

Virginia Board of Education
Committee on School and Division Accountability
January 27, 2016

Discussion of Challenges for English Language Learners in Earning a Virginia Diploma

Panel Presenters	
Corey Alder Coordinator for English Language Learner Programs K-12 Roanoke City Public Schools	Teresa Vignaroli English Language Learner Supervisor Loudoun County Public Schools
Rusty Carlock English Speakers of Other Languages & International Program Coordinator Albemarle County Public Schools	Deana Otwell Coordinator of English as a Second Language Services Chesapeake City Public Schools

Terms and Definitions:

ACCESS for ELLs: The statewide English language proficiency assessment administered annually to all English language learners in kindergarten through grade 12. The ACCESS for ELLs assessment was developed by the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium, a consortium of 38 member states housed at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The ACCESS for ELLs assessment was adopted by the Virginia Board of Education as Virginia’s English language proficiency assessment in September, 2007.

English Language Proficiency Levels: There are six levels of English proficiency, levels 1-6, as determined by student performance on the ACCESS for ELLs assessment.

ELLs: English language learners (also known as limited English proficient or LEP students)

ESL: English as a Second Language (refers to the instruction of English)

ESOL: English for Speakers of Other Languages (refers to the instruction of English)

SLIFE: Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education

VESA: State professional organization, Virginia ESL Supervisors’ Association

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Corey Alder

Coordinator for English Language Learner
Programs K-12
Roanoke City Public Schools

Challenges Roanoke City English Language Learners face in Meeting Virginia Diploma Requirements

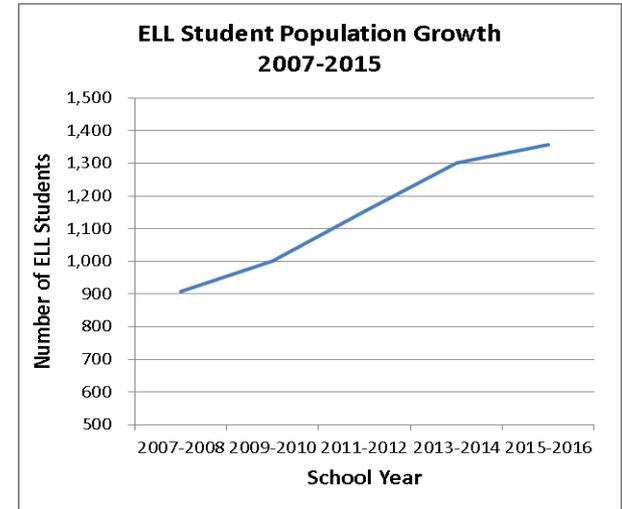
Presentation for VA BOE Accountability Committee
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RCPS English Language Learner Population

as of January 5, 2016

- 1,358 English Language Learner students
- 239 high school English Language Learners who have yet to reach full English proficiency
- 90 high school English Language Learners who are at the lowest levels of English proficiency



➤ **Top home languages:** Spanish, Nepali, and Haitian Creole

- **New arrivals from:**
- Guatemala
 - Honduras
 - Democratic Republic of Congo
 - Somalia
 - Mexico

Academic Successes of High School English Language Learners in RCPS

In coursework:

- Valuable contributors of experience and content knowledge
- Successful in completing content courses required for the Standard Diploma

On tests required for graduation:

- Passing scores on a sufficient number of Mathematics, Science, and History End-of-Course SOL tests to earn a diploma by 12th grade

Graduation Barriers for RCPS English Language Learners

In coursework:

- Any barriers in this area are overcome with support from peers, English as a Second Language teachers, and content teachers

On tests required for graduation:

- The End-of-Course Reading test

Other factors:

- Pressure to work for family income
- Individual perception of failure
- Insufficient time to develop full English proficiency before aging-out

One RCPS Senior

- Born in Bhutanese refugee camp in Nepal
- Entered US schools in 9th grade at Patrick Henry High School with little to no English proficiency
- Successfully completed all required coursework in 4 years
- Passed all required SOL tests except for End-of-Course Reading
- Returned in summer & fall of 2015 for an opportunity to obtain a diploma (**high score- 393**)
- Considering dropping out now to work full time to support family

Successes

- ✓ Learn English quickly
- ✓ Pass classes
- ✓ Math SOL tests
- ✓ Science SOL tests
- ✓ History SOL tests
- ✓ Get a job

Failures

- ✗ Passing Score on End-of-Course Reading SOL test

Teresa Vignaroli

English Language Learner Supervisor
Loudoun County Public Schools

Challenges English Language Learners Face in Meeting Virginia Diploma Requirements



Loudoun County Public Schools

Setting the Bar

High Expectations - High Standards

- Access to grade level curriculum
- Mainstream Participation



Image from:
<http://www.inflowinventory.com/blog/index.php/author/inflowinventory/page/7/>

Different Types of Language Learners

Mid to High Proficiency English Language Learners

- May pass content classes
- May pass some SOL tests
- End-of-Course Reading test becomes a barrier

Older Aged English Language Learners

- Time is a barrier
- Little to no English proficiency
- Limited or interrupted formal education

SOL Assessments & Accommodations

SOL Assessments

- Content Mastery vs. Language Proficiency
- Few alternatives to SOL assessments
- May not accurately assess students' content knowledge

Testing Accommodations

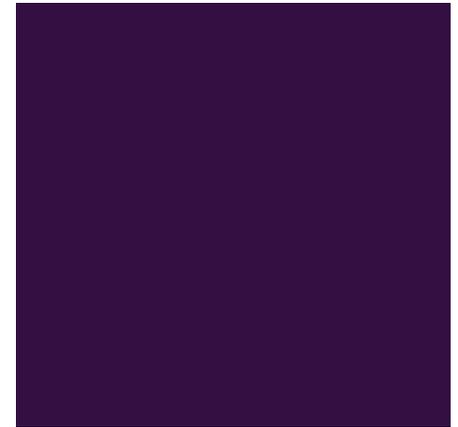
- Not always beneficial
- May not align to linguistic need
- May not allow students to demonstrate content knowledge

Rusty Carlock

English Speakers of Other Languages &
International Program Coordinator
Albemarle County Public Schools

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English Learners and Virginia Graduation Requirements



Misalignment between English SOL Tests and other Metrics

Successes	Challenges
Course Grades	Reading SOL test
Math, Science, and Social Studies SOL tests	Writing SOL test
Workforce Readiness	

One Student's Story

- Three countries and three cultures.
- Trilingual.
- Success in content courses and SOL tests.
- A student leader.
- A model of student conduct.
- Vocational success in Dental Assistant program.
- Completed an extra year of high school.
- 10 attempts at the End-of-Course Reading SOL test.

Deana Otwell

Coordinator of English as a Second
Language Services
Chesapeake City Public Schools



ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS:

*The challenge to earn
a Virginia diploma*



Chesapeake Public Schools
2015–2016

Chesapeake Public Schools English as a Second Language Student Count – JAN 2016

School Level	Number of Students at English Language Proficiency Levels 1-3	Number of Students at English Language Proficiency Levels 4-6	TOTAL
Elementary Schools	328	414	742
Middle Schools	66	129	195
High Schools	73	131	204
TOTAL	467	674	1141

Languages Represented in Chesapeake Public Schools (55 Total)

- Spanish 54%
- Chinese 7%
- Tagalog 5%
- Vietnamese 5%
- Arabic 5%
- Japanese 3%
- Gujarati 3%
- German 2%
- Russian 2%
- Korean 2%
- Other (45 languages) 12%

Challenges English Language Learners Face

- Limited/interrupted education in native language
 - Inadequate English proficiency
 - Lack of transferred credits
 - Courses taken in native homeschools not in alignment with courses in United States schools
 - Lack of credit for English as a Second Language instruction
 - Time – adjustment/instruction
 - Barrier – passing End-of-Course Reading and Writing SOL tests
 - Lack of confidence & self esteem
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Highlights of a Chesapeake Public Schools Test Taker

- ▶ Came to the USA from Columbian orphanage – age 10
 - ▶ Little education – No English language acquisition
 - ▶ Adopted by foster family – enrolled in Chesapeake Public Schools – 6th grade
 - ▶ Shy and withdrawn – Hard working student
 - ▶ Completed/passed all required coursework – 4 years of high school
 - ▶ Performance on the English Language Proficiency test – improved consistently each year in high school
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Highlights of a Chesapeake Public Schools Test Taker

- ▶ Passed all required SOL tests with exception of the End-of-Course Reading test
- ▶ End-of-Course Writing SOL test – passed the test on the 5th attempt
 - 2 times scored within the 375–400 score range
- ▶ Attempted End-of-Course Reading SOL test – 11 times
 - 7 attempts in high school – 4 attempts after leaving high school
 - 6 times scored within the 375–400 score range
- ▶ “Walked” & received *Certificate of Program Completion* – June 2015
- ▶ Currently lives with second foster family
- ▶ Currently working for a painting company
- ▶ Plans to take the End-of-Course Reading test again – current testing window

