Division of Accountability and Research

'English Language Acquisition'

2013 Program Evaluation

Prepared October 2013

Introduction

The vision of Aurora Public Schools (APS) is to graduate all students with the choice to attend college without remediation. The ELA department aims to provide ELLs with high levels of English proficiency that allow them to function successfully in academic settings and, ultimately, to achieve this vision.

English Language Acquisition Program Overview

Current ELA programming in APS has been developed, in part, as a response to federal and state legislation regarding the education of ELLs. All schools are expected to meet federal requirements of Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), and state requirements of the Colorado English Language Proficiency Act (ELPA). In order to ensure that schools meet these requirements, the Colorado State Board of Education has established the Colorado English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards. The ELP standards mirror the World-Class Instruction Design and Assessment (WIDA) standards, which the state board voted to adopt on December 10, 2009. The WIDA standards exceed minimum requirements established by federal and state law, and are focused on ensuring that ELLs develop the English language skills they need to succeed in school.

In addition to conforming to federal and state requirements, APS has voluntarily entered into a Resolution Agreement with the federal Office for Civil Rights (OCR) to address educational program services for Limited English Proficient (LEP) students and communication services for LEP parents. The district entered into this agreement in 2008.

Identification and placement

Ensuring that ELLs achieve academic success begins with the enrollment process. As part of the process for registering a child for school, state law requires that parents complete a Home Language Survey. The survey is completed the first time a parent enrolls a child in a school district, and supports the district in determining if a language other than or in addition to English is spoken in the home. If any response on the survey indicates the use of a language other than English, then further investigation is done to determine the student's English language proficiency level.

The presence of a language other than English does not automatically signify that the student is not a competent and proficient English speaker. If a student's Home Language Survey indicates that a language other than English is spoken in the home, state regulations require that the student complete an English language proficiency screening test within 30 calendar days of enrollment. This testing is done by trained personnel at the school sites with the goal of making the assessment and placement process as convenient and timely for the family and child as possible.

Colorado began to use the WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) during 2012-13 school year to identify students as ELLs. W-APT test items are written from the model performance indicators of WIDA's five English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards:

- Social & Instructional Language
- Language of Language Arts
- Language of Mathematics
- Language of Science
- Language of Social Studies

Once a student has been assessed using the placement test, a lead English Language Acquisition (ELA) teacher and other ELA staff review the placement results and other student records to make a placement decision. Students who are determined to be ELLs are given either a Non-English Proficient (NEP) or Limited-English Proficient (LEP) designation.

Once a child has been identified as an ELL, the district notifies parents/guardians of the program placement via the NCLB letter. This letter informs them of their child's placement results and language proficiency definition. It also informs them that their child is eligible to be enrolled in the Alternative Language Program and to receive ELA services. Parents/guardians do have the right to refuse ELA services.

The Alternative Language Program and ELA Services

Through the Alternative Language Program (ALP), the APS ELA department supports sites in providing instruction in language development, literacy, and standards-based content. ELA programming is designed to ensure that students develop English-language proficiency and build academic skills in other areas of the core curriculum. All ELA programming is required to contain the following core components:

- Well-articulated, standards-based, differentiated ELD instruction, specifically designed for ELLs;
- Well-articulated, standards-based, differentiated instruction in the core curriculum, with primary language support;
- Structured experiences designed to develop multicultural proficiency and positive identity.

Services provided through the ELA department include Systematic English Language Development (ELD) and sheltered instruction. Students receive ELD instruction during an allotted time each day. Sheltered Instruction may be provided in mainstream classes, through dedicated sheltered content classes, or both.

APS implemented the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs) to monitor ELL students'

progress toward acquiring academic English during the 2012-2013 school year. The assessment will be administered annually to all ELL students. As with the W-APT screener, test items on the ACCESS assessment are written from the model performance indicators of WIDA's five ELP standards.

Systematic English Language Development. ELD provides instruction in English as its own subject of study. The goal of Systematic ELD is to develop a solid foundation in the English language and increase students' ability to communicate for a range of academic and social purposes. ELD instruction is focused on developing students' receptive and expressive language in the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, which will allow students to engage in critical thinking and further their literacy development. In ELD, students gain practice with English forms, functions, and vocabulary while using a limited academic language. As they build toward fluency, they are expected to transfer the predictable patterns of this academic language to outside content areas. All teachers, including those outside of ELD, have a responsibility in supporting students with this language transfer.

All elementary and middle school ELLs are assigned to a designated ELD block where they receive Systematic ELD instruction. In high school, students scoring at or below the Intermediate level on the CELA placement test are required to take both an ELD course and a sheltered literacy course. High school students whose scores placed them at the Proficient level or in the upper range of Intermediate receive ELD instruction as part of an English/ELD class.

Sheltered Instruction. The term sheltered instruction describes both pedagogical techniques and program designs that are intended to make content standards accessible and meaningful to ELLs. Under the sheltered instruction model, instruction is focused on both content and language objectives. Teachers explicitly define learning goals and new vocabulary and post these for ELL students to access. They also provide opportunities for student-centered, hands-on experiences that use graphic and visual supports.

Every classroom in the district is expected to use sheltering techniques, and teachers are expected to differentiate instruction and to teach language explicitly in order to ensure that all students have access to the same content standards. At the High School level, dedicated sheltered content classes are offered for Beginning, Early Intermediate, and Intermediate students in certain content areas. In content classrooms, ELLs receive grade-level core content courses taught in English using sheltered instruction techniques.

Redesignation and the Exit Process

The expected outcome for ELLs is that they develop proficiency in the English language and exit the ELA program. To ensure that students reach this outcome, state legislation requires districts to establish objective redesignation criteria to ensure that ELLs are meeting the same high content area standards as their non-ELL peers before being

exited from the ELA program. The OCR further requires that exit criteria be crafted in such a way as to ensure that former ELLs will not be placed into academic settings where they will not be able to function successfully without remedial assistance.

APS has established a process for monitoring the academic progress and language development of ELLs that entails an ongoing process of review. After a student enters the ELA program, ELA teachers and other staff regularly review records to track the course of his or her language development. The records they review include but are not limited to CELApro and WIDA-ACCESS results, CSAP/TCAP scores, report card grades, enrollment history, and results of other reading and writing assessments. Taken together, these records form a body of evidence, which is intended to provide a comprehensive view of a student's language development. Based on this body of evidence, teachers and staff determine when a student has developed sufficient English language proficiency in comprehension, speaking, listening, reading, and writing to be redesignated and/or exited from the ELA program.

Once a student is determined to have gained sufficient English proficiency, he or she is officially redesignated from LEP status to Fluent English Proficient (FEP) status. The student then moves to monitoring status for two years. During this time, the lead ELA teacher regularly consults with general education and content area teachers to check and document the progress of the monitored student.
After the two year monitoring period is over, a student is evaluated for formal exit from the ELA program. A decision to exit a student is made based on the following criteria:

- The student has met proficiency requirements on the WIDA-ACCESS assessment;
- The student is at or above the level of Partially Proficient on age- and grade-level academic standards for reading and writing as measured by TCAP;
- The student is at or above the level of Proficient on age- and grade-level coursework and reading assessments for non-ELL peers;
- The student has demonstrated satisfactory academic achievement during the two-year monitoring period.

Professional Development

APS promotes Professional Learning opportunities within the district, through partnerships with universities and colleges in the surrounding area, and through online content providers. The ELA department supports the district's goals for professional learning through professional development initiatives undertaken at both the district and the building levels. Figure 1 provides a detailed model for professional learning that has been put in place by the ELA department.

To ensure that teachers are capable of providing high quality instruction to ELLs, APS has developed the Linguistically Diverse Educator (LDE) certification program. Under this program, APS partners with Regis University and the University of Colorado at

Denver to offer courses in assessment, linguistics, and teaching strategies that are oriented toward teaching second language learners. Teachers who successfully complete a course in each of these three content areas must submit a copy of their transcripts to the APS Human Resources department in order to receive an LDE certificate. Courses taken outside the LDE program may also qualify for credit toward the LDE certificate, subject to the approval of the Human Resources department. In such cases, the department will review a teacher's transcripts to determine whether the outside courses meet the program criteria.

Course training for the LDE program is funded through the APS Professional Learning and grant offices. From 2006 through 2010, APS provided funding for 150 teachers to take courses each semester. Beginning in 2010-11 school year, APS increased the number of slots available to 250 each semester. The same year, the district made completion of the LDE certification program a condition of continued employment for all new hires. Teachers hired prior to the 2009-2010 school year may also participate in the program through available district-funded slots.

Figure 1. Professional Learning Opportunities

District	Building
LDE certification program E.L. Achieve Institutes Systematic ELD Constructing Meaning Academies New teacher orientation and induction ELA teacher leader Monthly teacher leader meetings Coaching with ELA consultant Special Interest Cohorts	Co-planning and co-teaching with ELA teacher leader Building professional development Small group/teams Whole group

Family and Community Involvement

 APS values and encourages family and community involvement, and all staff members are committed to developing successful partnerships with students' families. All schools are eligible to apply for Title III funds to support outreach to families of ELLs. APS has adopted Epstein et al.'s *Keys to Successful School, Family and Community Partnerships* as a model for increasing family and community involvement. The model is detailed in figure 2.

In order to facilitate family and community involvement, APS has collaborated with parents to establish an ELA Parent Advisory Committee (EPAC). The EPAC meets quarterly to communicate with parents, schools, and district personnel. Feedback from all EPAC meetings is recorded and reviewed by the district ELA department to monitor parent concerns and satisfaction.

Figure 2. Family and Community Involvement Model

THE KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS: **Epstein's Six Types of Involvement**	
Type 1: Parenting	Assist families in understanding child and adolescent development and in setting home conditions that support children as students at each grade level. Assist schools in understanding families.
Type 2: Communicating:	Communicate with families about school programs and student progress through effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications
Type 3: Volunteering	Improve recruitment, training, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences at the school and in other locations to support students and school programs.
Type 4: Learning at Home	Involve families with their children in learning at home, including homework, other curriculum-related activities, and individual course and program decisions
Type 5: Decision Making	Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through the PTA/PTO, school councils, committees, action teams, and other parent organizations.
Type 6: Collaborating With the Community	Coordinate community resources and services for students, families, and the school with businesses, agencies, and other groups, and provide services to the community.

Adapted from School, Family, and Community Partnerships, Third Edition, by J.L. Epstein et al. © 2009 by Corwin Press. Reproduction authorized only for the local school site or nonprofit organization that has purchased this book.

Program Evaluation

As part of the Resolution Agreement entered into with the OCR in 2008, APS has agreed to conduct comprehensive evaluations of ALP placement and ELA services every two years. APS has been preparing evaluation reports annually. The current report follows the model established by the evaluations conducted for OCR, and focuses on the 2012-13 school year. The report includes the following elements:

- An analysis of demographic shifts over the past decade to provide context for assessing the demand for ELA services.
- An assessment of the ALP placement and services for ELLs, including number of students served in the ALP program; type(s) of services offered; and the number of students who have waived service.
- An analysis of student achievement, including an assessment of proficiency gains as measured by Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs); analysis of WIDA-ACCESS (formerly the state used CELApro) and TCAP/CSAP growth scores; and a review of the number of students reaching the proficient or advanced level on WIDA-ACCESS.
- An analysis of graduation, dropout, and grade retention rates for ELLs as compared to their non-ELL peers.
- An analysis of special education and gifted and talented referrals and placements to determine whether ELLs are statistically over-represented or under-represented.
- An analysis of results from the annual survey of LDE-certificated or endorsed teachers to evaluate their knowledge of ELD skills and the effectiveness of professional learning opportunities.

APS Demographics

Over the past decade, the communities that APS serves have experienced significant demographic changes. Awareness of these changes is crucial to understanding the need for ELA services. The graph below shows the size of different ethnic groups as a proportion of the total APS population over the past 11 years. Numbers are taken from the annual TCAP/CSAP administration. The most significant growth is noted with the Hispanic student population. While in 2003 Hispanics made up about 38% of the overall APS population, for the past five years they have been the majority (50%+) and continue to show increases.

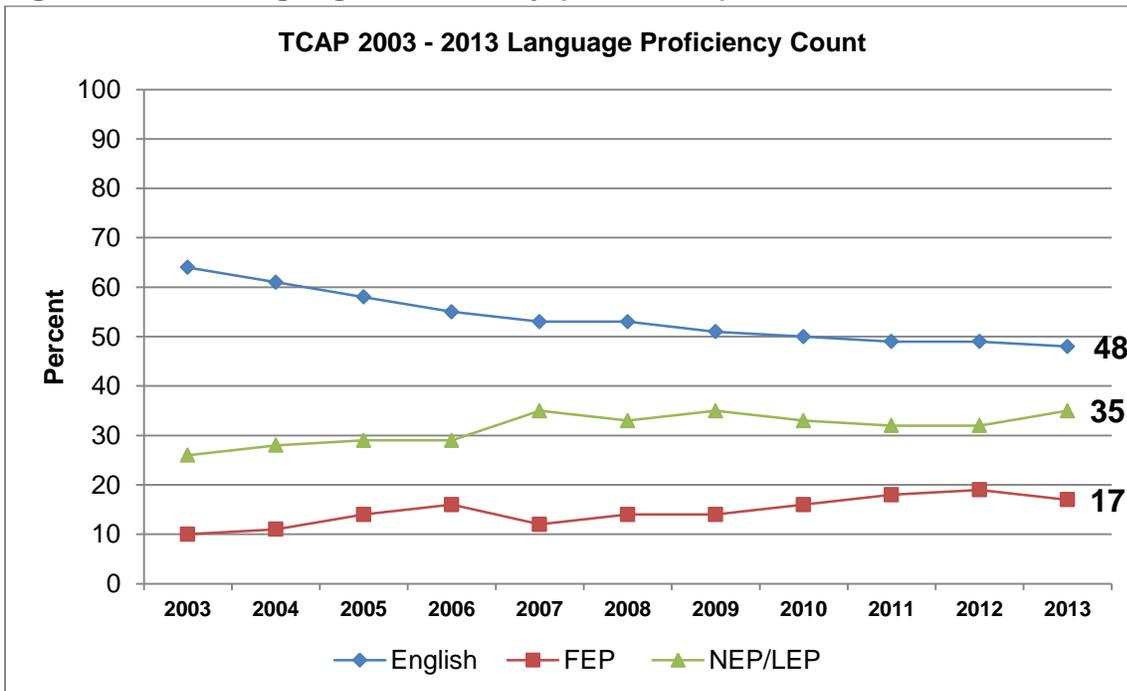While the growth in the Hispanic students does not directly affect the availability and delivery of ELL services, it is correlated with an increase in the proportion of students who speak English as a second language. Figure 4 below shows that the percentage of native English speakers has decreased from 65% to 48% over the past decade. Together these graphs provide a clear sense of the increased demand for ELA services in APS.

Figure 3. APS Demographics (2003-2013).

TCAP 2003 - 2013 Demographics

Legend: Native American, Asian, Black, Hispanic, White, NH-PI, 2 or More
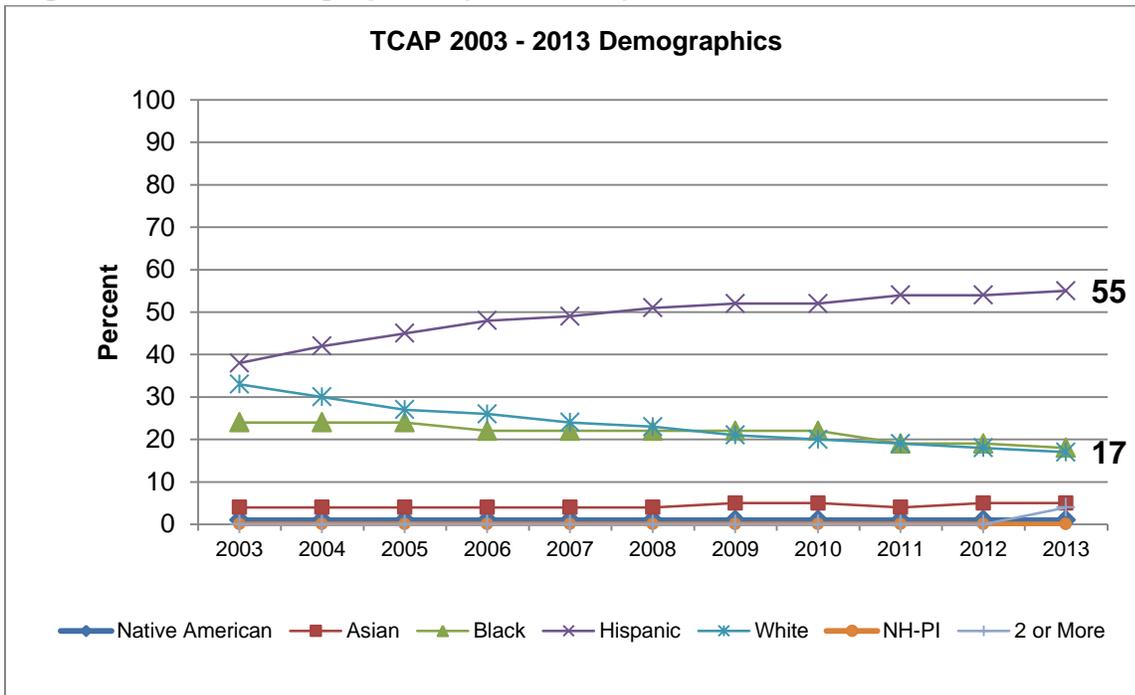
Figure 4. APS Language Proficiency (2003-2013).

TCAP 2003 - 2013 Language Proficiency Count

Legend: English, FEP, NEP/LEP

ALP Placement and ELA Services

Table 1 (below) shows the number of ELL students enrolled in APS by grade level as of October 1, 2013. The table also shows the number (and percentage) of students scheduled into ELD instructional blocks. The numbers for charter school students are included on the last line of the table. High school students who were eligible to receive special education services were also included in this first table. However, some students included in this table were not scheduled into an ELD block; rather, they were scheduled into a special education language arts block.

Scheduling challenges and conflicts often prevent students identified as eligible for special education and ELD services from concurrent enrollment in special education language arts instruction and ELD courses. Site administrators determine the best support for individual students' after an evaluation designed to determine a student's academic support needs. Some students may not progress in language development because of specific reading and writing deficits. Thus, site administrators determine that students' needs are better served in the special education language arts course. The curriculum in this course includes resources specifically designed for English language learners and targeted instruction in reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Overall, during the 2012-2013 school year, 93.1% of eligible students received ELD instruction. Qualified APS staff served 93.1% of ELL students. Consistent with previous experience, the largest proportion of students who received ELD instruction were in elementary and middle school (96.9% and 97.8%. respectively). At the high school level, 68.7% of eligible students received ELD instruction. The percentage of students who were scheduled into a special education language arts course instead of the ELD block increased to 74.5%.

Table 1. APS English Language Learners: Grade by ELD Participation (2012-13).

Grade	NEP	LEP	ELL Total	# ELD	% ELD	# SPED LA	% in ELD or SPED LA
KG	1394	135	1529	1435	93.9%	-	93.9%
1	1178	278	1456	1426	97.9%	-	97.9%
2	485	929	1414	1396	98.7%	-	98.7%
3	434	944	1378	1340	97.2%	-	97.2%
4	366	816	1182	1160	98.1%	-	98.1%
5	252	843	1095	1048	95.7%	-	95.7%
ES Total	4109	3945	8054	7805	96.9%	-	96.9%
6	171	643	814	803	98.6%	-	98.6%
7	168	649	817	798	97.7%	-	97.7%
8	109	527	636	616	96.9%	-	96.9%
MS Total	448	1819	2267	2217	97.8%	-	97.8%
9	110	427	537	414	77.1%	33	83.2%
10	97	460	557	398	71.5%	28	76.5%
11	91	363	454	345	76.0%	31	82.8%
12	190	463	653	354	54.2%	36	59.7%
HS Total	488	1713	2201	1511	68.7%	128	74.5%
Total:	5045	7477	12522	11533	92.1%	128	93.1%
w/Charters	5545	8407	13952	12234	87.7%	132	88.6%

Table 2 shows the number of students (by grade level) whose parents officially waived ELD service for the 2012-2013 school year. Nearly 1 percent of the district's ELLs (198) parents opted out of ELD services.

Table 2. Number of Parents that Waived Services by Grade (2012-2013).

KG	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	Total
4	10	14	18	8	9	21	12	16	17	17	17	35	198

Student Academic Progress & Achievement

Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs). In previous years, APS has reported on the district's progress toward meeting the state's Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs) for ELL instruction. With the ESEA Flexibility waiver, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) has revised its AMAOs. The revised AMAOs still contain three objectives, which are outlined briefly below. A full explanation of the revised objectives can be found in CDE's AMAO handbook for 2011-12.

1. Objective one sets a target for the percentage of ELLs who demonstrate improvement in overall English proficiency as measured by the annual CELA assessment. Prior to the revisions, improvement was determined by looking at the percentage of students who increased at least one proficiency level from one year to the next. The revised objectives base improvement targets on student growth percentiles for the CELA assessment. Districts earn points toward the growth targets under the guidelines outlined in the state's District Performance Frameworks, which function under the terms of the ESEA waiver as the state's accreditation mechanism.

2. Objective two of the AMAOs was not revised. It sets a target for the number of students who score at the Advanced level on the annual CELA assessment. This target increases incrementally each year. The target for 2012 was 7%. In 2011, it was 6%, and in 2010 it was 5%.

3. Objective three of the AMAOs is concerned with ensuring that districts close the performance gap between ELLs and native English speakers in core content areas of reading, writing, and math. In the past, the state set a target for the percentage of ELL students who score at the proficient or advanced level in each subject area of the annual CSAP/TCAP assessment. The revised objectives base targets on student growth percentiles for ELLs on the CSAP/TCAP. They also look at graduation rates for ELLs. As with objective one, districts earn points toward the growth targets under the guidelines outlined in the state's District Performance Frameworks.

The tables below provide a summary the district's 2012 AMAO results.

Table 3. AMAO 1 - Progress in Attaining English Proficiency (ACCESS Growth).

	Median Growth Percentile (MGP)	Points Earned	Points Possible	% of Points	Rating	Target[1]	Target Met?
Elementary	60	2	2	75	Meets		YES
Middle	61	2	2	75	Meets		YES
High	62	2	2	75	Meets		YES
Overall		6	6	75	Meets		YES

Table 4. AMAO 2- English Proficiency Attainment (ACCESS Proficiency).

	Num.	Den.	%[2]	Target	Target Met?
AMAO 2	2,734	13,785	20		YES

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[1] Due to the transition from CELAPro to ACCESS, targets and adequate growth percentiles were not established by the CDE.

[2] With Upper Limit of the Confidence Interval

Table 5. APS Targets for TCAP.

		Median Growth %tile (MGP)	Adequate Growth %tile (AGP)	Made Adequate Growth?	Pts Earn	Pts Poss	% Pts	Rating	Met?
3-5	R	48	54	NO	2	4	50	Approaching	
	W	48	59	NO	2	4	50	Approaching	
	M	55	68	NO	3	4	75	Meets	
6-8	R	55	59	NO	3	4	75	Meets	
	W	54	71	NO	2	4	50	Approaching	
	M	47	85	NO	2	4	50	Approaching	
9-11	R	57	65	NO	3	4	75	Meets	
	W	53	91	NO	2	4	50	Approaching	
	M	50	99	NO	2	4	50	Approaching	
All	R				8	12	66.7	Meets	
	W				6	12	50	Approaching	
	M				7	12	58.3	Approaching	

Graduation Data	Grad Rate	Grad Rate YR. Used	Points Earned	Points Possible	% of Points	Rating	Target Met?
Grad Rate[3]							
Overall							

ELA leaders have identified two causes for the district's failure to meet AMAO three. The first cause is a need for acceleration of student growth in all content areas. The second cause relates to the gap in the number of English learners graduating high school within the state target. In order to address the first cause, the district has put into place multiple supports focused on effective instructional strategies for English learners in the content areas. Figure 2 outlines these supports and their intended outcomes.

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[3] APS will not have graduation rate data for ELLs until January, 2014 when the state provides the data. We will then know if we met our targets and will submit an addendum at that time.

Figure 2. Supports for Acceleration of Academic Proficiency

Support Provided to Improve Content Instruction	Intended Outcome
Constructing Meaning Institute www.elachieve.org Three day institutes offered 6 times during the 2012-13 school year. A secondary CM Institute offered summer 2012. Two secondary Constructing Meaning Institutes (Fall 2013) were facilitated by Ellen Levy, the author of *Constructing Meaning*. Follow ups include school learning walks, ongoing site based professional learning and instructional coaching by ELA Consultants. Administrators are required to attend with their staff.	Teacher application of explicit language for content instruction, sheltering lesson design, academic language production and vocabulary instruction. Accelerates student academic proficiency through specific strategies and techniques to explicitly teach academic language alongside grade level content. Aurora Central and Hinkley goals: to train 100% of their content teachers.
ELA Teacher Leaders: Site based ELA teacher leaders.	Content support through demonstration classrooms, co-planning, and co-teaching, leaders facilitate site and district based professional learning based on site-specific needs.
ELA Consultants: Experts in content instruction for language learners.	Conduct learning walks, facilitate professional learning, guide data teams, co-plan, co-teach, and ACCESS resources.
Middle School Late Start Professional Learning for ELD teachers – 2x/month	For increased effectiveness of ELD instruction at the middle school level. Professional learning strategies from teachers' feedback.
High School Late Start Professional Learning for ELD teachers – 1 hour 2x/month	Develop skills: writing language objectives, analyze student work using WIDA/CELP rubrics, and utilize ELAchieve, Edge, and Constructing Meaning literacy units.
K8 Late Start Professional Learning with Science and ELA collaboration – ELA Consultants	Collaborate with instructional coaches on best practices of English language learners in science class.

The district is aware of the challenges in supporting English language learners in graduation. It is important to take into consideration language learners have the additional challenge of acquiring English. Additionally, English learner graduation rates

mirror the district graduation rates. The chart below outlines the supports for increasing high school graduation rates and the intended outcomes.

Figure 3. Supports to Increase Graduation Rates.

Supports for Increasing Graduation of High School Students	Intended Outcome
Change in district policies	The district revised policies so that students were not being suspended for excessive absences.
Graduation Initiative specialists	These specialists are in place at each high school to support students through counseling. These specialists support students in identifying the specific courses students will need in order to graduate.
ED2020 Credit Recovery	This online program is available for select courses and allows students to receive credit for graduation.
ICAP (Individual Career and Academic Plan)	The ICAP is written for each student in grades 6-12. (The state of Colorado only requires students in 9-12 to have an ICAP.) These ICAPs are written with guidance counselors to supports students in identifying their career goals and set the academic path for meeting those goals.
Secondary Literacy Programming Guide for ELLs	Attachment_2a_Secondary Literacy Programming Guide for ELLs This document outlines the literacy and ELD course trajectory for English language learners grades 9-12.

CELA/ACCESS Growth. The CELA/ACCESS growth model developed by CDE is designed to provide an index of individual student growth across proficiency levels. CELA/ACCESS growth percentiles provide a measure of progress toward language proficiency. A percentile score is calculated for each student who has CELA/ACCESS scores for two consecutive years. For each student, the percentile score compares his or her performance to students in the same grade throughout the state who had similar scores on prior year CELA/ACCESS tests. These percentiles can be aggregated at the grade, school, and district levels by finding the median score for each group of students. Because the 50th percentile will always be the state median value, it is useful to look for substantial differences from 50 when trying to determine whether growth for a given group of students has been high or low.

At the middle and high school levels, APS median growth percentiles have been above the state median for the past three years. Over the same period, median growth

percentiles for elementary students have been below the state median. In 2012, the median growth percentile for students in grades one through five was 47; for students in grades six through eight it was 55; and for students in grades nine through twelve, it was 54.

Table 6 summarizes APS students' CELA/ACCESS performance for the past three years. The median growth percentiles included all students that CDE included on the District Performance Framework.

Table 6. CELA/ACCESS Median Growth Percentiles (2010 - 2013).

	2010		2011		2012		2013	
	n	**MGP**	**n**	**MGP**	**n**	**MGP**	**n**	**MGP**
Grade 01	1332	43.0	1357	42.0	1405	42.0	1427	48.0
Grade 02	1315	42.0	1397	41.0	1376	41.0	1425	56.0
Grade 03	1229	53.0	1375	54.0	1374	52.0	1329	68.0
Grade 04	1140	52.5	1079	47.0	1170	49.0	1156	64.0
Grade 05	899	54.0	1001	53.0	1010	51.0	1074	67.0
Elementary School Total	5919	48.0	6218	47.0	6335	47.0	6411	60.0
Grade 06	714	52.0	711	58.0	845	55.0	792	60.0
Grade 07	681	54.0	629	56.0	619	55.0	747	64.0
Grade 08	577	54.0	611	56.0	565	57.0	544	60.0
Middle School Total	1968	54.0	1972	57.0	2029	55.0	2083	61.0
Grade 09	460	56.0	466	60.0	458	54.0	445	63.0
Grade 10	364	54.0	466	55.0	435	58.0	466	60.0
Grade 11	319	58.0	326	53.5	384	49.0	349	64.0
Grade 12	239	55.0	279	52.0	282	55.0	306	60.0
High School Total	1382	56.0	1483	55.0	1559	54.0	1566	62.0
District Total	9269	51.0	9697	50.0	9923	50.0	10060	60.0

Overall, the data indicate that APS students are performing better over time on the CELA/ACCESS assessment. The overall district median growth percentile in 2013 was 60 compared to 51 in 2010. This suggests that APS students are performing better than 59% of students with similar academic backgrounds on the CELA/ACCESS assessments. There is also a significant change in student growth across all school levels. For example, the elementary school median growth percentile (MGP) average was 48 in 2010 compared to 60 in 2013. Similarly, the middle school MGP rose from 54 in 2010 to 61 in 2013. High schools experienced similar growth with an average MGP of 56 in 2010 to 62 in 2013. This is good news for APS English language learners.

TCAP Proficiency & Growth. The Colorado Growth Model provides a measure of individual student growth across proficiency levels. A student's TCAP (or CSAP) growth percentile indicates how well that student has progressed relative to students with similar achievement backgrounds. The state uses the median growth percentile to summarize growth percentiles for the various student groupings (school, district, ethnicity, etc.). Tables 7 through 10 summarize the district's 2013 TCAP results. The calculations shown in these tables include native English speakers (non-ELLs), NEP, LEP, and FEP students. The tables show the percentage of students in each group that scored proficient or advanced. They also show the median growth percentiles for each group.

Table 7. TCAP Proficiency & Growth: 2013 Reading.

Grade	Non-ELL		NEP		LEP		FEP	
	%P/A	MGP	%P/A	MGP	%P/A	MGP	%P/A	MGP
Grade 3	59%	--	5%	--	50%	--	97%	--
Grade 4	53%	40.0	3%	34.0	30%	42.5	92%	47.0
Grade 5	56%	47.5	4%	39.0	33%	55.0	92%	65.0
Grade 6	63%	52.0	2%	49.0	24%	49.0	90%	56.0
Grade 7	54%	50.0	1%	50.0	15%	59.0	77%	58.0
Grade 8	56%	48.0	1%	55.0	11%	55.0	69%	51.5
Grade 9	58%	55.0	3%	53.0	11%	57.0	70%	65.0
Grade 10	60%	50.0	2%	48.0	15%	54.0	74%	55.0
District Total	57%	49.0	3%	42.0	27%	53.0	79%	57.0

TCAP reading results (table 7.) show the percent proficient or advanced and growth of all students. Both fully-English proficient (FEP) and limited-English proficient (LEP) students experienced greater growth than non-ELL students (57, 43, and 49, respectively). This result is consistent across all grades with the exception of grade 6. LEP 6th graders showed less growth than both non-ELL and FEP students. Proficiency and advanced proficiency rates are also higher for FEP students (79%) compared to non-ELL students (57%). Despite the lower overall proficiency rates for non-English proficient (NEP) and LEP students, we still see growth on the TCAP reading assessment. We expect to see higher MGPs for these two groups of students because they have more ground to cover as they learn English and take the TCAP assessment.

Despite the growth gains, the percent of LEP students who are proficient on the TCAP reading is extremely low (11%) overall. This is troubling especially when we compare elementary and secondary reading proficiency percentages. TCAP reading proficient percentages are highest in grade 3, which is consistent with the performance of both non-ELL and ELL students. The proficiency rates for LEP students beyond grade three decline at every grade level. For example, 30% of LEP 4th graders are proficient on TCAP reading compared to 15% of LEP 10th graders. For non-ELLs, 53% are proficient in grade 4 compared to 60% of 10th graders. Although FEP students have higher

proficiency rates than non-ELLs and both NEP and LEP students, a lower percentage of 10th graders are proficient (74%) when compared to 4th graders (92%).   This is both a non-ELL and ELL challenge. However, the median growth percentiles of LEP students are not adequate to increase proficiency levels substantially.

Table 8. TCAP Proficiency & Growth: 2013 Writing.

Grade	Non-ELL		NEP		LEP		FEP	
	%P/A	MGP	%P/A	MGP	%P/A	MGP	%P/A	MGP
Grade 3	38%	--	1%	--	27%	--	89%	--
Grade 4	38%	40.0	2%	33.0	22%	40.0	83%	50.0
Grade 5	44%	47.0	3%	46.0	23%	55.0	79%	52.0
Grade 6	45%	46.0	2%	58.0	15%	55.0	74%	56.0
Grade 7	50%	49.0	2%	52.0	14%	51.0	73%	49.5
Grade 8	46%	52.0	1%	50.0	8%	57.0	62%	57.0
Grade 9	41%	49.0	0%	48.0	4%	53.0	48%	58.0
Grade 10	34%	46.5	0%	36.0	2%	51.0	37%	49.0
District Total	42%	47.0	2%	44.0	17%	52.0	63%	54.0

Table 8 shows TCAP results for writing. We see similar results for APS students as we did in reading. Both FEP and LEP students show greater gains than their non-ELL peers. Furthermore, FEP students outperform non-ELLs on proficiency rates (63% and 42%, respectively). APS still has challenges with LEP students across all grades where proficiency rates are significantly lower than non-ELL and FEP students. Again, the MGPs are not sufficient to produce the gains in proficiency for LEP students. Furthermore, in grade 9 and 10, there are no NEP students who are proficient in writing. For reading, 4% of 9th graders and 2% of 10th graders were proficient. But, a similar proficiency rate is not occurring in writing. The low proficiency rates are expected for NEP students. However, the MGPs are quite low, especially in grades 3, 4, 9, and 10. The remaining grades show modest growth but still not enough to make the gains that are necessary to increase proficiency in writing.

Table 9shows how students are performing on the Math TCAP assessment. Overall, FEP and LEP students show greater growth on the Math TCAP than non-ell students. However, proficiency and growth rates by grade level declines by grade level. For example, in grade 7, 53% of FEP students were proficient or advanced compared to 37% non-ELL students. The MGPs for these groups were also lower (38 and 43, respectively). With a decrease in proficiency rates, we would expect to see higher growth scores but that is not occurring. The same is true of LEP students in both grades 6 and 7. Although this is a district challenge, the ELD program has an important role to play in helping students achieve growth and/or proficiency on TCAP. Oftentimes, math "word problems" are filled with subtle language nuances that could confuse ELLs. Providing supports for ELLs to recognize and interpret these subtle nuances could help increase performance.

Table 9. TCAP Proficiency & Growth: 2013 Math.

Grade	Non-ELL %P/A	Non-ELL MGP	NEP %P/A	NEP MGP	LEP %P/A	LEP MGP	FEP %P/A	FEP MGP
Grade 3	54%	--	12%	--	53%	--	97%	--
Grade 4	56%	48.0	11%	38.0	49%	53.0	92%	64.5
Grade 5	48%	52.0	5%	40.0	31%	57.0	86%	67.0
Grade 6	47%	45.0	5%	41.5	18%	45.0	71%	49.0
Grade 7	37%	43.0	3%	53.5	10%	43.0	53%	38.0
Grade 8	39%	55.0	3%	54.0	9%	55.5	46%	51.5
Grade 9	26%	52.0	3%	33.5	3%	45.0	31%	52.0
Grade 10	24%	53.0	0%	44.0	2%	49.0	31%	53.0
District Total	42%	49.0	7%	43.0	27%	50.0	54%	52.0

The declining percentage of LEP students' proficiency rates in grades 9 and 10 combined with smaller growth rates 45 and 49, respectively) suggests another challenge for APS. Essentially, over half of the population with similar achievement levels is growing at a higher rate than APS LEP students. More intensive ELD courses for students in grades 7 through 10 are increasingly critical for accelerated growth in LEP student achievement. It is important to remember, however, that the decline in math proficiency and growth rates in grade 7 occurs across Colorado.

Closing the Gap between ELLs and Native English Speakers on ACT scores. Table 10 shows the composite ACT scores for all APS and Colorado students. Consistent with the 2012 ACT results, fully-English proficient students earned the same composite score of non-ELL students. Both groups outperformed all students across APS. The NEP and LEP students' performance are comparable to that of others across the state.

Table 10. ACT Composite Score Averages by Language Proficiency (2013).

2013	All Students	NEP	LEP	FEP	English Speakers
State	20.1	12.7	13.8	17.8	20.9
District	17.1	12.8	13.6	18.0	18.0

Graduation and dropout rates. The most recent graduation and dropout statistics for the district that are available show what occurred during the 2011-2012 school year. Graduation rates for 2013 are not yet available from the CDE.   The table below (Table 11) compares graduation, completer, and dropout rates for both ELLs and non-ELLs within the district and across the state. In addition to the four-year (on-time) graduation and completer rates are rates for students who may require additional time to meet the graduation requirements of the district. The state uses these rates as part of their accountability system for schools and districts.

Across Colorado, LEP students have a 25% lower graduation rate than non-LEP students. The graduation gap between non-LEP and LEP students in APS is 30%. Completer rates for APS LEP students are 32.4% lower than that of their Non-LEP peers. Furthermore, dropout rates are double for LEP students when compared to Non-LEP students. APS LEP students graduate at a lower rate than their state peers regardless of the time (e.g., on-time, 5 years, 6 years). This result is consistent when APS students are compared to their state peers on completer rates. The only area where APS LEP students outperform their state peers is on the dropout rates.

The difference between statewide and APS LEP students dropout rates is 3.7 percentage points. However, the differences between non-LEP and LEP students at the state level are lower than that of APS. Statewide, there is a 2.4 percentage point difference between LEP and non-LEP students who drop out. In APS, that difference is 4.4 percentage points. Clearly, this is a serious challenge for APS students. It is important to identify the root causes of the high dropout rates and implement an evidence-based intervention that could, potentially, decrease these significant differences by increasing LEP student graduation and completer rates.

Table 41. Graduation & Dropout Rates (Class of 2012).

2012	Graduation Rates			Completer Rates			Dropout Rates		
	All	Non-LEP	LEP[4] only	All	Non-LEP	LEP only	All	Non-LEP	LEP only
State On-Time	75.4%	77.8%	53.3%	78.2%	80.9%	54.5%	2.9%	2.7%	5.1%
District On-Time	48%	59.6%	29.2%	49.6%	61.9%	29.5%	5.7%	4.4%	8.8%
State 5-Year	78.7%	80.8%	59.4%	82.9%	85.3%	61.5%			
District 5-Year	58.9%	69.3%	43.3%	61.6%	73.2%	44.2%			
State 6-Year	78.5%	80.4%	60.1%	84.3%	86.5%	63.3%			
District 6-Year[5]	58.8%	68.6%	43.5%	64.1%	75.9%	45.5%			

Graduation Initiatives. Aurora Public Schools is the recipient of a Colorado Education Pathways Grant. The focus of this grant is to support the school district in improving its graduation rate for all students. The grant pays for graduation initiative specialists at each of the 4 comprehensive high schools. These graduation initiative specialists' responsibility is to determine high school students who need additional support in order

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[4] These numbers also include a Charter High School, New America School. Students who attend New America are often older and the focus of this school is to prepare students for a career or life choice, not necessarily high school graduation.

[5] We do not have data for year 7.

to graduate. An early warning system identifies students based on three criteria: attendance, behavior, and credits. Graduation initiative specialists monitor about 100 students at each of the 4 high schools.

All APS students grade 6-12 have an Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP). These ICAP include milestones (benchmarks) that set goals and tasks for students to ensure they are on a path towards graduation. The ICAP includes connecting students with relevant coursework to keep them motivated towards graduation and ultimately their life and career goals. Student goals are monitored yearly by counselors and academic teachers.

Special Education and Gifted and Talented Referrals. Each year the district analyzes enrollment data to determine what proportions of ELLs have been identified as gifted and talented and as special needs. Table 16 shows the percentage of students who receive services through the Aurora Gifted and Talented Education program (AGATE) and through Exceptional Student Services (ESS). The data is disaggregated by language proficiency.

Table 12 shows gifted and talented and special education enrollments in APS schools by language proficiency. The data below indicates that nearly 12% fully-English proficient students have been identified as gifted and talented and participate in enrichment academic programming. This differs from the overall district percentage of 5% and 6.4% for English speakers. The percentage of students who are either Non-English proficient or are of limited English proficiency receiving gifted and talented services is considerably lower. Furthermore, a greater percentage of non-English proficient students are represented in special education programming than FEP and English speaking students. While 10% of all students in the district and 11.9% of English speakers receive special education services, 14.8% of NEP students also receive them. This imbalance requires a deeper analysis of why NEP students are over-represented in special education programs.

Table 12. SPED/AGATE Enrollment by Language Proficiency.

Group	Total n	AGATE		SPED	
		%	n	%	n
NEP	5,548	0.1%	5	14.8%	823
LEP	8,409	0.8%	64	9.1%	768
FEP	5,268	11.7%	615	1.0%	54
English Speakers	20,810	6.4%	1,333	11.9%	2,481
District	40,035	5.0%	2,017	10.3%	4,126

The district's ELA team is working with AGATE leaders to address the underrepresentation of ELLs in AGATE. The district has taken the following steps to address the issue:

- Administering the non-verbal assessment (NAGLIERI) at 2nd grade for all students
- Utilizing CELA growth as an indicator in AGATE identification
- Identifying ELLs as "high potential" in a particular content area to monitor and further develop
- Identifying an AGATE leader in each building who supports classroom teachers with strategies for working with gifted and high potential learners
- Expanding AGATE definition from academic achievement to other areas of giftedness
- Assigning an ELA consultant to Aurora Quest K-8, School for the Gifted

ELD Annual Teacher Survey

Each year, the Accountability and Research Division administers a survey to all ELD teachers. The survey is designed to provide district leaders with information about teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning supports. This helps the ELD department refine existing materials and professional development opportunities so that ELL students have the best access to high quality teaching and language development.

A few highlights of this survey found in this report include:

- Response Rate & Respondent Characteristics
- Attendance at ELAchieve ELD Institutes
- Co-planning for ELD
- Perceptions of the level of support for the materials and professional learning provided for ELD classes.

Response Rate & Respondent Characteristics. There were 195 teachers who responded to the survey that was sent to 469 teachers for a 42% response rate see (table 13). This is similar to the 43% response rate in 2012. Most of the respondents teach kindergarten through fifth grade. The response rate shows that less than half of the teachers who received the survey request – those who teach ELD blocks/courses -- did not respond. Over half of teachers who responded to the ELD survey taught in APS prior to 2009-2010 (see table 14). However, nearly half began teaching in the district after that time.

Table 53. Number of respondents by grade level.

Grade	Number	Percentage of Total Respondents
K-5th	148	75.9%
6th – 8th	25	12.8%
9th – 12th	22	11.3%
TOTAL	195	100.00%

Table 6. Respondents by whether or not they taught in APS prior to the 2009-2010 school year.

Did you start teaching in Aurora Public Schools (APS) before the 2009-2010 school year?	Number	Percentage of Total Respondents
NO	90	45.9
YES	106	54.1

ELAchieve ELD Institute. One of the central elements of the APS response to meeting the needs of ELL students is the ELAchieve ELD Institute, which provides professional learning for all ELD teachers. The Institute provides an opportunity in which teachers can develop their knowledge, understanding, and skills to teach English language learners. Overall, the survey results showed that this Institute plays an important role in the teachers' perceptions of resources and supports for ELD teaching. Table 15 shows the distribution of teachers who attended ELAchieve by grade level across the survey respondents.

Table 7. Distribution of teachers who attended the ELAchieve ELD Institute by grade level.

	I have attended the ELAchieve ELD Institute			
	NO		**YES**	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Grade Level				
K-5th	14	50.1	134	80.2
6th – 8th	6	21.4	19	14.1
9th – 12th	8	28.5	14	8.3

A majority of those who responded to the survey attended the ELAchieve ELD Institute (85.6%) compared to 14.3% of respondents who said they did not attend the Institute. Clearly, the majority of teachers who attended are represented in grades K-5.   The lowest representation of ELAchieve participants is the high school teachers -- nearly one-third of those who did not attend the Institute are high school teachers. Although we do not know if the non-respondents attended the Institute, we expect that a similar percentage of high school ELD teachers would not have participated in the professional development. This would be consistent with the ELD Department's experience working with the ELD block in high schools.

Co-planning for ELD. The collaboration model of ELD instruction is partly founded on collaborative instructional planning. This approach can produce useful lesson plans, reflection, and builds connections between ongoing instruction and assessment. There is a substantial research literature that shows collaborative planning is effective for teacher learning and strengthened instructional practice. Co-planning provides an opportunity for teachers to determine which strategies will work for which students, reflect on what did or did not occur in the classroom, and assess the extent that the

instructional plans worked with students. A challenge with this model is that often teachers say that they need the <u>time</u> to do this effectively and that the demands of the school day do not allow them to collaborate in a deep and meaningful way. When co-planning is sporadic the benefits of the strategy go unrealized.

The results of the survey show that the majority of participants are co-planning for ELD either weekly or biweekly (see table 16). The majority of co-planning is done with ELA Teacher Leaders. The majority of survey respondents reported that the support they received from ELA teacher leaders and ELA consultants was moderately to strongly supportive.

Across grade levels, a majority of respondents report that they co-plan for ELD from every other week to once a week. Furthermore, they say that they co-plan with multiple individuals including language proficiency teams, teacher leaders, and grade level teams. The grade level team co-planning in elementary is not surprising given that elementary schools are structured more by grade level than by discipline. However, nearly 15% of ELD teachers (across all grades) do not co-plan at all.

Table 8. Frequency of co-planning for ELD instruction.

How often do you co-plan for ELD?	Grade Level					
	K – 5th		6th – 8th		9th – 12th	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Never	19	12.8	2	8.0	9	42.9
Once a month	15	10.1	1	4.0	1	4.8
Every other week	53	35.8	4	16.0	1	4.8
Once a week	61	41.2	18	72.0	10	47.6
Yes, I co-plan with…	#	%	#	%	#	%
Teacher leader	74	50.0	19	76.0	9	40.9
Language proficiency team	53	35.8	8	32.0	7	31.8
My grade level team	66	44.6	8	32.0	4	18.2
No one (I do not co-plan for ELD)	19	12.8	1	4.0	9	40.9
Yes, I co-plan with…	Percentage of those who co-plan (don't co-plan) by grade level					
	K – 5th		6th – 8th	9th – 12th		ALL
Teacher leader	37.9		9.7	4.6		52.3
Language proficiency team	27.2		4.1	3.6		34.9
My grade level team	33.8		4.1	2.1		40.0
No one (I do not co-plan for ELD)	9.7		.5	4.6		14.9

Nearly half of those who attended (or didn't attend) the ELAchieve ELD Institute, co-planned ELD lessons at least once per week (see table 17). It appears that those who

co-plan ELD tend to do so with multiple sources. Some, for example, may co-plan with a teacher leader and a language proficiency team. Others may co-plan with only one source such as a grade level team. However, half of the respondents who attended the ELAchieve ELD Institute reported that they co-plan with teacher leaders. Furthermore, even those who do not attend the ELAchieve ELD Institute co-plan with others.

Table 9. Frequency of co-planning for ELD instruction by ELAchieve ELD Institute Attendance.

How often do you co-plan for ELD?	_I have attended the ELAchieve ELD Institute_			
	NO		**YES**	
	#	%	#	%
Never	6	22.2	24	14.1
Once a month	4	14.8	13	7.8
Every other week	4	14.9	54	32.3
Once a week	13	48.1	76	45.5
Yes, I co-plan with…				
Teacher leader	16	57.1	86	51.2
Language proficiency team	6	21.4	62	36.9
My grade level team	13	46.4	65	38.7
No one (I do not co-plan for ELD)	4	14.3	25	14.9

How often do you co-plan for ELD?	**NO**	**YES**	**ALL**
Never	3.1	12.4	15.5
Once a month	2.1	6.7	8.8
Every other week	2.1	27.8	29.9
Once a week	6.7	39.2	45.9
Yes, I co-plan with…	Percentage of those who co-plan (don't co-plan) by ELAchieve Institute		
Yes, I co-plan with…	**NO**	**YES**	**ALL**
Teacher Leader	8.2	43.9	52.0
Language proficiency team	3.1	31.6	34.7
My grade level team	6.6	33.2	39.8
No one (I do not co-plan for ELD)	2.0	12.8	14.8

<u>Perceptions of the level of support for the materials provided for ELD classes</u>. Survey respondents believe that the ELD resources available to them help them teach ELD courses, effectively (see table 18). However, less than half reported that the ELAchieve websites support their teaching practice. Furthermore, nearly half say that the resources on the 'U' drive support them. This is significant and suggests that the ELD Department could revise those resources – in collaboration with ELD teachers – to determine what would be most beneficial for effective teaching of APS ELL students.

Table 10. Perceptions of resource supports.

How supportive do you believe each of the resources listed below has been to you?	Combination of Moderately Supportive and Strongly Supportive	
	Number	*Percent*
ELAchieve Binder	152	78.4
ELAchieve Websites	78	41.2
Outside Websites	121	63.4
ELA Planning Guide	133	68.6
Resources on the 'U' Drive	95	49.2

Perceptions of the level of support for combined resources and combined professional learning activities. The ELD survey is administered annually to ELD teachers. Much of the analysis has examined descriptive data for individual survey items. The Accountability & Research Division (APS) chose a different analytic strategy to understand more about ELD teachers' perceptions and experiences with the supports and professional learning opportunities available to them. Rather than report descriptive statistics solely on individual items, three scales were created to measure overall beliefs about material supports and professional development.

Scale Development. Scales to measure overall beliefs about resource supports were created by summing the results from survey questions (see Table 19). Three scales were created: Level of belief that all resources combined are supportive of ELD teaching, level of belief that all professional development resources combined are supportive of ELD teaching, and the frequency that teachers use specific ELD resources. Cronbach's alpha **($α$)** was used to measure internal consistency (e.g., how closely each of the items in the scale are related to one another).

Table 11. Resource support scale development.

Scale Items	(α)
1. Level of belief that all resources are supportive.	.68
How supportive do you believe the ELA Binder has been to you?	
How supportive do you believe the ELAchieve websites has been to you?	
How supportive do you believe the Outside websites has been to you?	
How supportive do you believe the ELA Planning Guide has been to you?	
How supportive do you believe the U Drive resources has been to you?	
2. Level of belief that all professional development resources are supportive.	.81
How supportive has TL Support been to you?	
How supportive has co-panning support been to you?	
How supportive has ELA Consultant been to you?	
How supportive has school-based pro learning Support been to you?	
How supportive has district-based professional learning Support been to you?	
3. Level of Resource use.	.64
How consistently are flip charts, lesson plans, visuals, etc. shared within your building?	
How consistently do you use the ELD Planning Guide?	
How OFTEN do you refer/use the ELD flowchart for planning?	
How OFTEN do you refer/use the ELD flowchart for self-reflection?	

The highest possible mean for scales 1 and 2 that would indicate respondents' belief that all resources are strongly supportive is 15. Any mean closer to zero indicates that respondents perceive the items as less supportive of their ELD teaching practices. For the last scale, the highest possible mean would be 8 ('0' equals never, '1' equals sometimes, and '2' equals often).

The data shown in Table 20 indicates that those who attended the ELAchieve ELD Institute perceive the resources and professional learning as moderately supportive in their work. There were statistically significant differences between those who attended the institute and those who did not. The means fall just above the halfway mark between 0 (not at all supportive) to 15 (highly supportive). The same is true for those who have completed the 9 credit LDE courses or are in the process of completing them (those respondents who said 'no' to the question asking them about completion). Again, the mean differences are statistically significant. This would suggest that those who have some training or background in LDE recognize the importance of these resources to support them in ELD instruction. However, on a cautionary note, teachers perceive the resources as moderately supportive rather than strongly supportive. Strengthening the quality of and access to the resources could enhance the ELD teachers' perceptions that they are assets to their teaching practices.

Table 20. Perceptions of resource support by ELAchieve and course participation.

	I attended the ELAchieve ELD Institute.		I have NOT completed the 9 credit courses and am NOT in the process of completing them.	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Level of support provided by all resources (binder, websites, planning guide, and shared drive)	8.64*	6.77	7.19	8.71*
Level of support provided by all professional learning activities (TL, co-planning, ELA consultant, School-based, District-based)	9.07**	6.50	7.16	9.08**

*$p < .05$, ** $p < .001$

We also learned that K-8 grade teachers perceive higher levels of support provided by professional development (see table 21). This differs significantly across grade levels. Elementary and middle school teachers also use the ELD resources more frequently than their high school counterparts. However, the mean signifies that on average ELD teachers use the resources 'sometimes'. It would be important to know why teachers use the resources sometimes rather than often or even daily in their teaching practices. When both results are examined, a need to focus support at the high school level for ELD instruction arises. High school ELD teachers need high quality professional development and understanding on how use of instructional resources, effectively.

Table 21. Resource support and resource use scales by grade level.

	Grade Level			
	K - 5th	6th - 8th	9th 12th	All
Level of support provided by all professional learning activities (TL, co-planning, ELA consultant, School-based, District-based)	8.97	**9.00***	6.43	8.70
Level of use of resources (flips charts, visuals, lesson plans, planning guide, flowchart for planning, flowchart for self reflection).	**4.97*****	4.96	3.23	4.77

*$p < .05$, ** $p < .001$, *** $p < .001$

Table 22. Summary of LDE Certified and Endorsed Teachers Teaching ELD.

As of October 2013	# of sections	Total # of ELD teachers	# of Certified or Endorsed teachers	# of teachers working towards certificate or endorsed	% of LDE certified or Endorsed teachers	Oct 2012 % of LDE Certified or Endorsed teachers
Elementary Schools	343	335	198	66	59%	67%
K8 Schools	28	27	13	3	48%	64%
Middle Schools***	114	34	25	6	73.5%	92.5%
High Schools***	65	38	21	4	55%	42.5%
Charter Schools	58	29	8	2	28%	87%[6]

*****At the middle and high school level, one teacher may teach multiple sections of ELD.*

The data from 2012-13 show that the percentage of LDE certified or endorsed teachers providing ELD instruction has decreased over the previous year. Overall, the data show that 57.8% of those who are currently teaching ELD are LDE certified or endorsed. Furthermore, 18.5% of ELD teachers are working towards certification or endorsement. However, 42.1% (N=198) of ELD teachers are not certified or endorsed. The lack of appropriate credentials for teaching ELD is likely one of the reasons why ELL students are not performing as well as their state peers and non-ELL APS students on assessments and high school graduation rates.

After reviewing table 22 it is apparent that some school levels have significantly fewer LDE certified or endorsed teachers teaching ELD. One reason for this decrease could be due to schools that have large staff turnover rates, and high numbers of new teachers who have not yet completed the LDE certification. Human Resources and the ELA Director will work with Principals of these schools to identify areas of need and create an action plan to increase the number of LDE certified or endorsed teachers providing ELD instruction.

The table below (23) summarizes teachers hired by the district since 2009-10 and the extent to which the Linguistically Diverse Education Certification (LDE) has been completed.

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[6] Includes all charters.

Table 23. APS Condition of Employment (COE) Completion.

	Completed COE	In progress	Failure to Complete: *No longer with the district*	Failure to Complete: *Non-renewed for failure to complete COE*
2009-10	206	NA	100	4
2010-11	214	NA	146	0
2011-12[7]	93	91	101	0
2012-13[8]	41	250	113	NA
2013-14[9]	13	432	4	NA

Aurora Public Schools, a large urban school district, still needs highly qualified teachers to support English Language Learners. APS seeks to hire the highest caliber candidates for teaching positions. Supporting teachers to complete the LDE coursework, as seen by the numbers above, will need to continue. Aurora understands its ongoing commitment to provide this high quality professional learning as new staffs are hired yearly.

The district understands that at this time there is still a need for more LDE certified and endorsed teachers. Those teachers that are not currently certified or endorsed co-plan with the support of an ELA Teacher Leader and ELA Consultants. All ELD teachers are monitored through learning walks, classroom observations by ELA consultants and school administrators. The ELA Director and the Human Resources Department will meet with those schools that have fewer LDE certified and endorsed teachers to create a plan so that the teachers providing ELD instruction are certified or endorsed. APS has also committed to not renewing teachers who do not seek LDE certification or endorsement.

Students are placed in ELD blocks based on English language proficiency level. Individualized ELD needs of students are addressed through differentiated lesson plans for ELD. For example, ELD lessons for Level 1 (Entering) and Level 2 (Emerging) students focus more on oral language development. When students' progress in English language proficiency to Level 3 (Developing) and 4 (Expanding), ELD instruction then includes short texts for reading and writing. However, structured language practice opportunities to build oral language fluency are integral to all levels of ELD instruction. Research shows that while language learners make gains in oral proficiency, all levels of ELD instruction should include oral language development.

To support schools with effectively planning for ELD instruction, the district ELA Consultants and teacher leaders created an ELD Planning guide that outlines specific language functions to teach throughout the year. These language functions are to be

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[7] Finish Dec 2013.
[8] Finish in Dec 2014.
[9] Begin coursework in Fall 2014, finish Dec 2015

taught through the lens of reading, writing, speaking and listening domains. Teachers use these planning guides and additional resources to differentiate ELD instruction in order to meet student needs.

Individualized IEP's for ELL students. In order to meet the needs of some ELLs that also have identified learning disabilities, a new course was adopted to better meet their literacy and linguistic needs. Beginning in the 2013-14 school year, targeted students who are in *Language!* Course and need ELD services will receive ELD during a 30 minute portion of the *Language!* Course.

APS Exceptional Student Services department (ESS) continues to provide a bilingual assessment team consisting of two bilingual psychologists and two bilingual speech/language specialists. The department has hired and retained 2 additional bilingual psychologists and several bilingual speech/language specialists to provide special education services in schools.

The ESS bilingual team continues to work with the ELA Department to monitor the referral process and forms to improve our ability to provide quality assessment to students whose primary language is other than English. District approved interpreters are trained with basic interpreting information and all interpreters used for special education meetings or testing receive additional training about special education, IEP components, confidentiality, and technical vocabulary associated with special education. Interpreters used during assessments receive additional training in the most common tests that allow them to assist in the administration of valid and reliable tests.

Bilingual Team members are present at district special education meetings to review the referral process, disseminate the referral form, and answer questions. Information and referral forms are on the district website. Throughout the year, the team sends reminders to special education staff, working closely with one or two assigned schools to improve staff understandings of testing and educating students whose first language is other than English.

Redesignation. APS has changed its LEP re-designation procedures due to the addition of the WIDA ACCESS assessment. Students have two essential vehicles for re-designation: a) automatic re-designation – based on ACCESS and TCAP assessment results and (b) consultant review - for those students who have WIDA ACCESS scores but not TCAP results. Students who are not re-designated as FEP will remain as LEP students. However, their language proficiency statuses will be updated based on their WIDA ACCESS Overall Composite Score. Table 24 shows the re-designation criteria.

Table 24. ELL redesignation criteria.

Automatic Redesignation	Reviewed Redesignation	Non-Redesignation
WIDA ACCESS Listening Proficiency score of 5.0 or above	WIDA ACCESS Listening Proficiency score of 5.0 or above	Students with Overall Composite Scores between 1.0 and 2.9 will be NEP
WIDA ACCESS Speaking Proficiency score of 5.0 or above	WIDA ACCESS Speaking Proficiency score of 5.0 or above	Students with Overall Composite Scores between 3.0 and 4.9 will be LEP
WIDA ACCESS Reading Proficiency score of 5.0 or above	WIDA ACCESS Reading Proficiency score of 5.0 or above	
WIDA ACCESS Writing Proficiency score of 4.5 or above	WIDA ACCESS Writing Proficiency score of 4.5 or above	
TCAP Reading Proficiency level of PP-H or above	No TCAP Reading data available from prior year	
TCAP Writing Proficiency level of PP-H or above	No TCAP Writing data available from prior year	
WIDA ACCESS Listening Proficiency score of 5.0 or above	WIDA ACCESS Listening Proficiency score of 5.0 or above	

Colorado began using the ACCESS assessment during the 2012-2013 school year to identify ELL students' English proficiency. It is aligned to the Colorado English Language Proficiency (CELP) standards for ELL students. This assessment is given annually to measure students' progress toward English acquisition. Table 25 shows the description of the language proficiency levels of the ACCESS assessment.

Table 25. Description of ACCESS Proficiency Levels.

	Proficiency Level	Description of English Language Proficiency Level (from WIDA Access)
1	Entering	Knows and uses minimal social language and minimal academic language with visual support.
2	Beginning	Knows and uses some social English and general academic language with visual support.
3	Developing	Knows and uses social English and some specific academic language with visual support.
4	Expanding	Knows and uses social English and some technical academic language.
5	Bridging	Knows and uses social & academic language working at grade level.
6	Reaching	Knows and uses social and academic language at the highest level measured by this test.

The district set of goal of having ELL students reach proficiency within five years of enrolling in APS. To evaluate progress toward this goal, we examined the 2012 and 2013 CELAPro/ACCESS scores of students who, in 2008, were Kindergarteners designated as NEP. Of the initial cohort of 1,469 students, 1,001 or 68% of students were still enrolled in the district in the 2012 school year.

Table 26. 2008 NEP Kindergarten Cohort (n=1001) with 2012/2013 Scores.

2008 NEP Kindergarteners	2012		ACCESS Proficiency Levels[10]	2013	
CELAPro Proficiency Levels	%	N		%	N
Beginner - 1	4.5%	45	Entering -1	0.1%	1
Early Intermediate - 2	12.7%	127	Beginning – 2	2.7%	27
Intermediate - 3	26.9%	269	Developing -3	13.2%	132
Proficient (LEP) - 4	41.8%	418	Expanding -4	23.7%	237
Advanced - 5	7.3%	73	Bridging – 5	30.6%	306
			Reaching - 6	8.0%	80
Redesignated – Did not take test	3.8%	38	Redesignated – Did not take test	20.0%	200

Note. Includes KG students identified as NEP in the 2008 October count file and included in the 2011-12 and 2012-13 October count file.

Our analysis shows (see table 26) within 4 years 49.1% of students are limited English proficient or advanced. By year five, 30.6% of the 2008 NEP kindergarten cohort is using both social and academic English and are working within grade level. Eight percent achieved the highest level tested. The analysis also shows that 36.9% of the NEP kindergarten cohort is still working toward proficiency. In fact, 13.2% still requite visual support. Finally, a small percentage of students have not progressed beyond knowing minimal or some English (both social and academic) and still require visual supports for English language acquisition.

APS still needs to make progress on reaching the district goal of English proficiency within 5 years for ELLs. Students tested in 2013 are now in the fifth grade. The academic challenges are increasing as APS students move up in grade levels. The fact that over one-third of ELL students remain in the developing and expanding levels in grade five is troubling. District instructional leaders need to determine what is happening that is slowing students' progress on English language acquisition and remedy it.

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[10] Colorado began using the ACCESS assessment to identify and place ELL students. The category names are different.

Conclusion

The final section of this evaluation presents key findings and recommendations to strengthen APS' English language development programs and services.

Key Findings

- The proportion of Hispanic students in APS continues to rise while we see declines in white and black student populations. Percentages of Native American, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and students with two or more races remain flat.
- English language speakers and FEP student percentages are steadily declining while the percentage of NEP students increases.
- Overall, 93.1% of APS students participate in ELD courses.
- Very few APS parents opt out of ELD services for their children.
- The district continues to meet AMAO's 1 and 2 while struggling with meeting TCAP and graduation growth targets.
- APS student performance on the ACCESS assessment shows that, overall, APS ELLs outperform 60% of their peers with similar academic achievement histories.
- Although TCAP reading, writing, and math median growth percentiles are over 50 for LEP and FEP students, the percentage of LEP students proficient in reading, writing, and math declines at every grade level.
- FEP math TCAP proficiency rates mirror the district with performance declines that occur beginning in grade 7.
- APS LEP students had a similar ACT average composite score when compared with their peers across Colorado. FEP students in APS have higher average ACT composite scores than their district English-speaking peers.
- The CELAPro/ACCESS results show that students are making progress toward English language proficiency as measured by the ELL assessments in grades 4 and 5. However, there is room for improvement as over one-third of students are still not proficient after 5 years of continuous enrollment in APS ELD classes.
- APS LEP student dropout rates are double that of non-ELL students in the same schools.
- Whether LEP students graduate on-time or within 5 – 6 years, their rates are lower than non-ELL district peers. Less than 50% of ELL students graduate on-time or within 5 – 6 years.
- Nearly 15% of NEP students are offered special education services compared to 11.9% of non-ELL students. The percentages are lower for LEP and FEP students.
- The percentage of FEP students identified as gifted and talented are nearly double the rate of non-ELLs.
- The response rate for the ELD teacher survey was less than 50%.
- ELAchieve Institute participants have higher positive perceptions of ELD supports and professional development than non-participants.

- High school teachers who responded to the ELD annual survey are less likely to co-plan ELD lessons with other teachers.
- Less than 50% of respondents view the ELAchieve websites and 'U' drive resources as moderately to strongly supportive.
- The lowest percentage of LDE certified/endorsed teachers occur at the K-8 level (when charter schools are removed from the equation).
- The number of students re-designated remained stable: 944 (in 2011-12) to 933 (2012-13).

<u>Recommendations</u>

#1: Create a district-wide focus on the Alternative Language Program Framework (ALP).

The ALP is an evidence-based model that provides direction for Tier 1 instruction for English Language Learners. However, the principles found in the ALP are transferrable across both ELL and non-ELL student populations. Currently, district leadership does not make the provision of linguistically diverse education a condition of employment for administrators. However, many of the academic challenges APS ELL students experience arise from a lack of ALP knowledge, understanding, and implementation. Principals and other school leaders are accountable for the academic success of all APS students including ELLs. Effective instruction requires effective school leadership that arises when instructional leaders have a working knowledge and understanding of what needs to occur for students to learn.

#2: Increase TCAP growth rates through supports for ELL student academic performance.

Oftentimes, an issue arises in which ELL students, who are learning English, are unaware of some subtle nuances of English that is often found in assessments. Provide assessment supports such as word lists and definitions that help students understand assessment questions and answer them regardless of their English limitations. However, these supports are not sufficient to raise ELL student achievement rates. The ELL coaches have a unique opportunity to identify specific needs that teachers want related to assessment support. Ask teachers what they think will help them in the classroom to ensure that ELL students perform as well as or better than their non-ELL peers.

#3: Provide at-the-elbow professional development for principals to implement school-wide ELL programming and support.

All schools in APS have large numbers of ELL students. Yet, there is an apparent discrepancy in the way students are scheduled into ELD courses, especially at the secondary level. Email and introductions at trainings are not sufficient to make sure principals and assistant principals understand the importance of scheduling students

into appropriate ELD courses. Again, LDE certification is not a condition of employment for school administrators and requiring that it become a condition could actually decrease the pool of eligible principals, significantly. Therefore, it is critical that principals and assistant principals work closely with ELL coaches and leadership to know what is needed to educated ELL students effectively and helps them maximize their potential. Part of this support includes creating models of classroom observations that pay particular attention to strategies teachers use to educate ELL students beyond the ELD classroom. Use the ALP to create a model classroom observation for ELL students.

#4: Assess all of APS' graduation initiatives that affect ELL students.

Dropout rates are high and graduation rates are low for ELL students. It is clear from the cohort data that student proficiency rates increase – but only minimally. The early warning signs do not appear to serve ELL students sufficiently since their dropout rates are double that of non-ELLs. The LDE coaches could use classroom observations to indicate what is happening across the district at the classroom level to facilitate or debilitate ELL student engagement in classes. While student motivation is also a factor in student dropout and graduation rates, teachers can only control what they do in the class. However, if a majority of students are disengaged, then it is appropriate and necessary to examine the lessons and lesson delivery mechanisms to understand why students disengage from their classes.

#5: Understand what is occurring in the NEP student population related to special education and determine what additional supports students need (beyond special education and ELD courses) to succeed, academically.

Raw numbers indicate that nearly one-fifth of NEP students participate in Special Education (SPED) programming. However, in reading the sample assessments provided by the Exceptional Student Services (ESS) department, it became apparent that some of the issues related to special education identification and supports extend beyond the traditional SPED supports. For example, some students have recently arrived in the US after fleeing civil wars and refugee camps. In another school district, 67% of students who were participating in an 8th grade credit recovery program were identified as suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder brought on by war and refugee camp experiences.[11] It is important to identify those student experiences and provide additional supports that address the emotional well-being of our students.

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[11] The information provided here arose from this evaluator's experience in an urban school district in Minnesota during the 2006-2007 school year.