

1. Rationale

The Ontario Ministry of Education uses the term English Language Learner (ELL) to identify a student whose first language is a language other than English or is a variety of English that is significantly different from the variety used for instruction in Ontario schools, and who may require focused education supports to assist them in attaining proficiency in English.

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) uses the term multilingual learner (ML) to be inclusive of a wide range of students, recognizing that for some students, English is not their first language and that they require language supports regardless of their place of birth and/or number of years in Canada.

The SCDSB supports students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Educators are responsible for responding to the needs of an ML so that they can meet curriculum expectations while building their confidence, sense of belonging, and proficiency in English.

2. Policy

It is the policy of the SCDSB that schools be provided with direction and support to meet the needs of an ML so that this group of students can develop the skills necessary for academic success while valuing and maintaining their own cultural and linguistic identities.

3. Definitions

3.1 ML – a student with language skills/assets who is learning curriculum (content) where their primary language(s) is/are different from the primary language of instruction (English or French). This is an umbrella term to include English as a Second Language (ESL) and English Literacy Development (ELD) learners.

3.2 Steps to English Proficiency (STEP) – a framework for assessing and monitoring the language acquisition and literacy development of an ML across the Ontario Curriculum.

4. ML guidelines

4.1 Students who may require ML support:

4.1.1 A Canadian-born ML:

4.1.1.1 Indigenous learners whose first language is other than English; and,

4.1.1.2 students who were born in communities that have maintained distinct cultural and linguistic tradition, who have a first language that is not English, and who attend English language schools.

4.1.2 Newcomers from other countries:

4.1.2.1 students who have arrived in Canada with their families as part of a voluntary, planned immigration process;

4.1.2.2 students who have arrived in Canada as a result of a war or other

crisis in their home country, and who may have left their homeland under conditions of extreme urgency; and,

4.1.2.3 international or 'visa' students who have paid fees to attend school in Ontario and who may plan to attend a Canadian post-secondary institution.

4.2 Implementation

4.2.1 To implement this policy, the SCDSB will:

4.2.1.1 direct Ministry of Education funding for ESL for the benefit of an ML;

4.2.1.2 establish procedures for reception, orientation, placement and programming for an ML;

4.2.1.3 support administrators to assign staff to assess the English language proficiency of an ML;

4.2.1.4 collect updated STEP data aligned to a student's reporting period, in order to track students' progress related to both English language proficiency and academic achievement of an ML over time; and,

4.2.1.5 provide support for professional learning to help educators effectively design and implement instruction for an ML.

4.2.2 To implement this policy, educators will:

4.2.2.1 use the information in the appropriate STEP continuum to design and implement instruction for an ML, including accommodations and/or modifications that are required for academic success; and,

4.2.2.2 update the STEP levels for each identified ML using the STEP recording tool in the Student Management System.

5. **Administrative procedures**

The Director of Education is authorized to provide the administrative procedures necessary to implement this policy.

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