLOVAK	6	<1%	ENGLISH CARIB	1	<1%
TWI	46	<1%	GA	5	<1%	FANG	1	<1%
NEPALI	44	<1%	MACEDONIAN	5	<1%	FIJIAN	1	<1%
SINHALESE	40	<1%	ASHANTI	4	<1%	FLEMISH	1	<1%
THAI	39	<1%	BELARUSSIAN	4	<1%	FON	1	<1%
ITALIAN	33	<1%	CEBUANO	4	<1%	FUKIEN	1	<1%
SWAHILI	32	<1%	CHAMORRO	4	<1%	GONDI	1	<1%
MALAY	30	<1%	GEORGIAN	4	<1%	GUARANI	1	<1%
CAMBODIAN	27	<1%	ILCANO	4	<1%	KANNADA	1	<1%
GUJERATI	27	<1%	MALAYALAM	4	<1%	KINKWA	1	<1%
PUNJABI	23	<1%	OROMO	4	<1%	KIRUNDI	1	<1%
TAMIL	22	<1%	RUMANIAN	4	<1%	KISSE	1	<1%
GREEK	21	<1%	TIBETAN	4	<1%	KONO	1	<1%
TURKISH	21	<1%	BAMBARA	3	<1%	KYRGYZ	1	<1%
POLISH	19	<1%	CROATIAN	3	<1%	LOMA	1	<1%
AKAN	18	<1%	CZECH	3	<1%	MARSHALLESE	1	<1%
ARMENIAN	18	<1%	FANTI	3	<1%	MYANMAR	1	<1%
BULGARIAN	17	<1%	GANDA	3	<1%	OBU	1	<1%
GERMAN	17	<1%	HAUSA	3	<1%	ORIYA	1	<1%
IGBO/IBO	17	<1%	LITHUANIAN	3	<1%	PAMIL	1	<1%
KHMER	17	<1%	LUO	3	<1%	RUNYANKORE/NYA	1	<1%
BURMESE	16	<1%	MONGOLIAN	3	<1%	SLOVENIAN	1	<1%
OTHER	14	<1%	PALAUAN	3	<1%	TEMNE	1	<1%
DUTCH	12	<1%	SONGHAI	3	<1%	TONGA	1	<1%
KORANKO	12	<1%	ADA	2	<1%	TRUKESE	1	<1%
SOMALI	12	<1%	ALBANIAN	2	<1%	URHOBO	1	<1%
UKRAINIAN	12	<1%	BASSA	2	<1%	ZAO	1	<1%
LAO	11	<1%	BASQUE	2	<1%	ZULU	1	<1%

Source: MCPS Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs, April 2005.

### C. Schools Attended by MCPS ESOL Students

This section presents data on which schools ESOL students attend, presented first by high school cluster, followed by the list of the schools with a large number of ESOL students at a beginning level of English language proficiency.

**School Cluster.** Table 4 lists the number of MCPS ESOL students by high school cluster and the percent of total MCPS students enrolled in each cluster. The data show:

- The number of ESOL students enrolled in each high school cluster varies significantly, ranging from 22 students in the Poolesville cluster to 1,595 students in the Montgomery Blair cluster.
- The four high school clusters that make up the Downcounty consortium (Montgomery Blair, Wheaton, Einstein, and Kennedy) enroll 20% of MCPS total students but 35% of MCPS' ESOL population.

**TABLE 4: FY 05 MCPS ESOL AND % TOTAL STUDENTS BY HIGH SCHOOL CLUSTER**

<b>High School Cluster</b>	<b># of ESOL Students*</b>	<b>% of ESOL Students</b>	<b>Cluster Enrollment as % of Total MCPS Enrollment</b>
MONTGOMERY BLAIR	1,595	12%	7%
NORTHEAST CONSORTIUM	1,388	11%	13%
WHEATON	1,194	9%	4%
GAITHERSBURG	1,104	8%	5%
EINSTEIN	954	7%	4%
WATKINS MILL	851	7%	5%
KENNEDY	761	6%	5%
RICHARD MONTGOMERY	691	5%	4%
WALTER JOHNSON	612	5%	5%
SENECA VALLEY	556	4%	5%
MAGRUDER	493	4%	5%
QUINCE ORCHARD	449	3%	5%
NORTHWEST CLUSTER	444	3%	6%
BETHESDA-CHEVY CHASE	434	3%	4%
ROCKVILLE	393	3%	3%
WHITMAN	264	2%	4%
SHERWOOD	256	2%	5%
WOOTTON	256	2%	6%
CHURCHILL	196	2%	5%
DAMASCUS	112	1%	5%
POOLESVILLE	22	<1%	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,025</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*As of April 2005.

Sources: MCPS Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs, April 2005; MCPS FY 06 Capital Budget

**ESOL Priority Schools.** MCPS designates 69 schools as ESOL “priority schools”, meaning that the schools have a large number of ESOL students at a beginning level of English language proficiency. Priority schools receive scheduled ESOL counseling and parental outreach (described in Chapter V) each week.

Table 5 (below) lists the priority schools by grade level and “status”. Status 1 schools receive at least six hours of scheduled supportive services per week, Status 2 schools receive at least four hours per week, and Status 3 schools receive at least three hours per week. The data show that MCPS designates 33 elementary schools, 14 middle schools, 19 high schools, and three special/alternative schools as ESOL priority schools.

**TABLE 5: MCPS ESOL PRIORITY SCHOOLS**

<b>ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS</b>	<b>STATUS</b>	<b>MIDDLE SCHOOLS</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
BROAD ACRES	1	EASTERN	1
CHEVY CHASE	1	JULIUS WEST	1
SOUTHLAKE	1	MONTGOMERY VILLAGE	1
BEALL	2	PARKLAND	1
FARMLAND	2	SLIGO	1
GAITHERSBURG	2	TAKOMA PARK	1
GLEN HAVEN	2	WHITE OAK	1
HARMONY HILLS	2	NEELSVILLE	2
HIGHLAND	2	KINGSVIEW	3
KEMP MILL	2	REDLAND	3
MONTGOMERY KNOLLS	2	RIDGEVIEW	3
NEW HAMPSHIRE EST.	2	ROBERT FROST	3
ROCKVIEW	2	SILVER SPRING INTL.	3
ROLLING TERRACE	2	TILDEN	3
ROSEMONT	2	<b>HIGH SCHOOLS</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
SUMMIT HALL	2	BCC	1
TWINBROOK	2	BLAIR	1
VIERS MILL	2	BLAKE	1
WELLER RD	2	EINSTEIN	1
WHEATON WOODS	2	GAITHERSBURG	1
ASHBURTON	3	KENNEDY	1
BROWN STATION	3	MAGRUDER	1
CLOPPER MILL	3	QUINCE ORCHARD	1
EAST SILVER SPRING	3	RICHARD MONTGOMERY	1
GEORGIAN FOREST	3	ROCKVILLE	1
HIGHLAND VIEW	3	SENECA VALLEY	1
MARYVALE	3	SHERWOOD	1
OAKVIEW	3	SPRINGBROOK	1
ROSEMARY HILLS	3	WALT WHITMAN	1
SEQUOYAH	3	WALTER JOHNSON	1
TAKOMA PARK	3	WATKINS MILL	1
WATKINS MILL	3	WHEATON	1
WHETSTONE	3	WOOTTON	1
<b>SPECIAL/ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS</b>	<b>STATUS</b>	PAINT BRANCH	TBD
CARL SANDBURG	TBD		
ROCK TERRACE	TBD		
STEPHEN KNOLLS	TBD		

Source: MCPS Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs, April 2005.

#### **D. FARMS and Mobility Rates of MCPS ESOL Students**

This section presents data from MCPS on ESOL vs. non-ESOL students on Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS) eligibility, and data from the State of Maryland data on mobility rates.

**Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS).** Students are eligible to receive FARMS based on household size and income. For example, a family of four must earn less than \$34,873 annually for the student to receive FARMS.<sup>22</sup>

Table 6 shows the FY 05 FARMS rates for ESOL students, non-ESOL students, and the total MCPS student population. The data indicate that the percent of MCPS ESOL students eligible to receive FARMS (53.9%) is more than double the percent of non-ESOL students eligible to receive FARMS (20.1%).

**TABLE 6: FY 05 MCPS FARMS DATA FOR ESOL AND NON-ESOL STUDENTS**

<b>Student Category</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Number of FARMS Eligible Students</b>	<b>FARMS Eligibility Rate</b>
<b>ESOL</b>	12,398	6,687	53.9%
<b>Non-ESOL</b>	126,912	26,329	20.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>139,310</b>	<b>33,016</b>	<b>23.7%</b>

Source: MCPS Office of Shared Accountability, June 2005.

**Mobility Rate.** Student mobility rates refer to the number of entries and withdrawals within a school system against the school system's average daily attendance. Research indicates that the three factors that most significantly contribute to high rates of mobility are low family income, high population density, and low rates of home ownership.<sup>23</sup> Each year, the State of Maryland Department of Education (MSDE) publishes student mobility data for each school district. MSDE breaks out the mobility data for subsets of each school district's students, including LEP students and non-LEP students.<sup>24</sup>

MSDE publishes the data by elementary, middle, and high school levels. OLO combined the three levels for a systemwide mobility rate. Table 7 on the next page compares the mobility rates for LEP and non-LEP students within MCPS. The data show that the FY 04 mobility rate for LEP students (30%) is more than twice the mobility rate of non-LEP students (14%), continuing a trend since FY 02.

<sup>22</sup> MCPS website, <http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/foodserv/farms/guidelines.shtm>

<sup>23</sup> Skandera, Hannah and Richard Sousa, 2002. Mobility and the Achievement Gap, *Hoover Digest*, Issue #3 (Summer). <http://www.hooverdigest.org/023/skandera.html>

<sup>24</sup> 2004 Maryland Report Card, Montgomery County [http://msp.msde.state.md.us/mobil\\_specserv.asp?K=15AAAA](http://msp.msde.state.md.us/mobil_specserv.asp?K=15AAAA)

**TABLE 7: MPCS LEP AND NON-LEP STUDENT MOBILITY RATES  
FY 02-FY 04**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Entrants + Withdrawals (A)</b>	<b>Avg. Daily Attendance (B)</b>	<b>Mobility Rate (A/B * 100%)</b>
<b>MCPS LEP Students</b>			
<b>FY 02</b>	3,651	9,672.8	38%
<b>FY 03</b>	3,060	8,780.2	35%
<b>FY 04</b>	3,361	11,094.8	30%
<b>MCPS Non-LEP Students</b>			
<b>FY 02</b>	15,907	124,786.5	13%
<b>FY 03</b>	17,089	127,452.2	13%
<b>FY 04</b>	17,597	125,200.8	14%

Source: Maryland State Department of Education and OLO, June 2005

## **CHAPTER V: MCPS PROGRAMS – ASSISTANCE TO LEP PERSONS**

This chapter provides an overview of the various MCPS programs that serve limited English proficient (LEP) students and parents, and details MCPS' language assistance services used most often for communicating with LEP persons. OLO's review focused on the ways that MCPS staff communicate with and otherwise support LEP parents and other LEP members of the school community. Evaluating MCPS' English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) curriculum and other classroom-based activities was beyond the scope of OLO's assignment.

This chapter is organized as follows:

- **Part A** provides an overview of MCPS' four primary language assistance strategies (and associated costs) that help LEP persons in accessing MCPS programs and services;
- **Part B** summarizes the programs and language assistance services offered by the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs; and
- **Part C** highlights the programs and language assistance services provided by other MCPS offices and divisions.

### **A. Overview and Expenditures**

MCPS utilizes four primary language assistance strategies that assist LEP persons to access MCPS programs and services.

- 1. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) instruction and specialized support services for LEP students.** MCPS provides ESOL instruction and specialized support services to LEP students at the pre-kindergarten, elementary, middle, and high school levels. Specialized student support services provided to ESOL students are bilingual counseling and bilingual disability/educational assessments. MCPS' FY 06 Operating Budget includes 434 school-based ESOL instructional positions and 33 ESOL positions for student supportive services.
- 2. Outreach and assistance to LEP parents.** MCPS provides multilingual outreach and assistance for LEP parents. MCPS targets some services toward parents of ESOL students and some toward all LEP parents. The programs help parents become aware of MCPS and other community services available for themselves and their children, and are provided both at a central administrative location and at schools. In addition to formalized multilingual parent outreach and assistance programs, individual schools provide a variety of programming in multiple languages aimed at LEP parents. MCPS' FY 06 Operating Budget includes 22 positions dedicated to outreach and assistance for parents of ESOL students.

3. **Interpretation and translation services.** MCPS provides oral interpretation and written document translation services for LEP persons. MCPS provides the interpretation or translation services based on requests from school staff or from parents themselves. MCPS utilizes a pool of approximately 300 paid community members to provide the majority of interpretation services. MCPS' FY 06 Operating Budget also includes a new Unit dedicated to improving document translation.
  
4. **Telephone language assistance services.** MCPS provides three different telephone-based language assistance programs to help staff communicate with LEP persons in multiple languages. The programs either provide over the phone interpretation, connect callers with the appropriate bilingual personnel, or provide pre-recorded messages in the parent's native language.

**Estimated MCPS Expenditures Related to Serving LEP persons.** In FY 06, MCPS will spend more than \$40 million on services and programs for limited English proficient students and parents, representing approximately 2% of MCPS' total FY 06 budget. The majority of the funding is for ESOL student instruction. The \$40 million total only represents direct personnel and operating expenditures related to ESOL programs and services.

The total does not include personal costs of non-ESOL staff who spend time on LEP student or parent issues within the context of serving MCPS' entire student and parent population. Estimating these other costs is not possible because, with the exception of ESOL programs, MCPS does not track the percent of staff time and operational dollars spent on LEP versus non-LEP issues.

Table 8 (below) shows the estimated expenditures from FY 04 through the FY 06 approved budget.

**TABLE 8: ESTIMATED MCPS EXPENDITURES ON LEP-RELATED PROGRAMS AND SERVICES (FY 04 – FY 06)**

Type of Expenditure		Expenditures (in millions)		
		FY 04 Actual	FY 05 Current	FY 06 Budget
<b>Personnel Costs</b>	ESOL Employee Salaries	\$26.9	\$30.9	\$33.2
	ESOL Employee Benefits*	\$5.3	\$6.1	\$6.5
<b>Operating Costs</b>	ESOL General Operating	\$0.9	\$1.0	\$1.0
	Other Operating**	\$0.05	\$0.05	\$0.05
<b>Estimated Total</b>		<b>\$33.1</b>	<b>\$38.0</b>	<b>\$40.7</b>

\*OLO estimated benefit costs by applying a professional benefit factor of 20% to the FTE position salary costs for professional staff.

\*\*Operating cost for MCPS' use of Language Line.

Source: MCPS FY 06 Operating Budget Request and OLO, June 2005; Language Line Services' accounting of MCPS use of service, May 2005.

The remainder of this chapter details the services provided by MCPS to limited English proficient (LEP) students and parents. The chapter presents FY 05 program and service data where available. Depending on the program and MCPS data collection practices, the timeframes of FY 05 data available vary by program.

In addition, the data presented in this chapter illustrate program or service output and do not address the quality/effectiveness of programs and services provided. However, Chapters VI (Local Research) and VII (Feedback from the School Community) provide qualitative information pertaining to the general effectiveness of the programs and services described in this chapter.

## **B. Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs**

MCPS implemented an ESOL/Bilingual Program in 1967. Over the past 35+ years, the program evolved into a separate MCPS Division under the Office of Curriculum and Instruction, Department of Instructional Programs. The Division of ESOL/Bilingual Program's mission is "to provide high quality instruction, assessment, counseling, and parent outreach activities that enable English language learners and American Indian students to demonstrate successful academic performance across all curricular areas."<sup>25</sup>

The Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs provides services in three areas:

- **ESOL Instruction** – The Division coordinates the ESOL curriculum and instructional programs for MCPS students as its primary function. MCPS provides separate ESOL curriculum and instructional models for students at the pre-kindergarten, elementary, middle, and high school levels. MCPS also provides a special Multidisciplinary Education, Training, and Support Program (METS) for "students from grade 3 through high school who have experienced an interruption in their schooling or who have had no schooling in their own countries."<sup>26</sup>
- **Auxiliary Services** – The Division runs the ESOL Testing Center and the ESOL Summer School program. The Testing Center administers the State-mandated English language proficiency assessment to LEP students. The Summer School program provides intensive English language classes for beginning level ESOL students.<sup>27</sup>
- **Support Teams** – The Division administers a variety of supportive services for ESOL students and parents. These programs include the ESOL Counseling Team, the ESOL Parent Services Team, the ESOL Parent Center Team, and the Bilingual Assessment Team.

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<sup>25</sup> MCPS Website, <http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/curriculum/esol/index.shtm>

<sup>26</sup> MCPS Website, <http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/curriculum/esol/mets/index.shtm>

<sup>27</sup> MCPS Website, <http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/curriculum/esol/admin/overview.shtm>



The Division's Support Team assists LEP students and their parents to access MCPS services. Since OLO's review focused on the ways that MCPS staff communicate with and otherwise support LEP parents and other LEP members of the school community, the remainder of Part B will focus on the role of the Support Teams.

### **1. ESOL Bilingual Counseling Team**

MCPS provides funding for 430 school-based counselors to provide educational, career, and personal assistance to students. In addition to the school-based counselors, MCPS employs ESOL bilingual counselors to provide similar services to ESOL students and assist non-ESOL staff working with ESOL students.

The ESOL Bilingual Counseling Team consists of 15.2 full-time-equivalent positions filled by 17 staff members. As a team, ESOL counselors speak 12 languages other than English: Spanish, Galician, Portuguese, Korean, Khmer (Cambodian), Hebrew, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin, Taiwanese, Hindi, and French.

**Services Provided by ESOL Bilingual Counselors.** ESOL bilingual counselors serve individual ESOL students and assist the greater school community to support ESOL students. According to MCPS' written description of bilingual counseling services, ESOL counselors:<sup>28</sup>

- Hold individual and group counseling sessions with ESOL students to discuss concerns affecting academic and personal development;
- Assist in the cultural and social adjustments and help resolve conflicts arising from cross-cultural misunderstandings;
- Provide crisis intervention in incidents involving ESOL students; and
- Provide ESOL students academic and career guidance.

ESOL counselors also provide support at a school-wide level. Examples cited by MCPS staff include:

- Increasing school staff awareness of issues related to ESOL students;
- Participating in the special education Individualized Education Program process as necessary;
- Facilitating the transition process of ESOL students to mainstream classes; and
- Providing consultation and training to school staff on cross-cultural issues.

**Staffing and Workload.** The Division assigns an ESOL counselor contact person to each MCPS elementary, middle, and high school. ESOL "priority schools" – schools with a large number of ESOL students at a beginning level of English language proficiency listed in Chapter IV – each receive regularly scheduled counseling services totaling at least 3-8 hours per week. Other schools receive services on a referral basis, as-

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<sup>28</sup> MCPS Website, <http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/curriculum/esol/counselors/organization.shtm>

needed, through submitting a 'Request for ESOL Counseling' form to the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs.

At the time of this writing, FY 05 ESOL counseling output data is only available through January 2005. Since the beginning of the FY 05 school year, ESOL counselors provided between 800 and 1,900 counseling contacts per month.

**TABLE 9: FY 05 ESOL COUNSELING CONTACTS\***

<b>Month</b>	<b>Number of Counseling Contacts</b>
September 2004	802
October 2004	1,852
November 2004	1,455
December 2004	1,447
January 2005	930
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,486</b>

\*As of January 31, 2005. A contact refers to each time a counselor provides a regularly scheduled counseling service or responds to a counseling referral.

Source: MCPS Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs, April 2005.

**Specialized Programs Provided by ESOL Bilingual Counselors.** In addition to "traditional" counseling services, ESOL counselors also operate the following four specialized programs designed to assist ESOL students and their parents manage both academic and non-academic issues. MCPS' description of the four programs follows:<sup>29</sup>

- **Acculturation Groups.** This school counseling program assists newly arrived Spanish-speaking ESOL students with issues such as "culture shock", grief and loss, and family reunification.
- **Chess for Success.** This school counseling program develops an ESOL student's social, emotional, and academic skills by using "chess pieces as a metaphor for life situations."
- **Latina Girls Group.** This counseling group addresses gender and cultural issues that affect young Latina academic success. Topics include health, safety, and self-esteem issues.
- **Art of Communication Group.** This school counseling program helps mothers and daughters communicate in a positive and constructive manner.

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<sup>29</sup> MCPS website, <http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/curriculum/esol/counselors/special/>

## **2. ESOL Parent Center Team**

Located at MCPS' Rocking Horse Road Center, staff at the ESOL Parent Center provide a variety of services designed to assist ESOL families. These services include:

- Providing orientation, information, and assistance to parents of newly arrived international students during the school enrollment process;
- Providing general information and assistance to ESOL parents throughout the school year; and
- Coordinating and arranging interpretation and translation services for the entire school system.

The Parent Center Team consists of six full-time-equivalent positions filled by five direct services staff and three support staff members. As a team, ESOL Parent Center staff speak 11 different languages: Spanish, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Russian, Mandarin (Chinese), Shanghainese (Chinese), Khmer (Cambodian), French, Lingala, and Swahili.

**Orientation.** The Parent Center conducts orientation activities when parents register their children for school at MCPS' International Student Admissions Office (ISAO). While ISAO staff begin the process of determining the student's school assignment and grade level, Parent Center staff:

- Inform parents about MCPS and ESOL policies and programs; and
- Assist parents to complete required MCPS forms, e.g., enrollment forms, emergency forms, legal guardianship forms, free and reduced lunch applications, and health forms.

MCPS reports that the Center provided orientation sessions to the parents of more than 2,800 newly enrolling international MCPS students in FY 04. However, not all international families are limited English proficient or require ESOL services.

**Information and Assistance.** Parent Center staff provide information and assistance throughout the year to parents of ESOL students who telephone or stop by the offices. Although many of the information and assistance requests are school-related, Parent Center staff report that parents also contact them to find out how to obtain social services, how to find after-school activities, and to assist with other issues not directly school-related.

**Interpretation and Translation.** ESOL Parent Center staff coordinate and arrange interpretation and translation services for the entire school system. Interpretation is the act of listening to something in one language and orally translating it into another language. Translation is the replacement of written text from one language into an equivalent written text in another language. Providing and coordinating interpretation and translation is a major component of the Parent Center Team's workload.

To request interpretation/translation services, school-based staff submit a request form to the Division of ESOL 15 days before the needed date for services. Parents, however, may call the Center directly to request services.

**Interpreters.** ESOL Parent Center uses a combination of its own staff, paid community members, or other available MCPS staff to provide interpretation services. Parent Center staff report that they fulfill most requests for interpreters, if given sufficient advance notice.

According to Center staff, a pool of approximately 300 community members provide the majority of interpretation services. The community interpreters receive a set fee of \$25/hour for their services. If the request is for an uncommon language (an example provided by MCPS staff is the language of Mina, spoken in the African country of Togo) or the Center otherwise is not able to secure an interpreter, staff report contacting embassies to try and obtain an interpreter. As a last resort, staff report that they will ask the parents if they have any family or friends who could serve as the interpreter or use telephone language assistance tools described later in this section.

Between July 2004 and February 2005, the ESOL Parent Center arranged nearly 4,000 interpretations in 47 different languages. Table 10 shows that over three-fourths of the interpretations (3,016 or 76%) were for Spanish. The next highest number of interpretations were for Vietnamese (259 or 7%).

**TABLE 10: FY 05 INTERPRETATIONS BY LANGUAGE\***

<b>Language</b>	<b>Number of Interpretations</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Spanish	3,016	76%
Vietnamese	259	7%
Korean	175	4%
Cantonese	84	2%
Mandarin	56	1%
Amharic	53	1%
French	51	1%
Japanese	45	1%
Urdu	32	1%
All Other**	192	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,963</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*As of February 2005.

\*\*Includes Farsi, Russian, Cambodian, Arabic, Creole, Tagalog, Hungarian, Portuguese, Hindi, Bengali, Hebrew, Indonesian, Italian, Thai, Nepali, Wolof, Tigrina, Greek, Malayalam, Oriya, Slovak, Turkish, Twi, Singhalese, Tamil, Fon, Ibo, Bosnian, Burmese, Gujarati, Ghanaian-Akan, Laotian, Lingala, Punjabi, Sango, Swahilli, Telegu, Tibetan.  
Source: MCPS Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs, April 2005.

Table 11 below shows the total FY 04 interpretation requests by the type of meeting as categorized by the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs. OLO used FY 04 data for the type of meetings interpreted because it represents a full year of data and therefore would include events that may only occur at certain times in the school year. The FY 04 data show that out of 4,700 interpretations coordinated by the Parent Center, 67% were for special education-related meetings (e.g., individualized education program team meetings). The next highest type of activity requiring interpreters was parent-teacher conferences (15%).

**TABLE 11: FY 04 TYPES OF MCPS MEETINGS/EVENTS INTERPRETED**

<b>Type of Meeting/Event</b>	<b>Number of Interpretations</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Special Education	3,176	67%
Parent-Teacher Conferences	716	15%
Speech/Language Evaluations	168	4%
Back-to-School Nights	158	3%
Child Find	157	3%
Suspension/Expulsion Hearings	107	2%
Kindergarten Orientations	79	2%
All Other	202	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,763</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: MCPS Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs, May 2005.

**Translation.** MCPS staff report moving toward translating as many vital documents into multiple languages as possible. One example is MCPS' *Students Guide to Rights & Responsibilities* document, which is published in English, Spanish, Korean, Chinese, and Vietnamese. School staff interviewed also report an increase in the number of school flyers and other materials sent home in multiple languages, primarily English and Spanish. Many written announcements sent home to parents are printed on both sides with English on one side and Spanish on the other.

ESOL Parent Center staff maintain an approved list of vendors who are available to translate written material. Between July 2004 to February 2005, the ESOL Parent Center received nearly 1,800 document translation requests for 24 different languages. Table 12 on the next page shows the translations provided by language. The table shows that approximately one-third of the translations are for Spanish (606 or 34%). Other most requested languages for translations are Korean (376 or 21%), Chinese (235 or 13%), and Vietnamese (195 or 11%).

**TABLE 12: FY 05 TRANSLATIONS BY LANGUAGE\***

<b>Language</b>	<b>Number of Translations</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Spanish	606	34%
Korean	376	21%
Chinese	235	13%
Vietnamese	195	11%
French	126	7%
Amharic	61	3%
Russian	32	2%
All Other**	163	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,794</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*As of February 2005.

\*\*Includes Cambodian, Tagalog, Japanese, Portuguese, Urdu, Farsi, Arabic, Bengali, German, Creole, Nepali, Hindi, Burmese, Hebrew, Greek, Bosnian, and Turkish.

Source: MCPS Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs, April 2005.

**A New Translation Services Unit within the ESOL Parent Center.** MCPS' FY 06 Operating Budget includes the creation of a Translation Services Unit within the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs as part of a three-year plan. MCPS' FY 06 Operating Budget includes one position plus operating expenses for the Translation Unit at a total FY 06 cost of \$152,000. MCPS proposes building the capacity of the Unit over the three-year period, so additional funding may be requested in future years.

According to a written description of the Unit provided to OLO by the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs:

“Beginning July 1, 2005, the foundation for a translation unit will be created in the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs to provide professional translation services. This unit will be formed over a three-year period to build capacity for the school system to provide high quality translation services in print, television, and web. The unit will also employ the latest technologies in translation software and hardware to enable the school system to provide information to our linguistically diverse community that is of the same quality provided to our English speaking community.”

### **3. ESOL Parent Outreach Services Team**

MCPS describes the functions of the ESOL Parent Outreach Services Team as:<sup>30</sup>

- Helping parents of ESOL students become aware of educational services available for themselves and their children; and
- Minimizing linguistic and cultural barriers so that parents of ESOL students may participate in their children's education.

The Parent Outreach Services Team consists of 16 full-time-equivalent positions filled by 16 staff members. As a Team, Parent Outreach staff speak seven different languages other than English: Spanish, French, Chinese, Galician, Portuguese, Korean, and Vietnamese.

**Services Provided by ESOL Parent Outreach Services Staff.** Parent Outreach staff provide a wide variety of services to parents of ESOL students. Examples of services cited by staff include:

- Providing information about school services and resources, and connecting parents to social services programs provided by other governmental agencies;
- Helping parents understand the language and the processes at Education Management Team, or Individualized Education Program Team meetings;
- Conducting in-service training for school staff on how to work with the parents of ESOL students;
- Conducting workshops that inform parents of their rights and responsibilities; and
- Interpreting report cards or other types of written communication sent home from schools.

**Staffing and Outreach.** The Division assigns a Parent Outreach staff contact person to each MCPS elementary, middle, and high school. ESOL “priority schools” – schools with a large number of ESOL students at a beginning level of English language proficiency listed in Chapter IV – each receive regularly scheduled outreach services totaling at least 3-8 hours per week. Other schools receive services on a referral basis, as-needed, by submitting a request to the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs.

MCPS school staff involve the assigned Parent Outreach staff person when an issue requires the presence of the student’s parents. Parent Outreach staff typically receive requests from ESOL teachers, non-ESOL teachers, school nurses, and school administrators. Examples of requests cited by Parent Outreach staff include attendance problems, interpersonal issues, behavior problems, health problems, and neglect/abuse incidents.

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<sup>30</sup> MCPS website, <http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/curriculum/esol/parents/index.shtm>

Table 13 shows that during the 2004-2005 school year, ESOL Parent Outreach staff made between 500 and 1,000 contacts per month through March.

**TABLE 13: FY 05 ESOL PARENT OUTREACH CONTACTS \***

<b>Month</b>	<b>Number of Outreach Contacts</b>
September 2004	528
October 2004	1,031
November 2004	712
December 2004	970
January 2005	788
February 2005	987
March 2005	1,182
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,198</b>

\*As of March 31, 2005. A contact refers to each time staff provide a regularly scheduled outreach services or respond to an outreach referral.  
Source: MCPS Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs, April 2005.

#### **4. Bilingual Assessment Team**

The Bilingual Assessment Team assesses ESOL students suspected of having a disability that may qualify a student for special education services. The Team's primary focus is to prevent inappropriate placement of LEP students in special education programs when the cause of their difficulties is language proficiency and not a disability as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The Bilingual Assessment Team consists of 16 full-time-equivalent positions filled by six Bilingual Psychologists, six Bilingual Instructional Assessment Specialists, two Bilingual Speech-Language Pathologists, and two Bilingual Administrative Support Personnel. As a team, Bilingual Assessment staff speak seven languages other than English: Spanish, French, Portuguese, Russian, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Vietnamese. The Bilingual Assessment Team operates from MCPS' Rocking Horse Road Center. The Division assigns each MCPS school a BAT staff member contact.

**Services Provided.** Under IDEA, a local school district must evaluate a child suspected of having a disability to determine his/her eligibility for special services. The process to determine a child's eligibility for special education services begins with two-questions:

- Does a child have a disability that meets one of the 13 disability categories defined in federal law?
- Does the disability interfere with the child's ability to learn?

IDEA requires a multidisciplinary team to conduct the assessment. The team must include the child's parents, teachers, other specialists knowledgeable about the suspected



disability, and administrative school system representatives. MCPS requires the Bilingual Assessment Team to be involved in the assessment process if the student is:

- A preschool student (public or private) whose parents speak a language other than English;
- A school-aged student who qualifies for ESOL services or has been transitioned from ESOL less than one year prior to referral; or
- A school-aged student referred for special education screening by the International Student Admissions Office.

Once the Bilingual Assessment Team receives a referral, a BAT instructional specialist conducts a “language dominance assessment” on the student. If the student is determined to be English proficient, the disability assessments are conducted in English. If a student is determined to be LEP, some or all of the disability assessments (depending on the student’s English proficiency) are conducted in the student’s native language. Depending on the language, native language disability assessments are conducted by the BAT or by English-speaking school personnel with the assistance of an interpreter.

In addition to language dominance and disability assessments, BAT staff also serve on Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams that meet periodically to assess and update a student’s IEP progress; and assist LEP parents in understanding the special education process and materials.

**Staffing and Workload.** Table 14 below lists the number and type of assessments conducted by the Bilingual Assessment Team in FY03, FY04, and FY05 (as of April 7, 2005).

**TABLE 14: ASSESSMENTS CONDUCTED BY THE BILINGUAL ASSESSMENT TEAM  
FY 03-FY 05\***

Type of Assessment	FY 03	FY 04	FY 05*
Language-Dominance	542	598	405
Educational	185	173	135
Psychological	208	294	155
Speech-Language**	218	188	162
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,153</b>	<b>1,253</b>	<b>857</b>

\*As of April 7, 2005.

\*\*French and Spanish only.

Source: MCPS Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs, April 2005.

**ESOL/Bilingual Advisory Committee.** In addition to the outreach activities described in Part B of this chapter, the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs also receives input from the ESOL/Bilingual Advisory Committee (EBAC). Established in the 1980s, EBAC acts as a means of communication between the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs and the community, and provides input and support on ESOL activities.

The Committee consists of between five and ten language minority community members who meet monthly at MCPS' Rocking Horse Road Center. Some of the Committee's specific tasks explained by the Committee's Chair include:

- Serving as an advocacy group in matters related to ESOL students;
- Recommending program improvements;
- Reviewing materials for ESOL/Bilingual Programs;
- Connecting community members to the ESOL system;
- Identifying community educational concerns; and
- Encouraging MCPS staff (ESOL and non-ESOL) by giving recognition awards for outstanding work in helping ESOL students.

### **C. Other MCPS Offices, Divisions, and Programs that Assist LEP Persons**

Outside of the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs, OLO identified other MCPS offices, divisions, and programs that assist LEP persons in accessing MCPS services within the context of serving MCPS' entire student and parent population. These offices and divisions either manage an MCPS language assistance service, dedicate programs towards LEP parents or students, or train MCPS staff in multicultural topics.

#### **1. Division of Family and Community Partnerships**

In July 2004, MCPS reorganized the Division of Family and Community Partnerships (DFCP) to improve MCPS' outreach to families, and to further develop business and community partnerships. DFCP is located under MCPS' Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs, Department of Instructional Programs. According to DFCP staff, the Division:

- Informs parents and staff about the curriculum, instructional supports, and program resources available to them; and
- Creates a coordinated support system responsive to the growing size, diversity, and complexity of the community.

Division services that assist LEP persons are described below.

**MCPS' Call Center.** Established in July 2004, MCPS' Call Center provides "families and community members with a one-stop resource for accurate and timely information about school operations, programs, enrollment, tests and reports, and other information about the school system."<sup>31</sup> The Division of Family and Community Partnerships (DFCP) operates one of MCPS' telephone language assistance services, the MCPS Call Center, in collaboration with an outside contractor.

The Call Center is a telephone resource line staffed by bilingual (English and Spanish) personnel for individuals to call with any general questions about MCPS. Analysts

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<sup>31</sup> MCPS website, <http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/info/contact/callcenter/>

employed by the contractor answer calls using a database of answers to “Frequently Asked Questions.”<sup>32</sup> If the analyst cannot answer the caller’s question, the caller is directed to the appropriate MCPS department.

The Call Center can assist English and Spanish speaking callers Monday through Friday, 8 am to 6 pm. For callers who speak Cambodian, Korean, Vietnamese, French, and Chinese, the analysts refer callers to the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs Voicemail Lines for callers to leave messages. ESOL staff check the voicemail lines periodically throughout the day and respond to the caller’s inquiry. In addition to the voicemail lines, the Call Center contractor can also access the Language Line (described on page 36) if needed.

Since its inception, the Call Center has received over 7,500 inquiries, predominantly in English and Spanish. Call Center staff referred 83 of these inquiries to the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs’ Voicemail Lines.

**Community Outreach.** As part of its community outreach responsibilities, the Division directs the following activities that specifically target or impact limited English proficient persons.

- **General outreach** – The Division informs (and receives input from) a variety of community groups on new or proposed MCPS policies and programs. The Division coordinates with multiple community organizations to ensure that limited English proficient persons participate in the Division’s outreach efforts.
- **Parent Connection Newsletter** – In conjunction with MCPS’ Public Information Office, the Division publicizes the quarterly *Parent Connection* newsletter. The newsletter informs parents about available MCPS services and resources, and is published in English, Spanish, French, Korean, Vietnamese, and Chinese. The Division sends the newsletter to all MCPS parents.
- **Conquista Tus Suenos (Realize Your Dreams)** – Conquista is a Spanish language program aimed at empowering the MCPS Latino parent community by teaching strategies to improve communication, parenting, personal goal setting, and family relationships. The program is held monthly at the Long Branch Community Center.
- **Parent Meetings** – DFCP assists schools with planning and coordinating meetings for LEP parents, including back-to-school nights, the new grading/reporting policy, positive parenting, and parental empowerment.
- **Advisory Boards and Committees** – DFCP staff report seeking the participation of LEP persons in MCPS parent advisory groups and/or committees.

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<sup>32</sup> Examples of frequently asked questions include ‘How do I enroll my child in school?’, ‘When does school start?’, and ‘When will my child receive a report card?’.

## **2. Office of Special Education and Student Services**

The Office of Special Education and Student Services manages and funds a telephone language assistance contract with Language Line Services. MCPS contracts with Language Line Services<sup>33</sup> to provide over-the-phone interpretation from English to more than 150 other languages, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Commonly referred to as the Language Line, MCPS initially used this service as a language assistance tool during Individualized Education Program meetings with LEP special education students and their parents. Now, the Language Line is available to all MCPS employees to supplement (not take the place of) the interpretation services available through the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs. MCPS pays at flat rate of \$1.60 per minute for Language Line, regardless of language requested.

Table 15 summarizes MCPS' use of Language Line Services in FY 05 (as of April 30). As shown, MCPS used Language Line Services nearly 4,000 times to interpret over 30 languages at a cost of \$47K.

**TABLE 15: MCPS USE OF LANGUAGE LINE SERVICES**

<b>Details</b>	<b>FY 05*</b>
Number of Calls	3,998
Average Length of Call	7.3 minutes
Languages Interpreted	32
Total Cost for Interpretation Services	\$47,720

\*As of April 30, 2005.

Source: Language Line Services, May 2005.

In terms of languages requested, Table 16 on the next page shows that 78% of calls placed to the language line are for Spanish interpreters. Following Spanish, the most frequently requested languages are: Vietnamese (203 calls or 5%) and Korean (105 calls or 3%).

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<sup>33</sup> Several County Government departments, including the Police Department, Fire and Rescue Services, and Department to Health and Human Services, use this same service.

**TABLE 16: FY 05\* BREAKDOWN OF MCPS LANGUAGE LINE INTERPRETATIONS**

<b>Language</b>	<b>Number of Calls</b>	<b>Avg. Minutes per Call</b>	<b>Percent of Total Calls</b>	<b>Cost for Interpretation</b>
Spanish	3,132	7.4	78%	\$36,147
Vietnamese	203	6.4	5%	\$ 2,106
Korean	105	7.5	3%	\$ 1,239
Mandarin	95	7.1	2%	\$ 1,048
French	91	6.3	2%	\$ 900
Portuguese	89	6.7	2%	\$ 917
Amharic	70	8.1	2%	\$ 871
Cantonese	40	6.7	1%	\$ 408
All Other	173	7.3	4%	\$ 4,084
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,998</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$47,720</b>

\*As of April 30, 2005.

Source: Language Line Services' accounting of MCPS use of service, May 2005.

MCPS' Office of Special Education and Student Services also provided data on the source of calls to the Language Line through April 30, 2005. In total, 118 of MCPS' 203 regular and special schools have utilized the Language Line at least once in FY 05. Specifically:

- 77 elementary schools, 27 middle schools, 14 high schools, and 2 special schools used the Language Line;
- 85% (3,405) of the calls originated from school locations and 15% (593) originated from MCPS administrative locations;
- No single school accounts for more than 8% of total calls; and
- The top ten school users are Oak View ES, Albert Einstein HS, Sligo MS, Parkland MS, Highland ES, Rolling Terrace ES, Sequoyah ES, Forest Oak MS, Earle B. Wood MS, and Goshen ES.

### **3. International Student Admissions Office**

Located at MCPS' Rocking Horse Road Center, staff from the International Student Admissions Office (ISAO) enroll international students, foreign students, and US citizen students coming from foreign schools into MCPS. ISAO determines eligibility for school admissions of more than 6,000 incoming students and their families every year.<sup>34</sup> ISAO staff:

- Verify students school eligibility;
- Review school records and other appropriate documentation;
- Make grade placement recommendations and evaluate foreign school credentials to grant high school credits toward graduation; and
- Assign students to an appropriate district school.

<sup>34</sup> MCPS website, <http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/student-services/isao/>

ISAO staff may also refer students and parents to the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs if necessary. ISAO refers students to the ESOL Testing Center for an assessment of the student's English proficiency. ISAO refers parents to the ESOL Parent Center for language appropriate orientation to MCPS and assistance in completing registration forms.

#### **4. Office of Organizational Development**

MCPS' Office of Organizational Development manages MCPS' staff development and training initiatives. The list of initiatives includes three courses that assist MCPS employees in serving LEP families. Course participants earn Maryland State Department of Education approved credits that count towards salary advancement and certification renewals for professional staff. Each of the training courses is listed below along with excerpts from MPCS' course description.<sup>35</sup>

**Education that is Multicultural.** Participants in this course explore their own cultural backgrounds and identify how it impacts the learning environment. According to the course's description, "participants will develop sensitivity to racial and cultural biases in instructional materials and texts, in classroom patterns of thinking, in modes of communication, and in teaching/learning strategies."

**Ethnic Groups in American Society.** Participants in this course develop a philosophy of cultural diversity and a set of skills for use in educational settings. The course identifies and promotes educational practices that support academic achievement in various ethnic groups. According to the program's description, the course aims to give participants "greater awareness of communication and relationships in ethnically diverse schools and communities."

**Teaching the ESOL Student.** This course trains school staff in grades K-5 who have ESOL students as part of their classroom population. According to the course's description, participants will: increase their understanding on the nature of language, second language learning, and the influences of the cultures and backgrounds of ESOL students on their learning in the American classroom; and learn strategies for working with ESOL students in the mainstream classroom.

#### **5. Office of Strategic Technologies and Accountability**

The Business Systems Team within the Office of Strategic Technologies and Accountability administers a telephone notification service called Connect-Ed. Connect-ED is a computerized message system that allows schools to send pre-recorded information to the school community via telephone. MCPS reports that the intent of the system is to support community outreach initiatives and disseminate emergency information.

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<sup>35</sup> Staff from the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs provided OLO with the information used to write the course descriptions.

In April 2005, MCPS implemented Connect-ED in 20 schools (listed below) as a pilot project. MCPS reports that the service will be available to all schools beginning in the FY 06 school year.

- Baker Middle School
- Bannockburn Elementary School
- Beall Elementary School
- Clopper Mill Elementary School
- Cresthaven Elementary School
- Forest Knolls Elementary School
- Kemp Mill Elementary School
- Kennedy High School
- Key Middle School
- King Middle School
- Lee Middle School
- Richard Montgomery High School
- Northwest High School
- Poolesville High School
- Rosemont Elementary School
- Springbrook High School
- Watkins Mill High School
- Julius West Middle School
- Westland Middle School
- Wheaton High School

MCPS staff report that Connect-ED can facilitate schools sending recorded messages to parents in multiple languages. OLO spoke with individual schools that have begun using Connect-Ed to send messages in Spanish and English. One school pre-records a single message that provides the information first in English and then in Spanish. Another school records separate messages and sends the Spanish version to the school's Spanish speaking families.

## CHAPTER VI: LOCAL RESEARCH

OLO identified a total of five different studies, forums, and surveys completed during the past three years that directly or indirectly address how MCPS can more effectively communicate with limited English proficient students and parents. This chapter presents the highlights from the local research listed in Table 17.

The research summarized is not a definitive literature review of ESOL or LEP issues. The body of work presented varies from research-based studies prepared by consultants, to e-mail surveys conducted by volunteers intended to receive general feedback from the community.

**Summary of Research Themes.** The body of research acknowledges the challenges of communicating with limited English proficient persons. A common theme throughout the research is that language barriers and work commitments limit parent's involvement in their children's education, as well as school programs and events. The research also indicates that LEP parents wish to learn English. One study reports that some MCPS schools communicate effectively with their LEP community, while others struggle to overcome language barriers.

Common suggestions for improvement include: 1) MCPS should hold school meetings in languages other than English or use interpreters at school events; 2) MCPS should use various ethnic and multicultural media to inform parents about the school system; 3) MCPS should provide written communications in languages other than English; and 4) the County should offer English classes during the school day as well as in the evening.

The remainder of this chapter summarizes each of the five pieces of research identified by OLO.

**TABLE 17: LOCAL RESEARCH REVIEWED BY OLO**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Prepared by:</b>	<b>Year</b>
<i>Promoting Excellence for English Language Learners: An Evaluation of the Montgomery County Public Schools ESOL Program</i>	George Washington University Center for Equity and Excellence in Education	2002
<i>MCPS Downcounty Consortium Marketing Outreach</i>	The Media Network, Inc	2003
<i>Latino Youth in Montgomery County Maryland: A Review of the nature and needs of Latino youth regarding substance abuse and HIV prevention</i>	Identity	2002
<i>Parent Involvement Survey: Outreach Ideas</i>	Montgomery County Council of Parent Teacher Associations	2004
<i>Education Community Forums</i>	Montgomery County Board of Education	2004



**1. Promoting Excellence for English Language Learners: An Evaluation of the MCPS ESOL Program, George Washington University, April 2002**

In 2001, MCPS contracted with the George Washington University Center for Equity and Excellence in Education (GWU/CEEE) to assess how MCPS' ESOL services/programs could be improved to reduce the academic achievement gap. Released in December 2001 (and appended in April 2002), the study discusses the impact of rapidly increasing ESOL enrollment, shifting demographics, and new federal and state student testing requirements.

To gain feedback on MCPS' ESOL programs, GWU/CEEE conducted: 1) interviews with MCPS administrators and principals; 2) focus groups with MCPS administrators and teachers; 3) focus groups with parents of ESOL students; and 4) focus groups with current and former ESOL students.

**MCPS staff and parents of ESOL students.** GWU/CEEE staff conducted individual interviews with four members of the MCPS central administration and 15 principals. GWU/CEEE staff also conducted a total of 12 focus groups with school-based administrators, ESOL and non-ESOL teachers, and parents of ESOL students.

Discussions identified that MCPS utilizes a wide range of communication strategies for LEP students and parents, although services vary by school. **The report states that “the data show that schools provide varying levels of services, from none to extensive, specifically designed to enable meaningful communication between parents of ESOL students and schools.”** Examples of strategies or programs cited as beneficial for LEP parents but not available at every school include Linkages to Learning, “back-to-school” nights tailored toward ESOL parents, regular meetings for parents of ESOL students either at school or at locations in the community, and language classes.

Other key observations include:

- Parents of ESOL students expressed a desire to learn English and for English classes to be offered during the school day as well as in the evening;
- MCPS staff reported that timely translation of written communications (routine and emergency) is important;
- MCPS staff reported that schools have difficulty providing oral communications in the parents' native language, particularly for parent conferences or phone calls. Staff reported that bilingual teachers often serve as translators for parents, which takes them away from instructional responsibilities.

**MCPS ESOL students.** GWU/CEEE conducted three focus groups with a total of 30 current and former middle and high school ESOL students (24 current; 6 former). In general, the students expressed a high level of satisfaction with the quality of instruction

in ESOL classes. The students felt that ESOL classes were beneficial when they first enrolled at MCPS, and believed that they would have struggled if they were placed solely in mainstream classes upon enrollment. Students reported that ESOL teachers spend a considerable amount of time assisting ESOL students (and sometimes former ESOL students) in understanding the content of non-ESOL classes and appropriately interpreting assignments.

The students also reported that their personal comfort levels varied widely in non-ESOL classes. Specifically:

- Mainstream classes presented content in language that was difficult to understand. The students felt some non-ESOL teachers presume that exited ESOL students have no lingering linguistic difficulties.
- They generally did not volunteer to participate orally in their mainstream classes, primarily out of concern that the other students will criticize their language ability and that mainstream teachers did not take steps to minimize ESOL students' discomfort in classes.
- They were unaware that ESOL guidance counselors were available for their assistance. Those students that were aware of ESOL counselors felt that the counselors did not explain how course selection affects graduation.

## **2. *MCPS Downcounty Consortium Marketing Outreach, The Media Network, Inc., 2003***

In August 2003, MCPS contracted with the Media Network, Inc. to hold multiple discussion groups to determine the type of information parents desire about MCPS' High School Choice program. As part of this effort, the Media Network held separate group interviews with Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, and Chinese speaking parents of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. The common themes identified across the groups on how MCPS communicates with LEP persons include:

- Parents often rely on children, other relatives, and friends to serve as interpreters/translators. The parents rely on their children to update them on school events, as written school materials are not always available in languages other than English. The parents would prefer to receive mailings in their native language.
- Language barriers and work commitments limit parent's involvement in their children's education, as well as school programs and events.
- Parents would be more inclined to attend school meetings held in their native language or if interpreters were provided.

### **3. *Latino Youth in Montgomery County, Identity, 2002***

In 2002, Identity (a not-for-profit corporation) completed a study titled, *Latino Youth in Montgomery County Maryland: A Review of the nature and needs of Latino youth regarding substance abuse and HIV prevention.*<sup>36</sup> As part of the report process, Identity held a series of focus groups with Latino youth, parents involved in an Upcounty support group, and parents of Latino youth.<sup>37</sup>

As part of the discussion related to after-school programs, focus group participants were asked how they learned about school-sponsored programs and/or programs where information is sent home through the schools. Key points pertaining to how MCPS communicates with LEP persons include:

- The youth reported that ESOL staff let them know about MCPS programs, and that ESOL staff are able to effectively communicate with Latino parents.
- Participants of the Upcounty Parents' Support Group reported that the language barrier is a primary reason why MCPS services are not accessed by Latino parents. Specifically discussing information about after-school programs, the group suggested that MCPS correspondence should be written in Spanish and English.
- Latino parents reported that the language barrier stops many parents from visiting their children's schools and becoming involved in their children's education.
- Latino parents believed that the best method for corresponding about school-sponsored programs is to mail Spanish language fliers to them (parents reported relying on their children to explain the content of fliers written in English). The parents also suggested that MCPS communicate through Spanish-language newspapers or Spanish-language television stations.

### **4. *Parent Involvement Survey: Outreach Ideas, Montgomery County Council of Parents Teachers Associations, December 2004***

In December 2004, the Montgomery County Council of Parents Teachers Associations (MCCPTA) conducted an e-mail survey of schools to receive suggestions on the best practices for involving parents in PTA meetings. The survey specifically targeted successful strategies that worked with minority parents.

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<sup>36</sup> In October 2001, the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration awarded a grant to Identity, Inc. to conduct a review of "the nature and needs of Latino youth in Montgomery County, regarding substance abuse and HIV prevention."

<sup>37</sup> Identity held two focus groups with 24 Latino youth in Gaithersburg and Silver Spring; two focus group sessions with an Upcounty Parents' Support Group that includes MCPS ESOL staff, school outreach specialists, DHHS employees, parent volunteers, and staff of religious organizations; and a focus group with eight Latino parents.

Fifty-four different school PTAs responded to the survey. Responses related to best practices for limited English proficient parents included:

- Hold an ESOL back-to-school-night for parents with translators/interpreters;
- Link bilingual parents with LEP parents to act as liaisons to the school system;
- Translate PTA materials (e.g., newsletters) into languages other than English;
- Appoint a bilingual PTA liaison to coordinate with community groups; and
- Convene an English conversation group that regularly meets at a local school and also discusses upcoming school events.

#### **5. Community Forums, Montgomery County Board of Education, 2004**

In the fall of 2004, the Board of Education held a number of community forums to seek input on MCPS' performance. Each forum focused on specific goals and initiatives from the Board of Education's strategic plan. The three primary questions MCPS posed to the community were:

- 1) What strategies and initiatives are on target to achieve the goal?
- 2) What is missing or falling short?
- 3) How can we communicate the goals and objectives of the strategic plan more effectively to the community?

As part of this effort, the Board received input specific to ESOL programs/services and outreach efforts to LEP families. The feedback included:

- Continue to train teachers (and paraeducators) to effectively teach ESOL students within the mainstream educational program;
- Add language accommodations for LEP parents;
- Commit to ESOL and multiculturalism, and limit exclusion of non-English speaking families;
- Use various language and ethnic media to inform parents about the school system;
- Translate school documents into various major languages; and
- Provide interpreters at meetings.

## **CHAPTER VII: Feedback from the School Community**

As part of this study, OLO solicited feedback from various members of the school community on how effectively MCPS communicates with LEP persons. This chapter summarizes the common views expressed by those interviewed.

The chapter is organized as follows:

- **Part A** lists the various members of the school community interviewed;
- **Part B** summarizes the common themes identified across OLO's interviews; and
- **Part C** lists the specific recommendations for improvement suggested by those interviewed.

### **A. Methodology**

Staff from MCPS' Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs and the Division of Family and Community Partnerships assisted OLO in selecting the majority of interviewees. Staff from these divisions connected OLO with various groups of MCPS staff and LEP parents. OLO also selected individuals recommended by other interviewees.

OLO notes that while the information compiled in this chapter adds value to a discussion of MCPS' efforts to serve LEP persons, the individuals and groups interviewed were not randomly selected and the information presented may not represent the views of the entire school community.

**MCPS Staff.** OLO interviewed staff from the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs (including Division Administration, Parent Center and Parent Outreach staff, ESOL Counselors, and ESOL Teachers); Community Superintendents; Directors of School Performance; staff from the Division of Family and Community Partnerships; the Latino Outreach Coordinator at Eastern Middle School; the principal and instructional staff from Kemp Mill Elementary School; and the Montgomery County Education Association (MCEA) ESOL Joint Liaison Committee.<sup>38</sup>

**MCPS LEP Parents.** OLO spoke with approximately 30 Latino parents at a meeting of *Conquista Tus Sueños*,<sup>39</sup> and 17 Latino parents participating in the *Computer Access for Everyone* program, held at Seneca Valley High School.

**Community Members/Organizations.** To solicit feedback from the greater community, OLO spoke with representatives from various community members/organizations. OLO selected organizations based on recommendations from MCPS staff members and recommendations from MCPS parents. OLO also selected some organizations that

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<sup>38</sup> The MCEA/ESOL Joint Liaison Committee is a collaborative problem solving team comprised of MCPS and MCEA staff involved with ESOL programs.

<sup>39</sup> *Conquista Tus Sueños* (Realize Your Dreams) is a Spanish language program aimed at empowering the MCPS Latino parent community. The program is held at the Long Branch Community Center.

represent residents of the County's linguistic/ethnic minority communities. OLO interviewed representatives from the following organizations:

- ESOL Bilingual Advisory Committee;
- Montgomery Blair High School PTA;
- Takoma Park Middle School PTA;
- Takoma Park Elementary School PTA;
- Asian American Education Association;
- Chinese American Parents and Students Association; and
- Maryland Vietnamese Mutual Association

**Interview Questions.** OLO asked interviewees questions in three areas:

- General observations about how well MCPS is positioned to provide services to individuals who are of limited English proficiency;
- Personal observations or experiences that illustrate either a positive or negative example of an LEP person's experience with accessing MCPS services; and
- Suggestions for improving how MCPS provides LEP persons with access to services.

## **B. Common Themes**

This section summarizes the common themes from OLO's interviews. A complete list of comments and observations made by the various school community members is available in the Appendix at ©21.

Many interviewees shared anecdotes about an LEP person's positive experience with accessing MCPS services, especially noting services provided by staff from the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs. While indicating opportunities for improvement, in most cases, the interviewees describe MCPS staff as accommodating, polite, and extremely committed to providing services to LEP families.

### **1. Parent Outreach staff and ESOL Student Counselors communicate effectively with LEP families.**

A consensus among those interviewed is that many LEP families find the education system overwhelming and confusing, and rely on Parent Outreach staff and ESOL counselors to help them navigate the system. The LEP families are grateful for the services provided by outreach staff and counselors.

Since most of the Parent Outreach staff are multilingual, LEP parents rely on them for both school and non-school matters. Specifically, LEP families contact Parent Outreach staff to assist with:

- Interpreting/translating school correspondence and student progress reports;
- Linking parents to various social and community services; and
- General parenting guidance.

Almost all MCPS staff interviewed report that at schools without ready access to ESOL outreach staff and counselors, other MCPS staff (e.g., administrative staff and other non-instructional staff) spend time performing the above tasks, taking them away from regular duties. Several ESOL teachers report spending many hours each week after school contacting LEP parents on behalf of non-ESOL teachers. In addition, the ESOL counselors interviewed state that, due to high workloads, that they rarely have the time to provide “preventive” counseling services that may help ESOL students avoid crises.

## **2. Generally, MCPS performs better providing interpretation and translation services for planned events than for unplanned events.**

Almost all interviewees report that MCPS is successful communicating with LEP persons at planned events when school staff know speakers of other languages will be present (e.g., back-to-school nights, parent-teacher conferences). School staff coordinate with the Division of ESOL/Bilingual programs to arrange for interpreters for planned events. The majority of parents and staff interviewed expressed general satisfaction at the competency of the interpreters provided by the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs.

However, some interviewees report that the interpreters often have difficulties interpreting “education-lingo.” In addition, school-based staff report that at certain times of the year it may be difficult to obtain interpreters through the Division of ESOL because the demand is so high across the school system (e.g., on days set aside for parent-teacher conferences). In such instances, staff report contacting various volunteer community members/groups to ensure the presence of an interpreter.

Interviewees provide mixed feedback on MCPS’ ability to communicate with LEP persons at unplanned events, e.g., unscheduled school visits by an LEP parent or an emergency phone call to/from an LEP parent. For emergency or unplanned interpretation, schools rely on any multilingual staff available, the Language Line, ESOL Parent Center and Parent Outreach staff, and/or family members and friends. Long delays may occur if:

- Multilingual staff are unable to leave their regular duties and assist;
- School staff are not multilingual or do not speak the language of the person;
- School staff are unaware of the Language Line or how to use it; and
- ESOL Parent Outreach staff are not on-site at the time of the interaction.

In addition, both staff and parents report that LEP persons appreciate receiving school materials in their native language and at the same time as English speakers receive material. When material is not translated, staff report receiving phone calls about the material and parents report relying on children and other family members to translate.

Parents interviewed report that multilingual materials help LEP parents:

- Make decisions on what activities their children should participate-in;
- Gain greater understanding of MCPS services and programs; and
- Feel part of the school community.

One staff member reported that when his school started sending report cards home in the parent's native language, he "saw LEP parents taking an active interest in their children's education." However, the same staff member warned that translated "education-lingo" confuses some LEP parents.

MCPS staff report attempts to increase translated material sent home to parents. All staff view the proposed Translation Services Unit in the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs as a positive step that will allow for more "pro-active" translation.

**3. It is more difficult for LEP parents to access MCPS services if their children are not in ESOL programs.**

Most LEP parents interviewed report satisfaction with ESOL staff and services. LEP parents report enjoying the supportive and nurturing environment provided by ESOL teachers, counselors, and parent outreach specialists. As previously mentioned, many LEP parents rely on ESOL staff for assistance in both school and non-school related matters.

However, staff and parents interviewed agree that the nurturing environment and the ability to access services lessens when their children transition into mainstream classes. One parent interviewed stated that she felt overwhelmed after exiting ESOL because "it was now more difficult to access services." LEP parents and ESOL staff interviewed report that parents continue to rely on and use their ESOL contacts for assistance even when their children no longer receive ESOL services. While the ESOL staff attempt to assist all MCPS families who contact them for assistance, they have an ever increasing workload of new ESOL families coming into the system.

Additionally, interviewees report that many more MCPS students than are enrolled in ESOL have LEP parents or guardians. For those parents, ESOL services are not available.

**4. The services and communication strategies offered by MCPS to LEP families vary by school, both in type and intensity.**

A recurring observation of interviewees is that different factors within a school can impact how LEP persons communicate with MCPS. The feedback on this topic generally falls into three categories:



- **The principal of a school plays an important role in setting the tone of how the school communicates with LEP families.** A common observation from MCPS staff and MCPS parents is that the principal is a vital component in how an individual school structures its communication with LEP families. This tone setting is important to make parents feel welcome and needed, and more comfortable interacting within the school environment.

Several LEP parents report instances of feeling unwelcome and frustrated because of communication barriers. One parent reports feeling so frustrated by the system that she “never wanted to ever go back.” Another interviewee remarked “How can I help my children, if I don’t understand what the school is telling me?”

Principals and administrators who have the ability to “relate” to English language learners and understand the cultures of the non-native English speakers in their school create an atmosphere that is more conducive to effective communication. Staff, parents, and community members report that principals who make effective communication a priority create a trickle-down effect that leads to a greater ability for LEP parents to access MCPS services.

- **Resources of a school impact the ability to provide services to LEP families.** MCPS staff interviewed report that the type of language assistance services available to LEP parents depends on both the budget and personnel resources of a school.

Schools with more resources generally offer either more services or a higher level of services. For example, the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs maintains a list of “Priority Schools” (schools with a large number of ESOL students at a beginning level of English language proficiency). Priority Schools receive dedicated hours of service from ESOL parent outreach specialists and ESOL counselors each week. Other programs or school characteristics cited by interviewees as giving schools a greater capacity to provide language assistance services include:

- Linkages to Learning;
- Title 1 schools;
- METS program; and
- Bilingual personnel.

It is important to note that the interviewees do not believe that resources are misaligned; the schools that have these additional resources truly need them. Most interviewees cite that other schools could also benefit from similar resource levels.

- **Many schools develop programs/initiatives based on unique circumstances and experiences.** Many schools, in conjunction with Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs staff, continually look for ways to improve communication with LEP members of their school community. Schools also attempt to tailor their efforts to the specific language communities at their school.

According to MCPS staff, some school-based programs or initiatives may work well systemwide, while others may not be an effective strategy in another school. However, no formal mechanism exists to evaluate these programs/initiatives and determine which should be expanded to other schools. Some examples of school-based initiatives include:

- Kemp Mill Elementary School developed a bilingual DVD (in English and Spanish) entitled “A Day at Kemp Mill Elementary School.” The DVD, a copy of which is given to each family, goes through a typical day at the school and provides parents an idea of what to expect at school.
- Kemp Mill Elementary School also found that many of its LEP families live in apartment buildings not within walkable distance to the school, which they found limited parental involvement. To help address this issue, school staff began holding meetings at community locations in native languages (primarily Spanish) to help increase parent understanding and involvement.
- Eastern Middle School began a pilot project in FY 05 that created a position of Latino Outreach Coordinator at the school. The school administration wanted to improve communication with and increase involvement of the school’s Latino community. School staff and the PTA came up with the idea of an outreach coordinator to act as a liaison between the school and the community, and the Board of Education approved the initiative as a pilot project for FY 05. LEP parents and other community members OLO spoke with report a high level of satisfaction with this program.
- Eastern Middle School also relies on a Parent Telephone Tree to help communicate with LEP families. School administrators coordinate with 13 bilingual parent volunteers to phone and notify families on the details of school events (e.g., the annual science fair). School administrators report that the system is a cost effective method of reaching out to the school’s LEP community.

#### **5. English classes for LEP adults are important for communicating with parents.**

Almost all interviewees agree that many LEP parents are reluctant to contact MCPS due to their lack of confidence in speaking English. LEP persons may be embarrassed by their inability to speak English well and hesitant to place themselves in a situation where their language skills are apparent to others.

OLO’s interviews indicate that many LEP parents desire to learn English, but become discouraged at the long wait lists for the Adult ESOL classes now provided through Montgomery College. Many parents also work more than one job with inflexible

schedules and find it difficult to attend regular English classes.<sup>40</sup> MCPS staff and parents interviewed cite that the provision of Adult English language instruction -- offered during the school day as well as in the evening -- should be a County-wide top priority.

### **C. Suggestions for Improvement**

OLO received multiple suggestions from various stakeholders on how MCPS could reduce language barriers and improve the ease in which LEP persons access MCPS services. Some of the recurring suggestions for improvement echo those identified in the local research summarized in Chapter VI. This section lists five recurring suggestions for improvement.

- **Increase the availability of multilingual ESOL counselors and parent outreach staff to assist parents.** Perhaps the most consistently offered improvement suggestion concerned increasing the availability of parent outreach staff and ESOL counselors. Many staff, parents, and community members expressed an ideal of one parent outreach specialist and one ESOL counselor and at every school.
- **Hire more multilingual employees.** Almost every interviewee agreed that multilingual staff is the preferred solution to eliminating language barriers for LEP persons. The greatest advantage of multilingual employees is that communication with the LEP person occurs directly, and is more personal than other language assistance tools. A number of interviewees also commented that to be most effective, multilingual employees should also be “culturally competent.” This means that the interpreter should be familiar with both the language and the culture of the LEP person.
- **Promote the use of Language Line.** MCPS holds a contract with Language Line Services to provide over-the-phone interpretation from English to more than 150 other languages. OLO interviews indicate that not all school-based staff members are aware that they may access Language Line Services to communicate with LEP persons and/or are not sure how to use it. Staff report that they would use the Language Line if they knew it was available and/or knew how to use it. Some LEP persons perceive the use of telephone interpretation services as impersonal, others acknowledge it as “better than nothing” and the “only option” in some situations.
- **Send documents home from school in English and other languages.** All interviewees strongly support the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Program’s new Translation Services Unit, and feel that it will help achieve this improvement suggestion (see page 30 for details). Interviewees report that LEP persons appreciate receiving school materials in their native language. Additionally, they appreciate receiving it at the same time as English speakers receive material because it indicates that they are equally important despite their lack of English speaking skills.

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<sup>40</sup> This feedback mirrors some of the issues identified in the Council’s March 2004 *Adult ESL Task Force Findings & Recommendations* report, which identified a blueprint/strategic action plan for expanding the quantity and ensuring the quality of Adult ESL service delivery in Montgomery County.

- **Increase the availability of Linkages to Learning.** Linkages to Learning offers prevention and early intervention services to students and their immediate families at 23 school-based sites. Staff who had a Linkages site at their school and LEP parents who had utilized Linkages services report that it is an “invaluable” program. Both staff and parents recommend expanding Linkages whenever the opportunity arises.

## CHAPTER VIII: FINDINGS

This chapter presents the Office of Legislative Oversight's findings, organized to parallel the sequence of chapters in this report.

### LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

**Finding #1: Under federal law, MCPS must provide limited English proficient (LEP) students equal access to educational services and parents with opportunities to be involved in the education of their children.**

Four federal laws, two court cases, and State of Maryland regulations create the legal framework for the provision of school-related services to LEP students and parents. The table below summarizes the legal framework.

<b>Federal Laws</b>	
Title VI of the Civil Rights Act	Prohibits recipients of federal funds from discrimination based on race, color, or national origin. The application of Title VI extends to providing equal access to education for individuals who are limited English proficient.
Equal Educational Opportunity Act	Requires that state and local education agencies take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by its students in its instructional programs.
No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)	Title III of NCLB holds States accountable for LEP students' academic progress and English attainment and meeting adequate yearly progress requirements, and details parental notification and outreach requirements.
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	IDEA establishes federal mandates for the delivery of special education and other related services to students with disabilities. School districts must ensure that students are not classified as having a disability due to their English proficiency status.
<b>Court Cases</b>	
Lau vs. Nichols, 1973	This case established the precedent that in order to provide equal access to educational opportunities, English must be taught to students who do not speak English or who are limited English proficient.
Castaneda vs. Pickard, 1981	This case established a standard that programs for LEP students must be based on sound educational theory, must be implemented with appropriate resources and personnel, and must show positive results to be considered an appropriate action to overcome language barriers.
<b>State of Maryland Regulations (Title 13A – State Board of Education)</b>	
COMAR 13A.05.07	Establishes guidelines for the provision of services to LEP students in Maryland, State funding formulas, and reporting requirements; and establishes broad program criteria that local school districts must include as part of their LEP program (including parent and community involvement).

**Finding #2: Four Montgomery County Board of Education policies and one MCPS regulation address the provision of educational and associated services to limited English proficient students and their parents.**

One Montgomery County Board of Education (BOE) policy and a related MCPS regulation deal exclusively with limited English proficient students and their parents.

- **Policy IOD – *Education of English Language Learners*:** This policy outlines MCPS' commitment to providing equal educational opportunities for LEP students in MCPS. Policy IOD also requires support programs (e.g., counseling, parent outreach, and bilingual assessments) to help eliminate barriers that may prevent LEP persons from participating in educational programs.
- **Regulation IOD-RA – *Placement for Limited English Proficient Students*:** This regulation implements Policy IOD by establishing procedures and mechanisms for instructional and support programs for LEP students.

Three other Board of Education policies address the delivery of services to LEP persons within the context of serving MCPS' entire student and parent population. These are:

- **Policy ABC – *Parental Involvement*:** This policy calls for Board and school staff to work with PTAs, other parent organizations, and parent outreach personnel to ensure parental input from a broad range of culturally and linguistically diverse groups. It also requires the use of interpretation and translation services,<sup>41</sup> whenever feasible.
- **Policy ABA – *Community Involvement* and Policy AEB – *Strategic Planning for Continuous Improvement*:** These policies both state that the Board of Education and school-based staff shall seek the views and participation of culturally, linguistically, socio-economically, racially, and ethnically diverse stakeholders when conducting strategic planning or policy/program reviews with the community.

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<sup>41</sup> Interpretation is the act of listening to something in one language and orally translating it into another language. Translation is the replacement of written text from one language into an equivalent written text in another language.

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS**

In this section, the terms ESOL and LEP are used interchangeably. MCPS enrolls students assessed as limited English proficient (LEP) into the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program. Because of how students are enrolled into the program, the ESOL student data collected by MCPS represents data on the school system's LEP student population.

**Finding #3: In FY 05, 13,025 LEP students are enrolled in MCPS' English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program. MCPS' ESOL enrollment increased 83% between FY 95 and FY 05.**

MCPS' 13,025 ESOL students represent 9% of MCPS' total enrollment. Additionally, according to Maryland State Department of Education data, MCPS ESOL enrollment represents 44% of total Maryland ESOL enrollment. Over the past decade (FY 95 to FY 05), MCPS' ESOL enrollment increased 83%, from 7,135 to 13,025 students. MCPS' non-ESOL enrollment increased 16% over the same ten year period, from 109,947 to 127,467 students.

**Finding #4: MCPS' ESOL students were born in 161 different countries and speak 144 different languages. 41% of ESOL students were born in the United States. Additionally, 57% of ESOL students speak Spanish.**

69% of MCPS' ESOL students were born in 10 different countries, while the remaining 31% were born in 151 different countries. 143 nationalities are each represented by fewer than one percent of ESOL students. The table below shows that more ESOL students were born in the United States than any other single country.

**MCPS ESOL STUDENTS' COUNTRY OF ORIGIN**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Number and % of ESOL Students</b>	
<i>UNITED STATES</i>	5,279	40.5%
<i>EL SALVADOR</i>	1,362	10.5%
<i>PERU</i>	481	3.7%
<i>SOUTH KOREA</i>	370	2.8%
<i>ETHIOPIA</i>	324	2.5%
<i>MEXICO</i>	297	2.3%
<i>CHINA</i>	287	2.2%
<i>HONDURAS</i>	221	1.7%
<i>JAPAN</i>	180	1.4%
<i>COLOMBIA</i>	178	1.4%
<i>ALL OTHER</i>	4,046	31.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,025</b>	<b>100%</b>

MCPS' ESOL students cumulatively speak 144 different languages as their primary language. 129 of the languages are each spoken by fewer than 1% of MCPS' ESOL students. The table below shows that 57% speak Spanish as their primary language, and no single language other than Spanish is spoken by more than 5% of the students.

**MCPS ESOL STUDENTS' PRIMARY LANGUAGE**

<b>Language</b>	<b>Number and % of ESOL Students</b>	
<i>SPANISH</i>	7,387	56.7%
<i>FRENCH</i>	629	4.8%
<i>KOREAN</i>	464	3.6%
<i>ENGLISH</i> <sup>42</sup>	445	3.4%
<i>VIETNAMESE</i>	440	3.4%
<i>CANTONESE</i>	432	3.3%
<i>AMHARIC</i>	383	2.9%
<i>MANDARIN</i>	243	1.9%
<i>HINDI/URDU</i>	219	1.7%
<i>PORTUGUESE</i>	208	1.6%
<i>ALL OTHER</i>	2,175	16.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,025</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Finding #5: The number of ESOL students varies by high school cluster. One-third of ESOL students attend school in the Downcounty consortium.**

The number of ESOL students enrolled in each high school cluster varies, ranging from 22 students in the Poolesville cluster to 1,595 students in the Montgomery Blair cluster.

The high school clusters that make up the Downcounty consortium (Montgomery Blair, Wheaton, Einstein, Kennedy, and Northwood) enroll 20% of MCPS' total students but 35% of MCPS' ESOL population.

**Finding #6: MCPS' LEP students have a higher FARMS rate and a higher mobility rate than non-LEP students.**

Students are eligible to receive Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS) based on household size and income. For example, a family of four must earn less than \$34,873 annually for the student to receive FARMS.<sup>43</sup> In FY 05, MCPS data indicate that the percent of ESOL students eligible to receive FARMS (54%) is more than double the percent of non-ESOL students eligible to receive FARMS (20%).

Student mobility rates refer to the number of entries and withdrawals within a school system against the school system's average daily attendance. Research indicates three

<sup>42</sup> MCPS lists English as the native language spoken by 445 ESOL students. According to MCPS staff, these English speaking ESOL students generally come from other countries that speak varieties of the English language (e.g., Liberian English), but require additional instruction to improve their proficiency in Standard American English.

<sup>43</sup> MCPS website, <http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/foodserv/farms/guidelines.shtm>



factors that contribute to high rates of mobility include low family income, high population density, and low rates of home ownership.<sup>44</sup>

Each year, the State of Maryland Department of Education (MSDE) publishes student mobility data for each school district. MSDE breaks out the mobility data for subsets of each school district's students, including LEP students and non-LEP students.<sup>45</sup> MSDE data show that the FY 04 mobility rate for LEP students (30%) is over double the mobility rate of non-LEP students (14%).

### **MCPS PROGRAMS – ASSISTANCE TO LEP PERSONS**

MCPS utilizes four primary language assistance strategies, described below, that help LEP persons in accessing MCPS programs and services. Findings #7-#12 detail the funding, structure, and use associated with these strategies.

- **ESOL instructional and student support services** including separate ESOL curriculum and instructional models for students at all grade levels, bilingual student counseling, and bilingual student educational assessments.
- **Multilingual parent outreach programs** intended to help LEP parents become aware of MCPS and other community services available for themselves and their children.
- **Interpretation and translation services** based on requests from individual school personnel or parents.
- **Telephone language assistance services** that either provide over the phone interpretation, connect callers with the appropriate bilingual personnel, or can provide pre-recorded messages in a parent's primary language.

#### **Finding #7: Approximately 2% of MCPS' total FY 06 budget funds programs and services for limited English proficient students and parents.**

In FY 06, MCPS will spend more than \$40 million on services and programs for limited English proficient students and parents. The majority of the funding is for ESOL student instruction. This \$40 million total represents ESOL personnel costs (\$39 million), ESOL operating costs (\$1 million), and other known operating costs for programs serving LEP persons (<\$1 million).

It does not include personnel costs of non-ESOL staff who spend time on LEP student or parent issues. Estimating these other costs is not possible because, except for ESOL programs, MCPS does not track the percent of staff time and operational dollars spent on LEP versus non-LEP issues.

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<sup>44</sup> Skandera, Hannah and Richard Sousa, 2002. Mobility and the Achievement Gap, *Hoover Digest*, Issue 3 (Summer). <http://www.hooverdigest.org/023/skandera.html>

<sup>45</sup> 2004 Maryland Report Card, Montgomery County [http://msp.msde.state.md.us/mobil\\_specserv.asp?K=15AAAA](http://msp.msde.state.md.us/mobil_specserv.asp?K=15AAAA)

**Finding #8: MCPS' Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs provides English language instruction to LEP students as well as multiple supportive services to LEP students and their parents.**

MCPS' Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs (located within the Office of Curriculum and Instruction, Department of Instructional Programs) has four teams that provide multilingual supportive services to assist LEP students and parents access MCPS services. The table below summarizes the number of positions and languages (other than English) spoken by each team, followed by an overview of each team's services.

<b>Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs Teams</b>	<b>Positions</b>	<b>Number and Type of Languages Spoken (other than English)</b>	
Bilingual Counseling Team	15.2 FTEs	12	Spanish, Galician, Portuguese, Korean, Cambodian, Hebrew, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin, Taiwanese, Hindi, French
Parent Center Team	6 FTEs	11	Spanish, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Russian, Mandarin, Shanghainese, Cambodian, French, Lingala, Swahili
Parent Outreach Services Team	16 FTEs	7	Spanish, French, Chinese, Galician, Portuguese, Korean, Vietnamese
Bilingual Assessment Team	16 FTEs	7	Spanish, French, Portuguese, Russian, Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese

**Bilingual Counseling Team.** ESOL bilingual counselors serve individual ESOL students and assist the greater school community to support ESOL students. Examples of services provided include holding individual and group counseling sessions with ESOL students, providing crisis intervention in incidents involving ESOL students, and increasing school staff awareness of ESOL related issues. ESOL "priority schools" – schools with a large number of ESOL students at a beginning level of English language proficiency listed in Chapter IV – each receive regularly scheduled counseling services totaling at least 3-8 hours per week. Other schools receive services on a referral basis, as needed, through submitting a formal request to the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs.

**ESOL Parent Center Team.** Parent Center staff – working out of the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs administrative offices – provide orientation services to parents of newly arrived international students, provide general information and assistance to ESOL parents throughout the school year, and coordinate and arrange interpretation and translation services for the entire school system.

**ESOL Parent Outreach Services Team.** Parent Outreach staff – providing itinerant services to individual schools – provide a variety of services to parents of ESOL students depending on the needs at each school. Services include: providing information about school services and resources; connecting parents to social services programs provided by other governmental agencies; and conducting workshops that inform parents of their rights and responsibilities. ESOL "priority schools" – schools with a large number of

ESOL students at a beginning level of English language proficiency listed in Chapter IV – each receive regularly scheduled outreach services totaling at least 3-8 hours per week. Other schools receive services on a referral basis, as needed, through submitting a formal request to the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs.

**Bilingual Assessment Team.** The Bilingual Assessment Team assesses ESOL students suspected of having a disability that may qualify a student for special education services. The Team's primary focus is to prevent inappropriate placement of LEP students in special education programs when the cause of their difficulties is language proficiency and not a disability as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

**Finding #9: In FY 05, the ESOL Parent Center facilitated 4,000 interpretations in 47 different languages. 76% of interpretation requests were for Spanish.**

The Parent Center uses a combination of its own staff, paid community members, or other available MCPS staff to provide interpretation services. Parent Center staff report that they fulfill most requests for interpreters, if given sufficient advance notice. According to Center staff, a pool of approximately 300 community members provides the majority of interpretation services. The community interpreters receive a set fee of \$25/hour for their services.

Between July 2004 and February 2005, the ESOL Parent Center arranged 4,000 interpretations in 47 different languages. Over three-fourths of the interpretations (3,016 or 76%) were for Spanish. The next highest number of interpretations were for Vietnamese (259 or 7%).

Data from last fiscal year (FY 04) show that out of 4,700 interpretations coordinated by the Parent Center, 67% were for special education-related meetings (e.g., individualized education program team meetings). The next highest type of activity requiring interpreters was parent-teacher conferences (15%).

**Finding #10: In FY 05, the ESOL Parent Center facilitated over 1,800 document translations in 24 different languages. MCPS staff expects a new Translation Services Unit to increase this number.**

MCPS staff report moving toward translating as many vital documents into multiple languages as possible. School staff interviewed also report an increase in the number of school flyers and other materials sent home in multiple languages, primarily English and Spanish. Many written announcements sent home to parents are printed on both sides with English on one side and Spanish on the other.

MCPS maintains an approved list of vendors who are available to translate written material. In FY 05, MCPS translated 1,800 documents. Approximately one-third of the translations were for Spanish (606 or 34%). Other most requested languages for translation were Korean (376 or 21%), Chinese (235 or 13%), and Vietnamese (195 or 11%).

**Translation Services Unit.** MCPS' FY 06 Operating Budget includes the creation of a Translation Services Unit within the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs as part of a three-year plan. According to MCPS staff, the proposed Unit should enhance MCPS' capacity to produce translation of documents and other school materials in any language.

MCPS proposes forming the Unit "over a three-year period to build capacity for the school system to provide high quality translation services in print, television, and web." MCPS also reports that the Unit will "employ the latest technologies in translation software and hardware to enable the school system to provide information of the same quality provided to our English speaking community."<sup>46</sup>

MCPS' FY 06 Operating Budget includes one position plus operating expenses for the first year of the Unit. The total FY 06 cost is \$152,000.

**Finding #11: Other MPCPS Divisions and Offices serve LEP persons within the broader context of their assigned functions.**

Outside of the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs, OLO identified other MCPS offices and divisions that assist LEP persons in accessing MCPS services. These offices and divisions either manage an MCPS language assistance service, dedicate programs towards LEP parents or students, or train MCPS staff in multicultural topics.

**Division of Family Community Partnerships (DFCP).** DFPCP (located under MCPS' Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs, Department of Instructional Programs) operates one of MCPS' telephone language assistance services, the MPCPS Call Center, in collaboration with an outside contractor. The Call Center is a telephone resource line staffed by bilingual (English and Spanish) personnel for individuals to call with any general questions about MCPS. In addition, as part of its community outreach responsibilities, the Division directs activities that specifically target or impact limited English proficient persons, including:

- Informing and receiving input from a variety of community groups on new or proposed MCPS policies and programs;
- Publishing a quarterly parent newsletter in five languages other than English; and
- Assisting schools with planning and coordinating meetings, events, or programs for LEP parents.

**International Student Admissions Office.** Staff from the International Student Admissions Office (ISAO) enroll international students, foreign students, and US citizen students coming from foreign schools into MCPS. ISAO staff often refer LEP students and/or parents to the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs.

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<sup>46</sup> According to a written description of the Translation Services Unit provided to OLO by the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs.

**Office of Special Education and Student Services.** The Office of Special Education and Student Services manages and funds a telephone language assistance contract with Language Line Services (described in Finding #12).

**Office of Organizational Development.** MCPS' Office of Organizational Development manages MCPS' staff development and training initiatives, including three training classes on serving LEP students and families: *Education that is Multicultural*; *Ethnic Groups in American Society*; and *Teaching the ESOL Student*.

**Office of Strategic Technologies and Accountability.** The Business Systems Team within this office administers a telephone notification service called Connect-Ed. Connect-ED is a computerized message system that allows schools to send pre-recorded information to the school community via telephone. MCPS staff report that Connect-Ed can facilitate schools sending recorded messages to parents in multiple languages.

**Finding #12: In FY 05, MCPS staff utilized the Language Line 4,000 times to interpret at least 30 languages. 80% of MCPS' calls to the Language Line were for Spanish interpretation.**

MCPS contracts with Language Line Services to provide over-the-phone interpretation from English to more than 150 other languages, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. County Government also holds a contract for this same service for use by the Police Department, Fire and Rescue Services, and Department to Health and Human Services. The Language Line is available to all MCPS employees to supplement (not take the place of) the interpretation services available through the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs. Use of the Language Line costs a flat rate of \$1.60 per minute, regardless of language requested.

As of April 30, 2005, MCPS staff called the Language Line 4,000 times to interpret over 30 languages at a cost of \$47K. MCPS and Language Line Services records indicate that 80% (3,132) of calls placed to the language line were for Spanish interpreters. Following Spanish, the most frequently requested languages were: Vietnamese (203 calls or 5%) and Korean (105 calls or 3%).

## LOCAL RESEARCH

**Finding #13: Local research provides several common themes and suggestions for improving how MCPS communicates with LEP students and parents.**

OLO identified a total of five different studies, forums, and surveys completed during the past three years that directly or indirectly address how MCPS can more effectively communicate with LEP students and parents. The specific local research reviewed by OLO is listed on page 40 in Chapter VI.

Several common themes emerge from the local research, including:

- Language barriers and work commitments limit parent involvement in their children's education, as well as school programs and events;
- LEP parents wish to learn English; and
- Some schools communicate effectively with their LEP community, while others struggle to overcome language barriers.

Common suggestions for improvement were that MCPS should:

- Hold school meetings in languages other than English or use interpreters at school events;
- Use various ethnic and multicultural media to inform parents about the school system; and
- Provide written communications in languages other than English.

Another common suggestion found is that the County should offer English classes during the school day as well as in the evening.

### **FEEDBACK FROM THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY**

As part of this study, OLO solicited feedback from various members of the school community on how effectively MCPS communicates with LEP persons. OLO interviewed multiple MCPS staff, LEP parents, and other community members interested in MCPS ESOL issues. Findings #14 and #15 summarize the school community's feedback.

#### **Finding #14: Interviews with school community members provide five themes on MCPS' effectiveness of communicating with LEP persons.**

While members of the school community identified several opportunities for improvement, many also expressed satisfaction with several MCPS services -- especially the support services provided by multilingual staff from the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs. Five recurring themes from OLO's interviews include:

- **Parent Outreach staff and ESOL Student Counselors communicate effectively with LEP families.** Many LEP families find the education system overwhelming and confusing, and rely on parent outreach staff and ESOL counselors to help them navigate the system. LEP families contact these staff to assist with: interpreting/translating school material and student progress reports; linking them to various social and community programs; and general parental/family counseling and guidance.

- **Generally, MCPS performs better providing interpretation and translation services for planned events than for unplanned events.** Almost all interviewees report that MCPS successfully communicates with LEP persons at planned school meeting/events (e.g., back-to-school nights and parent-teacher conferences). For unplanned events (e.g., unscheduled school visits by an LEP parent, an emergency phone call to/from an LEP parent), schools rely on any multilingual staff available, the Language Line, and/or family members or friends. Long delays may occur if: multilingual staff are unable to leave their regular duties and assist; school staff are not multilingual or do not speak the language of the person; and/or school staff are unaware of the Language Line or how to use it.
- **It is more difficult for LEP parents to access MCPS services if their children are not in ESOL programs.** Most LEP parents interviewed report being satisfied with ESOL staff and services, and appreciate the supportive and nurturing environment provided by ESOL teachers, counselors, and parent outreach specialists. However, staff and parents interviewed agree that the nurturing environment and the ability to access services lessens when their children transition into mainstream classes.
- **The services and communication strategies offered by MCPS to LEP families vary by school, both in type and intensity.** The interviewees report that different factors within a school can impact how LEP persons communicate with MCPS. The feedback on this topic generally falls into three categories:
  - The principal of a school plays an important role in setting the tone of how the school communicates with LEP families;
  - Resources of a school impact the ability to provide services to LEP families; and
  - Many schools develop individual programs/initiatives based on unique circumstances and experiences.
- **English classes for LEP adults are important for communicating with parents.** Almost all interviewees agree that many LEP parents are reluctant to contact MCPS due to their lack of confidence in speaking English. MCPS staff, parents, and community members interviewed state that the provision of Adult English language instruction – offered during the school day as well as in the evening – should be a County-wide top priority.

**Finding #15: School community members interviewed offered five recurring suggestions for improving how MCPS communicates with LEP persons.**

OLO received multiple suggestions from various stakeholders on how MCPS could reduce language barriers and improve the ease in which LEP persons access MCPS services. Some of the recurring suggestions for improvement echo those identified in the local research summarized by Finding #13. The improvement suggestions are:

- **Increase the availability of multilingual ESOL counselors and parent outreach staff to assist parents** – Perhaps the most consistently offered improvement suggestion concerned increasing the availability of parent outreach staff and ESOL counselors. Many staff, parents, and community members expressed an ideal of one parent outreach specialist and one ESOL counselor at every school.
- **Hire more multilingual employees** – Almost every interviewee agreed that this is a preferred solution to eliminating language barriers for LEP persons.
- **Promote the use of Language Line** – MCPS staff indicate that not all school-based staff members are aware that they may access the Language Line to communicate with LEP persons and/or are not sure how to use it. Staff report that they would use the Language Line if they knew it was available and they knew how to use it.
- **Send documents home from school in English and other languages** – Interviewees report appreciating receiving school materials in their native language. All interviewees strongly support the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Program’s new Translation Services Unit.
- **Increase the availability of Linkages to Learning** – Linkages to Learning offers prevention and early intervention services to students and their immediate families at 23 school-based sites. Staff who had a Linkages site at their school and LEP parents who had utilized Linkages services report that it is an “invaluable” program. Both staff and parents recommend expanding Linkages whenever the opportunity arises.



## **CHAPTER IX: RECOMMENDATIONS**

Under federal and State law, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) must provide limited English proficient (LEP) students equal access to educational services. As part of meeting this requirement, MCPS must also provide opportunities for parents to be involved in the education of their children. MCPS has a long-standing commitment to meeting these obligations and provides a variety of programs and services targeted toward LEP students and parents.

The purpose of this study by the Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) was to examine the various programs and services that MCPS provides to assist LEP students and parents access MCPS services. OLO's review focused on the ways that MCPS staff communicate with and otherwise support LEP parents and other LEP members of the school community. Evaluating MCPS' English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) curriculum and other classroom-based activities was beyond the scope of OLO's assignment.

Feedback from LEP parents and community members indicates satisfaction with many of the programs and services MCPS provides for LEP students and parents. However, the feedback also points to opportunities for improving how MCPS staff communicate with parents who are limited English proficient.

The package of recommendations presented in this chapter aim to improve MCPS' communication and supportive services for LEP parents. In sum, OLO recommends that the Council request that the Superintendent of Schools:

- Develop a written MCPS policy that establishes greater consistency across the school system in the use of language assistance services;
- In conjunction with the Chief Administrative Officer of County Government, examine the potential cost savings from interagency procurement of language assistance services; and
- Examine the cost and feasibility of implementing a number of specific suggestions for improving how MCPS communicates with LEP parents.

OLO recommends the Council request the Superintendent to report back to the Council by **December 1, 2005** on the status of implementing these recommendations. This schedule will allow for initiatives that require funding to be incorporated into the FY 07 budget process.

**Recommendation #1: Develop a written MCPS policy that establishes greater system-wide awareness and more consistent use of language assistance services.**

The Montgomery County Board of Education has adopted general policies and regulations that affirm MCPS' commitment to educating LEP students, providing LEP persons access to MCPS services, and seeking input from the school system's diverse cultural and linguistic parent community. However, the existing policies do not address availability or routine use of language assistance services by MCPS staff.

In order to provide greater system-wide awareness and more consistent use of language assistance services, OLO recommends that the Council request the Superintendent to establish a written MCPS policy that:

- Identifies the language assistance services available, e.g., Language Line, multilingual staff;
- Incorporates existing procedures on the use of the language assistance services for planned events, e.g., PTA meeting, parent-teacher conference;
- Establishes procedures on the use of language assistance services for unplanned events, e.g., an unscheduled school visit by an LEP parent, an emergency phone call to/from an LEP parent;
- Establishes requirements for staff training on when and how to use language assistance services;
- Provides notice to LEP parents about the availability of language assistance services; and
- Establishes a process that tracks the use and reviews the effectiveness of the different language assistance services.

**Recommendation #2: Examine the feasibility and potential cost savings from an interagency procurement of language assistance services.**

In order to take full advantage of potential economies of scale, OLO recommends that the Council ask the Superintendent, in consultation with the County Government's Chief Administrative Officer, to examine the feasibility and potential cost savings from a joint procurement of language assistance services. If such a procurement is deemed beneficial, then consideration should be given to inviting other County and bi-County agencies to participate.

Both County Government and MCPS currently hold a contract with the same telephone interpretation services company, Language Line Services. The service charges a fee per minute of interpretation services provided. OLO recommends that staff from the two agencies explore whether cost savings (e.g., a reduced per minute fee) could be obtained through a joint procurement of telephone interpretation services.

OLO also recommends that the two agencies assess the feasibility of cost savings from a joint procurement of other language assistance services, e.g., contractual services for document translation or in-person interpreters.

**Recommendation #3: Examine the cost and feasibility of implementing specific suggestions for improving how MCPS communicates with LEP parents.**

In the course of conducting this study, OLO identified a number of opportunities for improving how MCPS communicates with LEP parents. OLO recommends that the Council request that the Superintendent examine the feasibility, costs, and benefits to implementing each of the suggested improvements outlined below (A through E). OLO further recommends that the Council ask the Superintendent to determine which improvements can be implemented within existing resources, and to establish a priority order for implementing improvements that will require additional resources.

**A. Increase the availability of multilingual staff, especially in school offices that have frequent contact with LEP parents.**

Increasing the availability of multilingual staff should be an essential component of MCPS' strategy for providing access to LEP parents. A recurring opinion voiced by MCPS staff and parents is that increasing the availability of multilingual staff is the preferred solution to reducing language barriers.

The greatest advantage of multilingual staff is that communication with the LEP person occurs directly and in-person. A number of interviewees commented that to be most effective, multilingual employees should also be "culturally competent," meaning that employees should be familiar with both the language and culture of LEP parents.

Examples of ways to increase the availability of multilingual staff, especially in school offices that have frequent contact with LEP parents, include:

- Assessing the current assignment of multilingual staff to ensure multilingual staff are located where their language skills are most needed;
- Increasing the number of ESOL parent outreach and ESOL counselor positions; and/or
- Recruiting more multilingual school office employees and/or volunteers.

**B. Ensure that all employees who routinely interact with LEP parents have access to and training on the use of telephone interpretation services.**

MCPS subscribes to a telephone interpretation service provided by Language Line Services, commonly referred to as the "Language Line." Language Line provides over-the-phone interpretation from English to more than 150 other languages.

Although senior management interviewed confirmed that all MCPS employees have “permission” to access the Language Line, OLO’s interviews with school-based staff indicate some confusion on this issue. For example, not all MCPS staff who work directly with LEP parents were aware of MCPS’ contract with the Language Line; and some staff who were aware of the Language Line report not knowing the logistics of accessing the service.

While recognizing that use of a telephone interpretation service is not necessarily the preferred or most efficient method of communicating with LEP persons, it is a tool that can be extremely useful in many situations. OLO recommends that MCPS improve system-wide awareness of the Language Line as a language assistance tool available to all employees who have regular contact with the public. In addition, as outlined in Recommendation #1, MCPS’ policy should include procedures that guide employees when it is appropriate to use this service.

**C. All written material intended for parents should be prepared in English and other languages that make sense for each individual school’s parent community.**

A recurring comment offered by those interviewed is that LEP parents appreciate receiving school materials in their native language. Further, there is an interest in receiving the material at the same time as the English-speaking parents. This helps LEP parents, for example, make timely decisions on what activities their children will participate in, gain greater understanding of MCPS’ services and programs, track their children’s academic performance, and feel part of the school community.

OLO recommends that MCPS aim to prepare written materials intended for parents in English and other languages, with specific decisions about which other languages decided at the individual school level. The Division of ESOL/Bilingual Program’s new Translation Services Unit (to be established in FY 06) should make it easier for MCPS to implement this improvement. OLO recommends that staff from the new Translation Services Unit coordinate with individual schools to:

- Identify the written material that should be translated;
- Determine the languages appropriate for translation;
- Facilitate translation in a timely manner; and
- To the extent possible, anticipate and plan ahead for translating material throughout the school year.

**D. Evaluate the strategies used by individual schools to communicate with and involve LEP parents, and take steps to expand use of ones proven successful.**

Many individual schools have developed different strategies for communicating with and involving LEP parents. All MCPS staff and parents interviewed by OLO report that the greater the involvement of LEP parents, the better those parents can assist their children to achieve success in school.

Some of the strategies identified by OLO in the course of conducting this study include:

- Hiring a full-time parent outreach coordinator, e.g., the Latino Outreach Coordinator at Eastern Middle School;
- Holding regular evening meetings with a group of LEP parents;
- Providing interpretation services at regular PTA meetings; and
- Establishing parent telephone trees that communicate information in languages other than English.

OLO recommends that MCPS identify the different strategies being employed by individual schools to reach out to LEP parents, and determine which are most promising for replication at other schools. Over time, MCPS should develop formal mechanisms to track and evaluate the effectiveness of the different efforts.

**E. Improve the process for obtaining feedback from LEP parents on MCPS' LEP-related programs and services.**

OLO recommends that MCPS identify practical methods for receiving regular and on-going feedback from LEP parents on how effectively MCPS communicates with LEP persons. Based on the feedback received, MCPS can adjust the language assistance services or programs to meet the needs of LEP persons. In addition, establishing ongoing mechanisms for obtaining feedback will provide MCPS with the ability to track improvements over time.

Potential approaches to receiving feedback from LEP parents include:

- Incorporate language access questions on existing parent surveys;
- Issue specialized surveys to LEP families that seek feedback on what works well and what needs improvement;
- Conduct specialized outreach forums in languages other than English at times and locations convenient to LEP parents; and/or
- Conduct an intensive survey or case studies at schools that have a large number of LEP parents.

## **CHAPTER X: AGENCY COMMENTS**

The Office of Legislative Oversight circulated a draft of this report to the Superintendent of Schools and relevant MCPS staff. The written comments received on the draft report from the Superintendent are included in their entirety, beginning on the next page.

OLO appreciates the time taken by MCPS staff to review and comment on the draft report. OLO's final report incorporates the technical corrections provided by MCPS staff.



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June 21, 2005

Mr. Scott Brown, Legislative Analyst  
Office of Legislative Oversight  
Montgomery County Council  
Stella B. Werner Council Office Building  
100 Maryland Avenue, Room 509  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Mr. Brown:

This is in response to your June 13, 2005, memorandum regarding the DRAFT Office of Legislative Oversight Report 2005–2006: An Assessment of Language Assistance Services Provided by Montgomery County Public Schools to the School Community. Corrections and suggested changes to be incorporated into the final report are noted below and on the enclosure for your reference.

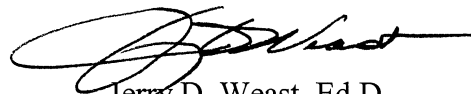
- Page 14: Clarify Table 1 by adding the following note: \*\*\*FY 1995 enrollment was reported to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) in the following grade bands: Grades K–8 and Grades 9–12. Prekindergarten was not yet implemented.
- Page 15: Clarify English speakers who are enrolled in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) by adjusting the last bullet. “Forms” of English should be “varieties of the English language (e.g., Liberian English, British English).” “English as spoken and taught in the United States” should be “Standard American English.”
- Page 19: Clarify the priority schools concept at the end of the first paragraph. Change “...student and parent supportive” to “counseling and parental outreach.”
- Page 22: Clarify ESOL instruction in item 1 by deleting “ESOL instruction is provided as a ‘pull-out’ service, where a student is pulled out from his/her regular classroom to receive ESOL instruction for certain subjects.” While this model is used in some elementary schools, it is by no means the only or the most pervasive model used to deliver ESOL instruction.
- Page 26: Clarify counseling services at the end of the first paragraph by replacing the term “services” with “contacts.” Also, the term “services” in the title of Table 9, as well as in the title of the second column in Table 9 should be replaced with the term “contacts.” (Note that counseling service is defined as the number of contacts made to provide regularly scheduled counseling services, as well as to respond to referrals for counseling services.)
- Page 32: Clarify parent outreach services at the end of the first paragraph by replacing “received between 500 and 1,000 requests” with “made between 500 and 1,000 contacts.”

The term “services” in the title of Table 13, as well as in the title of the second column in Table 13 should be replaced with the term “contacts.” (Note that parent outreach service is defined as the number of contacts made to provide regularly scheduled parent outreach services, as well as to respond to referrals for parent outreach services.)

- Page 35: Clarify the languages used to translate the parent connection newsletter listed in the second bullet by replacing “Cantonese” with “Chinese” and deleting “Amharic.”
- Page 36: Clarify the responsibility of the telephone language assistance contract by deleting “the Office of the Chief Operating Officer” from item 2, as well as from the first paragraph under item 2. Also, the last sentence of this paragraph should read, “The Office of Special Education and Student Services manages and funds the contract.”
- Page 38: Footnote 35 should read, “Staff from the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs provided the Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) with the information used to write the course descriptions.” It was noted that the descriptions were not verbatim repetitions of the information provided to OLO from the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs, but paraphrases of the information.
- Page 57: Clarify the location of ESOL parent outreach staff in the last paragraph by changing “working out of individual schools” to “providing itinerant services to individual schools.” (Note that ESOL parent outreach staff is housed centrally at Rocking Horse Road Center and provides itinerant services to schools. Staff does not work out of individual schools.)
- Page 60: Clarify responsibility for the language line by deleting all references to the “Office of the Chief Operating Officer” from the third paragraph. Also, the last sentence of this paragraph should read, “The Office of Special Education and Student Services manages and funds the contract.”

Please refer any questions to Dr. Karen C. Woodson, director, Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs, at 301-230-0670.

Respectfully,



Jerry D. Weast, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

JDW:ic

Enclosure

Copy to:

Dr. Lacey

Ms. Leleck

Dr. Cohen

Dr. Woodson



# **APPENDIX**

## **OLO REPORT 2005-6**

### **AN ASSESSMENT OF LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE SERVICES PROVIDED BY MCPS TO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Circle Number</b>
MCPS Policies and Regulation	©2
Observations Made by School Community Members	©21

# POLICY

## BOARD OF EDUCATION OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

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**Related Entries:** IOD-RA  
**Responsible Office:** Deputy Superintendent of Schools  
Instruction and Program Development

### Education of English Language Learners

#### A. PURPOSE

To reaffirm the education of English language learners as a high priority for MCPS

To ensure compliance with federal and state mandates regarding the education of English language learners

#### B. ISSUE

Success for Every Student is based on the premise that quality education is a fundamental right of every child. Language should not be a barrier that impedes English language learners in their effort to secure equal educational opportunities in the Montgomery County Public Schools. English language learners have become an increasingly diverse group of students, representing many countries and languages, coming from all socioeconomic levels, and having varied educational and experiential backgrounds. There must be special instructional and support programs to meet the challenges faced by these students, including services such as counseling, parent outreach, and bilingual assessments that will help eliminate barriers that might prevent students from participating fully in educational programs. Instruction should enable students to learn English as quickly as possible while at the same time ensuring that they do not fall behind their grade-level peers in content areas.

#### C. POSITION

1. It is the intent of the Board of Education of the Montgomery County Public Schools to:
  - a) Hold English language learners to the same high expectations of learning established for all students

- b) Assure that English language learners develop full proficiencies in English in the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, consistent with expectations for all students
- c) Assure that English language learners reach challenging content and performance standards in all content areas, including reading and language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, the fine arts, health, and physical education, consistent with those for all students
- d) Provide instruction to English language learners that builds on their previous education and cognitive abilities and that reflects their English language proficiency levels
- e) Evaluate English language learners with appropriate and valid assessments that are aligned with state and local standards and that take into account the language acquisition stages and cultural backgrounds of the students
- f) Recognize that the academic success of English language learners is a responsibility shared by the students, all educators, the family, and the community

2. Definitions

- a) *ESOL - English for Speakers of Other Languages* is a specialized English language instructional program for non-native speakers of English that emphasizes the four language skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- b) *English Language Learners (ELL)* is the term preferred by professionals in the field of second language teaching to describe students whose native language is not English and who have sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language and whose difficulties may deny such individuals the opportunity to learn successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English.
- c) *Transition students* are those who have been exited from the ESOL program for less than one year.
- d) *Limited English Proficient (LEP)* is the official term found in federal and state legislation to describe English language learners.

3. Curriculum

The ESOL curriculum:

- a) Is research based
- b) Incorporates the principles and guidelines set forth in the *ESL Standards for Students PreK-12*
- c) Is based on age-appropriate levels of English language proficiency
- d) Is aligned with the MCPS English/Reading/Language Arts curriculum
- e) Is reflective of the many cultural and linguistic backgrounds represented by ELL students
- f) Is taught using the content, strategies, and thinking processes that students encounter as they pursue an education in MCPS

4. Program

- a) Each school, in collaboration with the Office of Instruction and Program Development and the Office of School Performance, will provide an appropriate, clearly defined and articulated program to respond to the range of needs of English language learners.
- b) Performance of transition students will be monitored by ESOL staff and appropriate accommodations will be provided for a period of one year.
- c) Staff development is an integral component of a quality program. Staff development opportunities will be offered to all staff.

5. Identification and Completion

- a) An English language proficiency assessment will be administered by qualified and trained assessors to all students whose native or primary language is not English at the time they initially enroll in MCPS to identify English language learners and determine their level of English proficiency.

- b) English language learners will be considered English proficient and designated as “transition” students upon meeting the criteria established by Maryland State Guidelines.
- c) Identification and program completion procedures will be evaluated periodically and revised as necessary.

6. ESOL Services

- a) Schools will employ appropriate, relevant, and culturally sensitive approaches to ensure that parents of English language learners are informed about and become involved in their children’s education.
- b) MCPS will provide ESOL counseling to assist English language learners in their new school and community environment.
- c) MCPS will provide assessments that minimize cultural and linguistic biases for English language learners who are suspected of having a disability.

**D. DESIRED OUTCOMES**

- 1. Services of the ESOL program will be offered to all English language learners and will be designed to accommodate diversity in student backgrounds and levels of English language proficiency.
- 2. The expectation for success for students receiving services of the ESOL program will be the same as for all students in MCPS.

**E. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

The superintendent will:

- 1. Issue administrative procedures for the development, maintenance, and evaluation of appropriate programs for English language learners in Montgomery County Public Schools
- 2. Allocate staff and material resources annually, based on documented needs and within existing budgetary constraints
- 3. Apply for appropriate federal financial assistance, where available, to implement this policy

4. Work collaboratively with other county agencies and community organizations to access resources and help meet the needs of English language learners and their families.

**F. REVIEW AND REPORTING**

1. Annually report to the Board of Education the number of English language learners being served, by program and by native language spoken, within the total Montgomery County Public Schools.
2. Annually report to the Board of Education the results of English language learners' academic progress with the same measures used by all students, including comparisons with other Montgomery County students.
3. This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis in accordance with the Board of Education policy review process.

*Policy History:* Resolution No. 77-80, January 21, 1980, amended by Resolution No. 333-86, June 12, 1986; amended by Resolution No. 599-99, October 14, 1999; updated office titles June 1, 2000.

# REGULATION

## MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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**Related Entries:** IOD, IKA, IKA-RA

**Office:** Associate Superintendent for Special and Alternative Education

### Placement for Limited English Proficient Students

#### I. PURPOSE

To establish procedures for students with limited proficiency in English for assessment and placement, instruction and appropriate assistance, evaluating and reporting student progress, and awarding credit (Carnegie Units) in Grades 9-12 toward meeting the requirements for high school graduation

#### II. DEFINITION

Limited English Proficient (LEP) -- An individual whose native language is a language other than English and whose English language skills of listening, speaking, reading, or writing are such that reduced benefit is derived from regular school instruction.

#### III. BACKGROUND

The purpose of the ESOL program is to effect the transition of students with limited English proficiency into the regular school program, instructionally and culturally. English work for these students, pursued through ESOL classes, is guided by the objectives of the regular English courses, but with materials adapted to the level of the student's proficiency.

#### IV. PROCEDURES

##### A. Identification Process:

Before a student can be placed in an ESOL program, the student must be referred for testing.

1. The student can be referred to the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs by the International Student Admissions Office, an administrator, one of the student's

classroom teachers, a counselor, the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the student, the ESOL teacher, or by the student himself/herself.

2. An ESOL program staff member then administers the battery of entrance tests to assess the student's English proficiency.
3. If it is determined that the student is eligible for ESOL services, the ESOL staff arranges for the appropriate placement.
4. In secondary schools, appropriate programs for ESOL students should be worked out jointly by the counselor and the ESOL teacher. Students should be advised by the counselor, ESOL teacher, and/or subject matter teacher to postpone certain courses until such time as the student's proficiency in English has increased to the point where it is likely that the student will have success.
5. LEP students should not be placed in classes for low achievers merely because they are not yet proficient in English.

B. Evaluating and Reporting Student Progress

1. Student Progress
  - a) The LEP student is evaluated and graded in the ESOL classes, as well as in mainstream classes, according to the criteria contained in MCPS Regulation IKA-RA: *Grading and Reporting Student Progress*.
  - b) When it is determined that more time is needed to evaluate the student's mastery of the course objectives, the assignment of a letter grade for a secondary LEP student in regular classes may be deferred and a temporary "Incomplete" (I) assigned until the end of the semester.
  - c) If this occurs, at the end of each grading period, the teacher is expected to meet with the student and, if possible, the parents, to discuss the student's progress.
  - d) Upon the parent's request, a written evaluation of the student's progress will be sent to the parents, and a copy will be retained in the student's folder.



- e) At the end of the semester, the mark "I" must be changed to a letter grade in Grades 9-12.
- f) At the beginning of a course to which the credit-no credit option applies, the teacher or the counselor should explain the option to ESOL students. (It is important that ESOL students understand this option and every effort should be made to insure this understanding.) See Regulation IKA-RA: *Grading and Reporting Student Progress*.

## 2. Final Examinations

In accordance with MCPS Senior High School Policy (Policy IED), whether ESOL students should take a final examination in their classes is determined by the level of the student's English language instruction. Students are tested periodically to determine when their placement in the next level is indicated.

- a) Beginning students (i.e., ESOL students in ESOL Levels 1 or 2) are exempt from all final examinations in mainstream classes.
- b) Intermediate students (i.e., ESOL students in ESOL Level 3) should take the final exams if both the ESOL teacher and the subject matter teacher agree that the final exam will accurately reflect the student's knowledge of the subject; if students are still too weak in English to permit an accurate assessment of their knowledge of the course content, then they are exempt from the final exam. Intermediate ESOL students should, however, be allowed to take final exams for practice purposes, and their scores should not be entered in their records.
- c) All high intermediate and advanced (Levels 4 and 5) ESOL students are required to take the final exams.

## 3. Awarding Credit

- a) In secondary ESOL courses, Carnegie Units are awarded for English under the following conditions:
  - (1) A student enrolled in ESOL for one semester earns one-half English credit.

- (2) ESOL credits are specified on the permanent record card and on transcripts in the following manner: e.g., General English Skills (ESOL), Oral Communication (ESOL).
  - (3) Credit for ESOL may be earned either in summer school or during the regular school year.
  - (4) Upon the recommendation of the ESOL teacher, the counselor, and/or the teacher specialist of the ESOL/Bilingual Division, the student may be enrolled in two ESOL classes for credit during the same semester. If the student meets the objectives of both courses, the student gets credit for both courses.
  - (5) While an ESOL student is at the High Intermediate Level (4) or Advanced Level (5), the student may audit a regular English class.
  - (6) All of the Carnegie Units necessary to fulfill the English requirements for high school graduation in the Montgomery County Public Schools may be earned in the ESOL program.
- b) Grades for limited English proficient students in both ESOL and non-ESOL courses are reported on the regular MCPS Form according to MCPS Regulation IKA-RA: *Grading and Reporting Student Progress*.
  - c) LEP students who are in danger of failing or of dropping more than one letter grade in an ESOL course or in a mainstream course, should receive an Interim Progress Report (MCPS Form 355-24) in accordance with MCPS Regulation IKA-RA: *Grading and Reporting Student Progress*.

C. Exit from the ESOL Program

Before exiting from the ESOL program, the ESOL student must be tested by an ESOL program staff member. The student can be referred to the ESOL program staff member for testing by a classroom teacher, an administrator, a counselor, the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the student, or by the student himself/herself. The result of the proficiency assessment battery yields a qualifying score which determines whether the student still needs ESOL service(s) or not.

D. Placement in Non-ESOL English Classes

When it has been determined, according to the ESOL Exit Criteria, that a student no longer needs ESOL instruction, ESOL staff members will coordinate with the counselor in placing the student in an appropriate English class.

- V. Additional information regarding the ESOL program, placement criteria, and the use of specific forms can be found in the *ESOL Manual* available from the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs.

*Administrative History:* Formerly Regulation 310-11, revised November 1982, (directory information updated, October 1986.)

# POLICY

## BOARD OF EDUCATION OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

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**Related Entries:** ABA, ABA-RA, ACG, BMA, FAA, IEA, IEB, IED, IFB, IGP-RA, IRB-RA  
**Responsible Office:** Deputy Superintendent

### Parental Involvement

#### A. PURPOSE

1. To reaffirm the Montgomery County public school system's strong commitment to the role of parents as valued partners in their children's education and to promote and increase effective, comprehensive parental involvement
2. To ensure that parental involvement efforts reflect the rich cultural and linguistic diversity of local school communities

#### B. ISSUE

Family involvement in a child's learning is a critical link to achieve academic success and to ensure a safe and disciplined learning environment.

#### C. POSITION

1. Definition

In this policy, "parent" is intended to include parents, guardians, and other family members involved in supervising the child's schooling.

In this policy, "comprehensive parental involvement" is intended to include the research-based, Six National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs as follows:

- a) Communicating
- b) Parenting
- c) Student Learning

- d) Volunteering
  - e) School Decision-Making and Advocacy
  - f) Collaborating with Community
2. Achievement of the purpose will be sought through a variety of efforts including:
- a) Effective two-way communication between all parents and schools regarding school system policies, practices and regulations, local school policies, and an individual child's progress
  - b) Activities to encourage parental volunteer opportunities in schools both in the classroom and in other areas of the school including attendance at local school programs and events
  - c) Information and programs for parents on how to establish a home environment to support learning and appropriate behavior
  - d) Information and programs for parents about how they can assist their own children to learn
  - e) Assistance to develop parental involvement in educational advocacy through PTAs and other organizations, including school system task forces and advisory committees
3. While each division, office, and school must assess its role and plan of action to meet these goals, all MCPS employees are expected to convey a commitment to parental involvement.
- a) Consistent with this commitment, local schools are expected to:
    - 1) Provide an inviting and welcoming environment where parent involvement is respected and valued
    - 2) Develop activities and materials that provide for effective two-way communication between parents and the school on local school policies and practices and individual student progress
    - 3) Support and encourage parental volunteer opportunities including participation in the development of school improvement plans

- 4) Provide programs that assist parents in learning how they can help children learn, including activities that are connected to what children are learning in the classroom
  - 5) Work with PTA, other parent organizations, and parent outreach personnel to ensure parental input from a broad range of culturally and linguistically diverse groups
- b) Consistent with this commitment, local schools are encouraged, in collaboration with their parent community, to develop a local school statement which articulates a shared responsibility and strategies to support: student learning and high achievement; effective, frequent, two-way communication between school and home; and family, school, community partnerships aligned with school improvement plan goals
4. In addition, appropriate staff in central offices are expected to support local school efforts and, where relevant:
- a) Communicate with parents on school system policies and regulations
  - b) Provide for the development of parenting programs and materials, including the use of cable television, pamphlets, adult education courses, parent resource centers, and programs designed to orient new parents to MCPS
  - c) Support and encourage the use of interpretation and translation services whenever feasible
  - d) Maintain and support parental volunteer opportunities with appropriate information and training
  - e) Assist in the development of parental leadership through PTAs and other recognized groups
  - f) Work with businesses, organizations, and other government agencies which by their policies and activities can provide support and assistance for parental involvement efforts

- g) Provide appropriate teacher and staff training to support effective parental involvement; conduct staff and parent training in ways to communicate and work together including problem solving, conflict resolution skills, and outreach strategies
- h) Identify and publicize promising programs and practices related to parental involvement
- i) Work with colleges and universities that prepare teachers and administrators to support the inclusion of school and family connections in their training programs
- j) Develop methods to accommodate and support parental involvement for all parents, including those with special needs, limited English proficiency, limited financial resources and individuals with disabilities
- k) Develop mechanisms for local schools to use in order to assess the effectiveness of their parental involvement efforts

**D. DESIRED OUTCOME**

Schools and families will work together to ensure that the educational process includes quality learning at home, in school, and in the community.

**E. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

1. The superintendent will assess the status of parental involvement, review existing policies and procedures, and develop necessary regulations and procedures to support this policy, including a review of staff and budget support.
2. The Board of Education will seek parental input on school system policies, including curriculum, facilities, and funding issues from a broad spectrum of our culturally and linguistically diverse community.

**F. REVIEW AND REPORTING**

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis in accordance with the Board of Education policy review process.

**Policy History:** Adopted by Resolution No. 669-90, November 13, 1990; reformatted September 1996; amended by Resolution 489-02, October 28, 2002.

# POLICY BOARD OF EDUCATION OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

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**Related Entries:**

**Responsible Office:** Superintendent of Schools

## **Strategic Planning for Continuous Improvement**

### **A. PURPOSE**

The Board of Education is committed to strategic planning for continuous improvement in order to provide an effective instructional program, ensure success for every student, strengthen productive partnerships for education, and create a positive work environment in a self-renewing organization.

### **B. ISSUES**

Strategic planning must guide the work of MCPS in providing a high quality, world-class education that ensures success for every student through excellence in teaching and learning. It is essential that a broad range of stakeholders actively participate in this process. To that end, the strategic planning process must:

1. Use organizational assessment criteria that evaluates leadership; strategic planning; students, stakeholder and community focus; measurement analysis and knowledge management; faculty and staff focus; process management; and organizational performance results
2. Develop on an ongoing basis a five year plan which identifies, analyzes and plans to successfully address the major factors that affect what and how students learn. Additionally, there will be careful consideration given to factors which affect schools and students over the foreseeable future
3. Be guided by the MCPS core values:
  - a) Every child can learn and succeed
  - b) The pursuit of excellence is fundamental and unending
  - c) An ethical school system requires fair treatment, honesty, openness, integrity, and respect



- d) A high quality school system strives to be responsive and accountable to the customer
- 4. Provide for ongoing monitoring and continuous improvement
- 5. Ensure the alignment of MCPS' strategic plan with state and federal requirements
- 6. Predicate major budget priorities on the strategic plan, as reflected in both the proposed and adopted capital and operating budgets

**C. POSITION**

1. Board participation

The Board will participate in strategic planning through several means:

- a) An annual meeting with the superintendent and senior staff to review progress on the implementation of priorities, initiatives and strategic plans, to determine which goals have been achieved, whether any new efforts are needed, and to review major issues that may affect the future
- b) It will also consider and act upon objectives and major activities proposed by the superintendent to achieve long-range goals
- c) Through its standing Strategic Planning Committee, the Board shall provide leadership and monitor the progress of the strategic plan and receive recommendations for its consideration
- d) The Board's agenda-setting process shall determine from time to time specific initiatives and priorities to be addressed as part of a business meeting

2. Planning procedures

The superintendent will develop a comprehensive strategic planning process for all schools and offices.

3. Staff, student, parent, and community involvement

The Board will actively seek the participation of a broad range of internal and external stakeholders representing the rich cultural and linguistic diversity of the community in the strategic planning process.

4. Progress reports

The Strategic Planning Committee will provide the Board with periodic reports on the progress and success of the strategic plan and its planning process.

**D. DESIRED OUTCOMES**

There will be a strategic planning process that supports continuous improvement in creating a high quality, world-class school system, where success for every student is ensured through excellence in teaching and learning.

**E. REVIEW AND REPORTING**

This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the Board of Education policy review process.

*Policy History:* Resolution No. 518-85, November 5, 1985; amended by Resolution No. 620-04, November 9, 2004.

# POLICY

## BOARD OF EDUCATION OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

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**Related Entries:** ABA-RA, ABA-EA, ABB

### Community Involvement

WHEREAS, Citizens have a direct interest in the successful operation of the Montgomery County Public Schools – and especially the school in their local community – and citizen interest in and support of the schools is essential to their continued success; and

WHEREAS, This interest and support can best be secured and maintained through good communication between the school and home and through citizen involvement in decision-making at the local level; and

WHEREAS, More acceptable decisions at local schools and greater support for these decisions can be achieved if the community participates in their formulation; now therefore be it

*Resolved*, That the principal and community should review the mechanisms existing in their school for community participation in decision-making in educational policies and programs and should propose any changes which will help to implement this policy and the associated guideline. The PTA should be the primary focal point for this review and for community involvement. The PTA and principal shall seek to have represented the educational viewpoints and socio-economic, racial and ethnic elements in the community; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the local community is defined as the parents of children attending the school, the principal and other staff at the school, its students, and any interested residents in the school service area; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the superintendent will develop procedures to ensure that, in each school:

- the principal will establish and/or maintain year-round, regular channels of communication with parents and other citizens, both independently and in cooperation with the PTA or PTSA, to provide information about school programs, resources, policies, progress and problems, and forthcoming decisions about which the principal believes the community may have an interest, or in which persons have indicated an interest;

- the principal will provide opportunities for the local community to; a) express its views prior to decision-making on issues that pertain to the local school to the maximum extent feasible and permissible within state and local laws and policies; and b) request review of existing school policies and procedures;
- the principal's prior consultation shall depend upon his/her view of the importance of the issue, and whether the principal is informed by the local community or in any other way has or is given reason to believe the local community desires to express its views, and if consultation is feasible and permissible within state and local laws and policies;
- the principal will take affirmative action to respond to all parent requests for information to which they are entitled under state law and Board of Education policies, as well as to transmit information to parents when the principal has reason to believe the parents may need or wish it; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the superintendent of schools shall, in cooperation with the Montgomery County Council of Parent Teacher Associations and the principals' associations, provide periodic joint training for principals and PTA or other group leadership, to ensure that strong, cooperative and harmonious relationships between each school and its community are built and maintained; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the attached guidelines have been developed to assist in the implementation of this policy and future amendments thereto by the superintendent shall be presented for information to the Board of Education prior to their implementation.

**Resolution No. 287-74, May 28, 1974, amended by Resolution No. 268-76, May 11, 1976.**

**APPENDIX**  
**OBSERVATIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE MCPS SCHOOL COMMUNITY**

**Observations made by ESOL Teachers**

- Spanish-speaking teachers often serve a dual role as teacher and as interpreter.
- Once an ESOL teacher builds trust with an LEP family, the family often relies on the teacher for guidance on both school and non- school related matters.
- Serving as an interpreter/counselor takes teachers away from their regular duties.
- More bilingual school office staff, multilingual ESOL counselors and parent outreach staff are needed.
- Transitioned ESOL kids have a hard time adjusting to mainstream curriculum, and still need to work very hard at learning English.
- More training is needed for regular teachers to help students with transitioning from ESOL.
- Transitioned ESOL families still rely on the teachers for assistance.
- Many more students outside of ESOL have LEP parents or guardians.
- Some teachers spend many hours each week after school contacting LEP parents on behalf on non-ESOL teachers.
- Language Line Services is an adequate language assistance tool. However, Language Line is not well known among school-staff, and some are aware, but don't know how to access the service.
- Translated material is appreciated by LEP parents, especially when they receive material at the same time as English speaking parents – this helps parents feel part of the school community.
- The more MCPS can translate material the better. One teacher said that he saw LEP parents taking an active interest in their children's education, after his school started sending home report cards in the parents' native language. However, translated education lingo can still confuse LEP parents.
- The proposed Translation Unit should help produce more translated material.
- LEP parents want to learn English but the waiting lists for classes are extremely long. Many of the parents work more than one job, and don't have time to take formal English classes.
- Title I schools have a great capacity to serve LEP families.
- Schools with Linkages to Learning, METS program, and multiple bilingual staff can provide more assistance than school without them.
- Linkages to Learning should be expanded.
- Many schools have innovative programs that serve LEP families. However, there is no mechanism to learn about the programs. Maybe some of these programs could be expanded to other schools – if successful
- American students should learn foreign languages as this would make things more balanced. Also, Bilingual students should be recognized as having an asset for speaking a second language.

**Observations made by ESOL Counselors**

- Due to a large workload, the counselors do not provide as much preventive counseling as they would like to.
- More ESOL counselors are needed provide ESOL student with counseling to prevent personal crisis's.
- Some school's front offices are not well positioned to communicate with LEP persons. These schools need to hire more bilingual office staff.
- MCPS employees should receive regular cultural sensitivity training.
- Transitioned ESOL students still rely on the counselors for assistance. The counselors try and help as much as they can, however, their ever increasing ESOL student workload prevents them from doing so.
- Counselors spend too much time on administrative tasks.
- It is not part of some cultures not to advocate for children in the school system.
- Some non-ESOL guidance counselors lack the understanding of ESO student needs
- Translation is a problem – parents do not understand documents in English that are sent home
- Principals of the schools set the tone for how a school interacts with LEP families

**Observations made by the Parent Services Center and Parent Outreach Team**

- Families who have been in the U.S. 3 years or less require the most help when initially accessing services.
- Many parents want to learn English but there is a long waiting list.
- LEP parents rely on Center and Outreach staff for both school and non-school matters.
- Biggest complaint they get from parent is that Outreach staff “are not there all the time.”
- Some parents can speak English, but cannot read it.
- LEP parents want social services and health care.
- Staff help translate correspondence, link families to community and social services, and provide general parental/family guidance.
- Need more bilingual Parent Outreach staff, especially in the middle schools.
- Title 1 schools generally have a greater capacity to serve to LEP families.
- Transitioned ESOL families still rely on Parent Center and Parent Outreach staff for assistance.
- Many more students outside of ESOL have LEP parents or guardians.
- LEP parents appreciate translated material, especially when they receive material at the same time as English speaking parents – this helps parents feel part of the school community.
- The proposed Translation Unit should help produce more translated material.

**Observations made by Community Superintendents and Directors of School Performance**

- LEP parents prefer to speak to a live person rather than a person over the phone.
- LEP parents form a strong relationship with a bilingual staff person.
- All schools may access the Language Line.
- Need to provide bilingual staff (primarily Spanish) at the front office.
- Written correspondence should be sent in multiple languages in a timely manner.
- Back-to-school nights in different languages is very helpful.
- PTAs should try and include families.
- Parent Outreach person at schools play an important role.
- LEP parents like having a “go-to” person.
- Parents want to learn English, but can’t get into classes.
- Principals are trained in cultural competency.
- Linkages to Learning is very effective for LEP families, and should be expanded.
- Need to increase the marketing of the different language assistance tools available.

**Observations made by the MCEA/ESOL Joint Liaison Committee**

- Language Line works well but is under-used because staff don’t always know about it or don’t think of it as a tool. Staff need to develop a comfort level with it, before using the service.
- Schools with large numbers of LEP students and parents need more bilingual office staff.
- Greater need for afterschool and mentoring programs to help students who do not get academic support at home.
- Non-ESOL counselors need to be better informed of services and where to find help for families, especially for immediate assistance.
- Schools need to partner more with community organizations, e.g., the YMCA or Long Branch library, where students can receive tutoring or other youth services.
- Train bilingual parents to teach LEP parents how to empower themselves and become involved and participate in the schools.
- LEP parents want to learn English, however, there is a long wait list for adult ESOL classes.
- Basic school forms are not translated uniformly for all needed languages.
- Need more parent outreach specialists and ESOL counselors.
- School counselors need to be more informed regarding County services.

**Observations made by staff from Kemp Mill Elementary School**

- Parents need help understanding the U.S. culture of learning and would respond well to one-on-one mentoring that explains the school system, as well as acculturation issues.
- In order to achieve a high level of parental involvement, a one-on-one personal relationship must first be developed. An in-house parent coordinator would be helpful to achieve this.
- Every school needs a parent outreach coordinator.
- Important for teachers to tell parents that they are partners in their child's education, not observers.
- Interpreters provided by the Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs are generally great. However, it is often difficult to get ESOL interpreters for large school events, e.g. Back to School Night because conferences are happening in every classroom, all at the same time.
- Linkages to Learning is great program and needs to be expanded to more schools.
- School staff will rely on any multilingual staff in building to help communicate with LEP parents that drop-in or call.
- The school has more students with LEP parents than those enrolled in ESOL
- School has developed DVD titled, "A Day at Kemp Mill Elementary School" and staff often hold meetings in the community because LEP parents find it difficult to get to school due to lack of transportation.

**Observations made by the Division of Family and Community Partnerships**

- Parents are grateful to receive information in their native language.
- Parents feel more involved and important when the Division provides proactive translation of written materials. Distributing this written material in all languages simultaneously is also important to parents.
- Parents like consistency and tend to go to the same staff person for information and develop a personal relationship with that staffer.
- Principals have to re-enforce teachers how to use the Language Line but there are no limitations on how often it can be used.
- Principals are critical to success.
- PTA's want more interpretation and translation services at MCPS.

**Observations made by participants of MCPS' Conquista Tus Sueños program**

- MCPS' ESOL program is great. Counselors, teachers, parent outreach folk are polite and accommodating.
- Mainstream education environment is not as supportive and overwhelming – "it was now really more difficult to access services."
- When their child transitions from ESOL, they still rely on ESOL staff for help.
- ESOL staff still help "us to understand the system even though our children are no longer in ESOL."
- There is a longer wait for assistance when visiting the school office because it takes time to find someone in the building who can speak their language and assist.
- It is more difficult to communicate with the school, especially when calling or dropping by the office.
- They appreciate speaking to frontline staff who can speak their primary language, and also appreciate the interpreters at school meetings
- Language Line is impersonal, however, it is a good tool to overcome language barriers
- Their children help them translate written school material. It is greatly appreciated when materials are printed in their native language helps because they feel more connected to the school community and more involved with their children's education. However, "education lingo" is hard to understand even when translated.
- Learning English is important but attending adult ESOL classes is difficult because of a long wait list and class times are not always convenient for them.
- Linkages to Learning is invaluable and should be provided at more schools.

**Observations made by participants of MCPS' Computer Access For Everyone (CAFÉ) program**

- ESOL programs, services, and staff are fantastic. We still rely on them even though our kids are not in ESOL.
- It is difficult communicating with the school, especially when calling or dropping by the office.
- They appreciate speaking to frontline staff in their native language, and the interpreters provided at school meetings.
- Language Line is impersonal.
- Receiving materials in native language is imperative.
- They rely on their children to translate school material.
- The solution to communication barriers is two fold: LEP parents need to learn/improve their English skills and schools need to provide more frontline multilingual staff.
- They would like to learn English but attending adult ESOL classes is difficult because of a long wait list and class times are not always convenient for them.
- The “more involved we are, the better our children will succeed.”
- Linkages to Learning is great.

**Observations made by representatives of Montgomery Blair High School PTA**

- ESOL teachers are the salt of the earth.
- MCPS needs to cater to LEP parents needs by sending home material in LEP parents' native language, holding meetings at times most appropriate for LEP parents, ensuring that interpreters are always present.
- Some school have developed great programs to assist LEP parents.
- Schools need to hire more multilingual staff, especially for positions that interact with LEP parents.
- All school staff need more multicultural training.
- LEP parents, in general, don't know how they should advocate for kids education.

**Observations made by representatives of Takoma Park Elementary School PTA**

- Schools with large number of LEP students and LEP parents need parent outreach person solely dedicated to the parent needs that school.
- MCPS' website contains great information, however it is not easily understood. All translated school forms should be put on MCPS' intranet website.
- No matter what the medium, information about MCPS services should be in “plain English.” Translated “plain English” is more easily understood than translated “education lingo.”
- School office staff need to be multilingual or have access to interpretation services.
- Schools need to hire more multilingual school office staff.
- Language Line is good back-up tool – but do all schools have access to it?
- All written communications should be translated into parents' native languages.
- Linkage to Learning is great, and should be offered at other schools.

**Observations made by representatives of Takoma Park Middle School PTA**

- The more that parents become involved in kids education the more like it is that they will succeed.
- Schools with large LEP populations need a staff member that is solely dedicated to parent outreach activities. The person needs to be able to understand both the community's language and culture.
- Parents need more support, especially the parents of kids who have transitioned out of ESOL.
- Most LEP parents work multiple jobs, schools have to be flexible and accommodate this.
- Every school office needs multilingual staff, especially English/Spanish speaking staff.
- School staff need to receive more training on diversity and cultural competency issues.
- MCPS needs to do a better job of informing parents how they can better advocate on behalf of their children.
- Families that transition out of ESOL miss the support services provided through ESOL.
- Schools should rely on more bilingual volunteers to help out, especially at the front office.



**Observations made by representatives of the Chinese American Parents and Students Association**

- Parents appreciate Chinese translation of notices that go home.
- ESOL counselors and teachers do very good work.
- Schools should hire more bilingual staff.
- Parents want to learn English but have work commitments that prevent them from doing so.

**Observations made by a representative of the ESOL/Bilingual Advisory Committee**

- Experiences with ISAO and ESOL programs and services are positive.
- Many LEP families state that ESOL teachers, counselors, and outreach specialists are caring and dedicated.
- MCPS recognizes the need and importance of connecting the triangle: parents, teachers, and students.
- Parents' language barriers prevent them from understanding the school system.
- Some principals are extremely active in getting ESOL parents involved – the more that ESOL parents are involved the better the chance the ESOL student will succeed in learning English.
- Need more ESOL counselors.

**Observations made by representatives of the Maryland Vietnamese Mutual Association**

- Many LEP parents do not get involved in their children's education due to work commitments and/or language barriers. More tutoring programs would help students excel.
- Parents would appreciate more translation or explanation of how to interpret report cards.
- Need for more Vietnamese-speaking ESOL counselors at schools with large Vietnamese-speaking community.

**Observations made by representatives of the Asian American Education Association**

- Schools should hire more bilingual staff.
- Language line is helpful for communicating with people who speak uncommon languages/dialects.
- There are cultural differences in how parents view education.
- Linkages to Learning is a wonderful service but would be helpful if there could be more social workers so could take on higher caseload.