

Progress of English Learners in Utah



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Summary

The Legislative Management Committee of the Utah Legislature has requested the Education Interim Committee to study progress in serving students with limited English Proficiency, including current programs. The Committee has requested that USOE gather information and data pertinent to this request and present a report to inform the Education Interim Committee. This report summarizes the efforts of USOE Title III staff, the process of allocation of Title III funds to LEAs, the current status of English learners (EL's) in Utah, the progress of LEAs in meeting Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAO) goals, and the process of corrective action and support for LEAs who do not meet AMAO goals. Included in this report are two addenda summarizing the FY15 preliminary Title III grant allotments to LEAs, as well as the Department of Education Title III monitoring review, findings, and USOE responsive action resulting from this review.

Introduction

Over the past year, the USOE Title III department has undergone several major changes. Dr. Jose Enriquez was appointed as coordinator of Title III in October, 2013. Under his direction, the Title III team at the USOE has focused on increasing visibility, alignment, and capacity at all levels: within the team itself, with other departments of USOE, and most importantly within LEAs. The roles of Title III staff were adjusted to improve the quality of monitoring and professional development activities, and two additional specialists were added. The Title III staff have worked to support the needs of EL's in the state of Utah in meaningful and effective ways.

As its first major task, the USOE Title III department chose to amend and update its EL Master Plan. As a requirement of NCLB Title III Act, the purpose of the plan is to provide educators with critical information related to the linguistic and educational needs of English learners, as well as the legal requirements for serving these students. Recognizing that English learners bring a wealth of knowledge and talent that will benefit Utah's communities, we encourage the use of this plan as a guide for implementing best instructional practices for EL's, and for driving systemic changes required to ensure the academic success of linguistically diverse learners. The EL Master Plan is intended to serve as both a tool as well as an example of what individual LEA plans should contain. The State Board of Education approved the EL Master Plan in April, 2014.

The EL Master Plan also facilitated the correction of specific issues in previous years' monitoring of LEAs for compliance in Title III issues. Among these were the lack of oversight in proper expenditures of Title III funds. The rewrite also allowed for USOE to make corrective changes to the full monitoring process so that LEAs became fully aware of the requirements for the use of those funds under NCLB. The roll-out and implementation of such changes has happened throughout the year as professional development to Alternative Language Services (ALS) Directors in LEAs. This has taken place in various forms including face-to-face meetings and school visits, webinars, and official documents clarifying compliance requirements.

To better address and support the needs of LEAs and the services being provided to EL students, a desktop monitoring instrument (DMI) has been developed. The implementation will be in place for the

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FY15 and henceforth is a part of the standard review of Title III services being provided to EL students. The DMI enables USOE to monitor LEAs for Title III compliance annually, and provide technical assistance where needed. In addition to increased monitoring, USOE has increased the opportunities for LEAs to participate in SIOP and WIDA trainings provided by Title III staff. The evidence-based strategies and materials provided by these programs are shown to be effective when used with fidelity in the classroom. The professional development activities are intended to increase the capacity of educators to consistently use effective instructional strategies and tools, and increase EL student outcomes.

Title III Funding Process

Title III funds are federal funds awarded to LEAs by the USOE and are based on the number of EL students within each LEA. LEAs receive a preliminary allotment based on previous years EL enrollment formula. Grant Award Notifications (GAN) are sent out at the end of September to LEAs so that they are aware of their allotment for the fiscal year. The number of EL students is verified with the Oct. 1st enrollment count, and then again in the middle of the year to help the allocation be as accurate as possible. New GANs are sent accordingly upon each revision of the student count. The allotment for the FY15 have been included as an addendum to this report (see appendix B).

The use of Title III funds is intended to supplement (not supplant) LEA services for EL students in the following two areas, as stated in NCLB Title III:

- High-quality language instruction educational program (LIEP)
- High-quality professional development

LEAs are monitored for their use of these funds, and provided with technical assistance if questions arise. Currently, the expenditures range from the purchase of published evidence-based programs to direct classroom support. These funds are also used for providing in-service training, helping current teachers gain an ESL Endorsement, and are also used to provide paraprofessional staff. Currently, there is no one standout program. Because of the availability of staff, resources, and in-kind LEA support, each program works individually to meet the needs of EL students within their boundaries.

Parent outreach is another endeavor for which Title III funding is used. As with most at-risk student populations, EL students benefit when parents are supported and their involvement in their child's education is elicited and facilitated. Often parents with limited time, resources, and English language ability are not aware of the academic requirements their students are required to meet. Parent participation in programs such as those found in Davis and Canyons school districts help to foster parent and community participation, and support student achievement.

Title III funds are the only source of funding which specifically target EL student language development. Other funds, such as Enhancement for At-Risk Students Program Fund and Title I, may be used at the discretion of LEAs to support the academic achievement of EL students, but LEAs are not specifically directed to do so. In the past, the state legislature had awarded funding specifically for EL students, but does not currently do so. Due to these limitations, USOE's role in monitoring the use of Title III funds is critical for ensuring high-quality and effective programs and practices.

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Progress of EL's in Utah

Background: Title III of NCLB requires states to establish English language proficiency (ELP) standards that are aligned to state academic content standards. LEAs annually assess the English proficiency of each EL student, and define AMAOs to measure and report students' progress in attaining English proficiency, meeting academic achievement standards. Prior to 2014, the UALPA was the summative assessment developed by the state of Utah for the purpose of measuring English proficiency. In 2014, the state of Utah adopted the WIDA™ ACCESS assessment for this purpose.

LEAs are required to meet three specific AMAOs annually. If an LEA does not meet the objectives for two consecutive years, the USOE must provide technical assistance and the LEA is required to develop an improvement plan for instruction and services for EL's that specifically addresses the factors that prevented the LEA from meeting the AMAO goals.

Three specific AMAOs have been established under NCLB Title III:

- AMAO 1: Progress in English language acquisition—LEAs must show annual increases in the number or percentage of students making progress in learning English. This progress is defined as students moving from one level to the next on the summative English proficiency assessment.
- AMAO 2: Reaching English language proficiency, or exiting EL services—LEAs must show annual increases in the number or percentage of students attaining English language proficiency by the end of each school year.
- AMAO 3—Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs): LEAs must meet individual AMO targets in both English Language Arts and Mathematics in grade spans 3-8 and 10-12. They must also meet a 95% participation requirement for both grade spans and content areas.
- All LEAs in the state of Utah have demonstrated progress in teaching EL students and are meeting or surpassing the target goals of AMAO 1 and 2. On average, LEAs are exceeding the AMAO 1 target for percentage of EL's making progress by 25%. On average, LEAs are exceeding the AMAO 2 target for number of students reaching English fluency by 37%.

AMAO 1 - The Percentage of Students Making Progress in Learning English: This calculation includes all current EL students who have demonstrated progress. Progress is defined as students progressing from one level to the next over the course of the school year. All LEAs with more than 10 EL's, the minimum enrollment required for inclusion in the data set, met the goals of AMAO 1 in 2013. The percentage of students making progress is, on average, exceeding the target by 25% (see figure 1).

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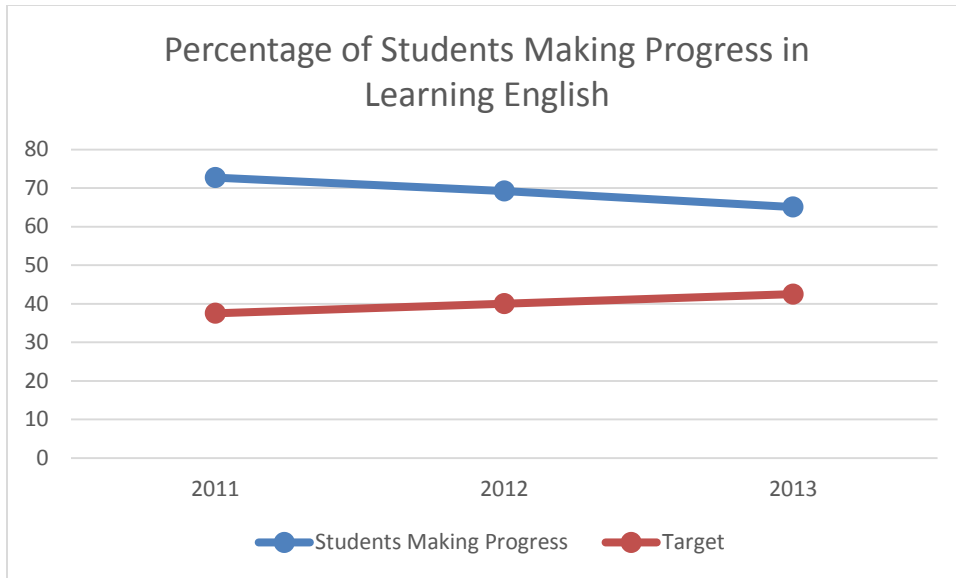


Figure 1: AMAO 1-Percentage of students making progress in English language acquisition

AMAO 2 - Students Attaining English Proficiency: AMAO 2 indicates the percentage of EL students who receive a designation of 'Advanced' on the UALPA, or who receive the designation of 'Fluent' on the ACCESS in the most recently completed school year. An LEA must meet the target in both grades K-6 and grades 7-12. Again all LEAs with 10 or more EL's met or exceeded the target in 2013. On average, the number of students attaining fluency is exceeding the AMAO target by 37% (see figure 2).

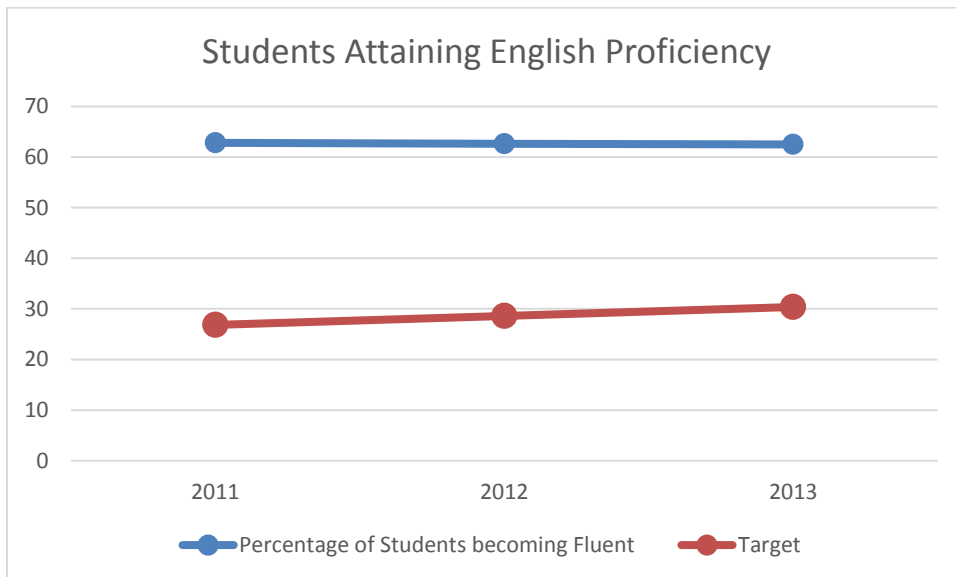


Figure 2: AMAO 2-Percentage of students reaching English language fluency

AMAO 3 - The LEA Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) determination for the English Language Learners Subgroup: AMAO #3 is the EL subgroup determination for the LEA AYP report for both language arts and math. The report has two parts: Grades 3-8 and grades 10-12. An LEA meets the requirements of AMAO 3 if the LEAs subgroup for EL meets AMO in language arts and mathematics in both grade spans.

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Individual LEA reports and detailed information of AMO can be found:

<http://schools.utah.gov/data/Educational-Data/Accountability-School-Performance.aspx>

Process of Corrective Action

NCLB Title III requires State Educational Agencies to provide technical assistance to LEAs who have not met AMAO goals for two consecutive years to develop an improvement plan, and LEAs who have not met AMAO goals for four consecutive years to modify curriculum, programs, and methods of instruction. All LEAs in the state of Utah have met AMAO goals 1 and 2, and their efforts in serving EL's should be congratulated. It is evident that AMAO 3 is the area in which LEAs have difficulty, and for this reason has become the focus of the Title III team at USOE.

At the end of the 2013-2014 school year, seven LEAs were identified who had not met AMAO 3 goals for two consecutive years. One LEA has not met this goal for four consecutive years. In order to address this issue and provide technical assistance, these target LEAs have been invited to participate in an in-depth data analysis workshop on August 28th and 29th, 2014 which will guide them through the process of revising their EL plan and develop strategies for implementation. This is the first opportunity of its kind provided by USOE. LEAs will utilize student outcome data to align their use of Title III grant funds with appropriate student services. The expected outcome of the workshop is for LEAs to develop a 90-day action plan for addressing the needs of EL's as stated by AMAO 3.

Conclusion

Over the past year, the Title III department at the USOE has made efforts to improve the achievement of EL students through the development of the EL Master Plan, improved monitoring activities, and the development of high-quality professional development. LEAs are systematically granted federal Title III funds by USOE based on the number of the EL students with their boundaries. Title III funds must be used to supplement programs for EL students, and not supplant services which should be provided by the LEA. Appropriate use of funds, as stated by NCLB Title III, includes high-quality language instruction educational programs and high-quality professional development. LEAs are monitored regularly in order to ensure appropriate use of funds and that services being provided for EL's are effective. Over the past three years, LEAs have exceeded the goals of AMAOs 1 and 2, demonstrating that EL students are making adequate progress toward English language fluency. AMAO 3, which indicates the academic progress of EL students in English/language arts and mathematics, has become the target for improvement by the USOE. The process for corrective action and technical assistance provided for LEAs who have not met AMAO 3 has been improved significantly. These target LEAs have been invited to participate in an intensive, data-driven problem solving process to develop a 90-day action plan with support and follow-up from USOE. These efforts, along with increased efforts to provide high-quality professional development, are aimed to improve the academic success of ELs. Areas of need which remain in the state of Utah are an increased focus on graduation and the college and career readiness of EL students.

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APPENDIX A

2015 TITLE III FUNDING ALLOCATION

LEA	Award Amount
Alpine	\$ 223,812.00
American Preparatory	\$ 62,802.00
Box Elder	\$ 33,719.00
Cache	\$ 54,478.00
Canyons	\$ 173,760.00
Davis	\$ 191,673.00
Dual Immersion	\$ 17,703.00
Duchesne	
Grand	\$ 13,488.00
Granite	\$ 1,148,038.00
Iron	\$ 21,707.00
Jordan	\$ 176,816.00
Kane	
Logan	\$ 65,858.00
Millard	\$ 15,174.00
Murray	\$ 25,711.00
Nebo	\$ 86,195.00
North Sanpete	\$ 11,170.00
Ogden	\$ 236,140.00
Ogden Preparatory	\$ 11,591.00
Park City	\$ 31,507.00
Provo	\$ 149,419.00
Salt Lake	\$ 544,357.00
San Juan	\$ 72,286.00
South Sanpete	
South Summit	
Tooele	\$ 52,897.00
Wasatch	\$ 41,938.00
Washington	\$ 155,636.00
Weber	\$ 97,154.00
Total	\$ 3,715,029.00

Duchesne Consortium:		
Fiscal Agent:	Duchesne	\$ 8,219.00
	Uintah	\$ 16,227.00
	Total	\$ 24,446.00

Kane Consortium:		
Fiscal Agent:	Kane	\$ 1,370.00
	Garfield	\$ 2,107.00
	Beaver	\$ 7,376.00
	AMES	\$ 948.00
	City Acad.	\$ 843.00
	Guadalupe	\$ 6,217.00
	Gateway	\$ 527.00
	Total	\$ 19,388.00

South Sanpete Consortium		
Fiscal Agent:	South Sanpete	\$ 13,909.00
	Sevier	\$ 5,269.00
	Piute	\$ 632.00
	Wayne	\$ 632.00
	Total	\$ 20,442.00

South Summit Consortium		
Fiscal Agent:	South Summit	\$ 6,217.00
	North Summit	\$ 4,953.00
	Total	\$ 11,170.00