

Guidelines for the Identification and Assessment of Limited English Proficient Students/English Language Learners

Overview of School Districts' Requirements in Serving Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students/English Language Learners (ELL)

In its publication *The Provision of an Equal Education Opportunity to Limited English Proficient Students* (1992), the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, provides guidelines to school districts regarding their legal obligation to language minority students. The following is a summary of the guidelines.

First, school districts must identify all students whose primary or home language is other than English (PHLOTE). The district then needs to assess all PHLOTE students to determine if they are limited English proficient and need special language assistance to effectively participate in the district's instructional program.

After a school district has identified LEP students who need assistance, it must determine what kind of special language service program is to be provided and it must implement the program. Ohio does not prescribe a specific type of intervention program. Thus, school districts have the flexibility to decide on the educational approach that best meets the need of their LEP/ELL students. The program, however, must be based on sound theory and best practice. In other words, the program must be one that is likely to be effective in meeting the educational needs of its language minority students. Whatever program is selected, it must provide effective instruction that leads to academic achievement and timely acquisition of proficiency in English. For guidelines and further information about programmatic options for LEP/ELL students can be obtained through the Lau Resource Center of the Ohio Department of Education (see contact information at the end of this document)..

In implementing its program, school districts must ensure that staff are properly trained and that appropriate curricular materials are used. In addition, classroom facilities should be comparable to those used by other students. School districts have the responsibility to effectively notify national origin minority group parents of school activities which are called to the attention of other parents. Such a notice, to be effective, may have to be in a language other than English.

Once a school district implements a special language program for its LEP students, it must monitor student progress on a regular basis and take steps to modify the program if the students are not making reasonable progress.