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# Increasing English As A Second Language Teacher Retention

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INCREASING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHER RETENTION

by

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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master  
of Arts in Teaching English as a Second Language.

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## Abstract

With the increasing number of English Learners entering schools across the nation, there is an increased need for high-quality English as a Second Language teachers. (Watlington, Shockley, Guglielmino, and Felsher, 2010) School districts spend time and money to hire and recruit high-quality teachers. Many teachers in various districts face an overwhelming workload. Due to the overwhelming workload, many teachers leave the profession. Districts are faced with increased costs to recruit and hire quality teachers. (Brill and McCartney, 2008; Cha and Cohen Vogel, 2011; Sharplin, O'Neill and Chapman, 2011) Students' education is compromised when the turnover rate is high. (Kraft, Marinell, and Shen-Wei Yee 2016) This research project addresses the reasons teachers leave the teaching profession and what can be done to retain high-quality teachers. The project artifact provides a guidebook for English as a Second Language teachers. The intent of the project artifact is to ease the workload of English as a Second Language teachers in order to increase retention. The increase in English as a Second Language teacher retention rates will defer district costs as well as raise the quality of education English Learners experience.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **Introduction**

#### **Purpose**

There is no arguing that there are increasing numbers of English Learners (ELs) entering our schools. English Learners refers to someone whose primary language is not English, but who is in the process of learning the English language. These learners come to us with unique needs, challenges, and barriers. They also enrich the culture and diversity of our schools and communities. In order to meet the needs of English Learners, as well as capitalize on their assets, schools must hire highly-qualified teachers. Schools must not only attract highly-qualified teachers, but also must retain them. Teachers need a workload that is not only manageable, but one that has appropriate supports in place to create the desire to work in a school.

The purpose of my project is to gather specific information for a guidebook for English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers to help increase teacher retention in the school district I teach. This chapter introduces the issues of teacher retention that schools are facing and defines the key concepts. It also describes my personal interest in the topic and the challenges facing ESL teachers. The chapter concludes with a discussion on some strategies for teacher success.

#### **ESL Teacher Retention**

According to Van Zandt Allen (2013), “retention relates to identifying and keeping teachers with the most potential for shaping student academic achievement” (p. 75). Teacher retention is an important issue. As Watlington, Shockley, Guglielmino, and

Felsher (2010) point out, retaining quality teachers not only saves districts time and money, it also benefits students by providing consistency and quality education.

Watlington, Shockley, Guglielmino, and Felsher (2010) state, “Teacher shortage and retention problems have been documented to have an excessively negative impact on students that are at-risk, as well as on schools classified as low performing” (pg. 24). The school district I work in has many marginalized students-that is students who come from lower socioeconomic families and/or diverse cultural and linguistic communities. In fact, in one of our buildings in the district, 43% of the population qualifies for free and reduced lunch benefits. Fifty-six percent of the students in my school district are proficient on state reading assessments, and fifty-seven percent are proficient on state math assessments. There is definite room for improvement.

Cost is also a huge factor in regards to teacher retention. Watlington, Shockley, Guglielmino, and Felsher (2010) state:

Using a U.S. Department of Labor estimate, the AEE released a national analysis of teacher attrition costs, which suggested that the cost of replacing public school teachers that leave the profession is \$2.2 billion per year nationwide, and when the cost of replacing teachers who transfer schools is added, that number rises to approximately \$4.9 billion per year. (p. 25)

Teacher attrition refers to teachers who leave the profession to pursue a different profession. Currently, there is a lot of research surrounding effective teacher retention strategies. However, research is still lacking regarding English as a Second Language

(ESL) teacher retention. The focus of my research is specifically on ESL teacher retention.

### **My Teaching Career**

I began my career in teaching 16 years ago. I received my K-6 teaching license in an undergraduate program. I taught a variety of grade-levels, with the most time being spent in fourth grade. As a classroom teacher, I almost always had English Learners (ELs) in my classroom. I realized that my true passion was helping ELs find success in the classroom. I then went on to acquire my ESL teaching license.

I attained my first ESL teaching job four years ago at a small, rural, consolidated district in the Midwest. During the interview, I asked the administration how many ELs they had in the building. They assured me it was around seventy students. When I began the job at this K-8 building, there were not any records of who had received ESL services in the past. I began the year by testing every student who had marked a language other than English on their home language questionnaire. It turned out that I was to provide services to 120 students.

At this time, the district had a half-time ESL coordinator. She helped immensely in sorting out all the challenges of providing services to such a large number of students. She was able to convince the district to add a half-time ESL teacher to come help me the following year. However, the ESL coordinator found a position in a different district, and her position in our district was eliminated. Our department was under the direction of the Special Services Director. She was always supportive of what we were doing, but did not have a background in ESL.

Eventually, the district saw the need for two full-time ESL teachers in our building, and my duties as a teacher became more manageable. However, the Special Services Director relied heavily on my knowledge when making decisions for the department. I turned into the “go-to” person for all ESL questions and procedures district-wide. The other three ESL teachers I had been working with left the district for other opportunities, so during my third and fourth years in the district, I was the employee with the most knowledge surrounding all ESL topics. Combining this with my teaching duties was a great task to conquer.

### **Challenges Faced by Teachers New to a District**

Throughout my career, I have worked in a variety of school districts. Each time I started in a new position, even if it was in the same grade-level, I found the first year to be extremely overwhelming. Every district did things differently and had different expectations. Each job position had different requirements and expectations. I even left one district after my first year working there because there were very few supports in place and the expectations and duties were too demanding.

Beginning to teach in a new district requires you to learn many new things. There are a plethora of staff members you need to know, including administration, guidance counselors, and fellow teachers. This alone is a daunting task. Then you have to learn procedures for grading, homework, lunch lines, hallway expectations, schedules, supervisory duties, and meeting times and locations. This is not an exhaustive list, as it could go on and on. All of this is above and beyond your duties of providing quality instruction to the students, which should be most important and take the majority of a

teacher's time. According to Sharplin, O'Neill and Chapman (2009) "Entering new environments can challenge individuals faced with socialising into unfamiliar norms of behavior and belief systems" (p. 137). It can all become so overwhelming that teachers do not see the benefits of staying in the profession.

ESL teacher retention is a growing issue at the small, rural Midwest school district where I teach. Guarino, Santibanez, and Daley (2006) state, "...novice teachers in small towns had higher attrition rates than urban teachers" (p. 191). Since becoming a consolidated district in 2011, the ESL department has consisted of three to four teachers. Every year, at least one of those teachers has resigned. There are many possible factors to this issue of teacher retention. For one, we are a consolidated district. Because of this, there is less opportunity for "teaming" given the geographical distance among the schools. Two of the buildings are in the same town, but there is only a half-time ESL teacher in each building. The other building that employs ESL teachers is 13 miles away. This building has two full-time ESL teachers. The teachers in this building definitely have more opportunities to collaborate and support each other. Often times the two half-time teachers in the other buildings feel on their own to deal with the job responsibilities in their respective buildings.

Another possible reason for low ESL teacher retention is that we are a rural district. According to Sharplin, O'Neill, and Chapman (2009), "A review of teacher supply and demand in English speaking countries identified rural teacher shortages in the United Kingdom, the United States, New Zealand, and Canada" (p. 136). Rural districts

have a more difficult time recruiting and retaining teachers due to factors such as location, spousal job opportunities, and lower teacher salaries.

### **Strategies for Success**

The district administration at my current school district has realized the need to add back the half-time District ESL Coordinator role. The District ESL Coordinator will provide support to teachers by serving as a mentor and resource. The District ESL Coordinator will travel among the buildings. This is the role I am currently in, paired with teaching half-time at the high school. As the District ESL Coordinator, I am creating a district-wide ESL teacher's guidebook that provides ESL teachers in our district with timelines, procedures, and district policies in order to increase retention of our department staff. The purpose is to alleviate some of the stress for the teachers in the department. An additional purpose is to ensure that new teachers coming to our district have appropriate supports in place that will help them succeed.

In this project, I will focus specifically on ESL teacher retention strategies for my small, rural, consolidated school district in the Midwest. I believe, based on what research suggests, that it is important to retain quality staff members in order to increase student achievement as well as save time and money. Brill and McCartney (2008) suggest, "...teacher quality has been shown to be one of the most important factors in influencing student achievement...teacher experience is a significant factor in determining teacher quality" (p. 753). Brill and McCartney (2008) also point out that, "...nationally, the cost of teachers leaving the profession ranges from 20 to 150 percent of that teacher's

salary” (p. 752). The financial impact of losing teachers is great. The purpose of the project is to create supporting materials to ESL teachers that will provide them with tools to ease their workload. Regular support meetings are also being planned for increased unity within the department. Through these efforts, the ultimate goal is to help increase the retention rate of ESL teachers at my small, Midwest school district.

### **Chapter Overviews**

In Chapter One, I introduced my research by establishing the purpose, significance and need for the study. The context of the study was briefly introduced as was the role, assumptions and biases of the researcher. The background of the researcher was provided. In Chapter Two I provide a review of the literature relevant to teacher retention. In Chapter Three I provide a detailed description of the current project, including the research framework, relevant findings, intended audience, and rationale behind the guidebook format chosen. Chapter Four presents the conclusions and reflections, including how my ideas about teaching have been influenced and how I can apply my learnings going forward.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Literature Review**

#### **Guiding Questions**

The two main purposes of this research project are to gather information about the issue of teacher retention and to find proven, effective strategies that can be utilized to increase teacher retention and decrease teacher turnover. Teacher retention refers to keeping teachers in the profession. Teacher turnover refers to teachers who leave a school for either a different profession or to teach at a different school. The following questions will guide the project: (1) What information should be put into a guidebook for English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers, such as checklists, timelines, important district contacts, and district policies, to lighten the workload of teachers, and in turn increase retention? (2) What are proven strategies that increase teacher retention? A review of the literature will discuss teacher retention rates, impacts, and reasons for leaving the profession. Proven effective teacher retention strategies will also be discussed, as well as how this impacts the current research project.

#### **Teacher Retention Rates**

With a teacher shortage in many subject areas, in various regions in the United States, the issue of teacher retention is of increasing importance to remedy. Many districts are facing teacher shortages and are looking at ways to retain quality teachers. (Brill and McCartney, 2008; Cha and Cohen Vogel, 2011; Sharplin, O'Neill and Chapman, 2011) According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2014), of the 3.3 million public school teachers who were teaching during the 2011-12 school year, 8

percent moved to a different school, and 8 percent left the profession (p. 3). Teacher mobility refers to teachers who leave a school to teach at a different school. Brill and McCartney (2008) explain that thirty-three percent of teachers leave their schools in the first three years, and forty-six percent leave after five years (pg. 750).

Cha and Cohen-Vogel (2011) break down the issue of teacher shortage in the United States. According to Cha and Cohen Vogel, “The magnitude of these shortages varies by region and subject area, with rural schools reporting severe shortages of teachers of special education, physical sciences, foreign languages, and English as a Second Language” (p. 371). They relate the issue of teacher shortage to the high rate of teacher attrition. Cha and Cohen-Vogel’s research found that approximately 20% of the teachers who left teaching between 1999 and 2001 went on to other careers (p. 372). Sharplin, O’Neill and Chapman (2010) conclude “Current and recurring teacher shortages jeopardize educational quality for students in marginalized locations and difficult to staff schools” (p. 136). As shown above, teacher turnover is a major issue many schools are facing and are forced to deal with. The numbers of teachers leaving the profession are many. There are several negative impacts that correlate this issue, and these will be discussed in the next section.

### **Negative Impacts of Teacher Turnover**

The issue of growing rates of teacher attrition and mobility have several negative impacts on school districts. Each time a district loses a teacher, time and money is lost. Hughes (2012) estimates that the national cost of recruiting, hiring, and training new

teachers is \$2.2 billion per year (p. 245). Time is lost when the turnover rate increases. Cha and Cohen-Vogel (2011) suggest that the time and energy that is spent in the hiring process is draining the human resources departments of school districts (p. 372).

As Ronfeldt, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2012) suggest, “The recruiting, hiring, and training of new teachers requires significant financial costs. These costs drain resources that might otherwise be spent on program improvement or working conditions”(p. 8). Districts could instead spend money that is lost due to teacher turnover for improved instructional materials, teacher resources, or technology. This combined research suggests the necessity to focus on keeping teachers in the district, for the sake of time and money.

Beyond financial costs, there are student achievement costs associated with teacher turnover. Schools that have high teacher turnover rates also tend to have lower student achievement. According to Ronfeldt, Loeb and Wyckoff (2012) in a study on Math and English-Language Arts achievement, “students of teachers in the same grade-level team in the same school do worse in years where teacher turnover rates are higher, as compared to years with less teacher turnover”(p. 19). Kraft, Marinell, and Shen-Wei Yee (2016) studied the correlation among schools who have strengthened their organizational contexts. They linked strong organizational contexts to decreased teacher turnover, which in turn boosted student achievement on standardized tests at a faster rate (p. 1429). Ronfeldt, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2012) point out that “turnover has a broader, harmful influence on student achievement since it can reach beyond just those students of

teachers who left or of those who replaced them” (p. 32). Ronfeldt, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2012) further describe the negative relationship between teacher turnover and student achievement by suggesting that “...turnover negatively affects collegiality or relational trust among faculty; or perhaps turnover results in loss of institutional knowledge among faculty that is critical for supporting student learning” (p. 32). Something must be done to reverse the effects of teacher turnover in order to boost student achievement.

Teacher turnover also disrupts the school community. Brill and McCartney (2008) suggest that schools that have a positive sense of community and strong communication among teachers are more effective schools. When there are high rates of turnover, this sense of community is disrupted (p. 764). Ronfeldt, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2012) also suggest that teacher turnover has a negative impact on faculty relationships. Teachers are less likely to invest in collegial relationships when they suspect teachers will be leaving within a year or two. Faculty also become frustrated with having to train new staff members each year, as this takes up a great amount of their time and efforts (p. 8). Brill and McCartney (2008) point out “Constant changes in the staff interrupt the planning and implementation of a coherent, comprehensive and unified curriculum”(p. 752). Brill and McCartney (2008) also argue that high teacher turnover rates cause strains on working relationships because teachers are continuously expected to spend time helping their new colleagues adjust to the school instead of spending time on their students (p. 753). As highlighted above, teacher turnover has several negative impacts. District time and money is lost, teacher relationships suffer, and student achievement

suffers. The following section will highlight some of the most common reasons teachers do not stay in the profession.

### **Reasons Teachers Leave**

Schools are seeking ways to keep teachers in the profession for the long-term. There are several reasons teachers leave a school district, or leave the teaching profession altogether. The following outlines some of those reasons.

In analyzing the data, schools have found that one of the main reasons teachers leave the profession is due to working conditions. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011) found that an important predictor of teachers staying in the profession or leaving are the working conditions (p. 1029). Working conditions refers to a variety of things such as hours of work, schedules, and mental and physical conditions. Examples of working conditions, as illustrated by Kraft, Marinell, and Shen-Wei Yee (2016), are the nature of interactions among colleagues, the support of administrators, and school-wide discipline programs (p. 1412). One of the working conditions that is a factor in teacher retention is manageability of workload. According to the National Center for Statistics (2014) “About 51 percent of public school teachers who left teaching in 2012-13 reported that the manageability of their workload was better in their current position than in teaching”(p. 3). The workload needs to be conducive to retaining quality staff. Maistre and Pare (2009) explain the many tasks that teachers are expected to do well. Maistre and Pare explain:

The increasing complexity of teachers' workloads has been explained by a number of factors: greater societal expectations and lower societal recognition; greater accountability to parents and policy-makers; pedagogical and curriculum changes being implemented at an increasing rate; increased demands beyond the pedagogical task; increasing diversity among students; and more administrative work. (p. 560)

As pointed out by Maistre and Pare (2009), the demands of a teacher are many. These demands add stress and decrease job satisfaction for many teachers. Research by Brill and McCartney (2008) furthers the point that one of the main reasons teachers leave the profession is due to an overwhelming workload. The overwhelming workload stems from increased pressures from administration on student achievement results on standardized testing. Interestingly enough, as pointed out earlier, increased teacher turnover results in lower student achievement. Lower student achievement results in increased pressures on teachers, which leads to increased teacher turnover rates. ESL teachers face these demands as well, as many of their students historically do not perform well on standardized tests. Administration looks to ESL teachers to "fix" the students, so the achievement gap begins to close. According to Brill and McCartney (2008) "teachers must increase their students' test scores or risk missing out on valued benefits or even being terminated"(p. 756). There is increased pressure to make students achieve, and this increased pressure causes job dissatisfaction. Castor, Kelly and Shih (2009) suggest:

McCann and Johannessen (2004) discovered that teachers who were likely to leave the profession reported feeling that the workload was unreasonable or unmanageable, that their efforts were futile, that their needs were not being met, or that choosing teaching was a compromise rather than the career of choice. (p. 622)

Another reason teachers leave the profession is due to emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion causes low energy and chronic fatigue. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011) argue that since teaching is one of the professions with the highest level of stress, emotional exhaustion is likely to occur for those individuals who cannot cope with the stress. These individuals tend to leave the profession (p. 1030).

Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011) conclude that positive social climate and social support in a school are positively related to retaining teachers. In contrast to this notion, when a school has a negative social climate and little social support from peers, teachers are more likely to have a lowered sense of job satisfaction. A lower sense of job satisfaction can in turn cause teachers to leave the school or profession (p. 1031). According to Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011) “Emotional support and positive relations with supervisors, colleagues, and parents may also promote a feeling of belonging” (p. 1031). Anderson (2010) describes how many new teachers leave their schools, looking for working environments that have more supportive colleagues in hopes this will make effective teaching more possible. (p. 543).

Cha and Cohen-Vogel (2011) report that some of the other reasons teachers leave the teaching profession are for family reasons, such as maternity, students who leave to attend graduate school, and retirees (p. 371). Not all teachers leave for the same reasons, and at times the reasons for leaving teaching are not negative. Not all of these issues can or should be remedied, as teachers simply sometimes leave for reasons other than unhappiness in the profession. As highlighted above, there are several reasons teachers leave the profession. Some of those reasons are due to working conditions, such as an unmanageable workload. Other reasons are increased pressures on student achievement, emotional exhaustion, and school climate. The following section will suggest effective strategies for teacher retention.

### **Teacher Retention Strategies**

Long (2009) recognizes the necessity of retaining teachers. Long (2009) states “Keeping the teachers who have been attracted to teaching must be a professional responsibility as attrition negatively impacts on a range of issues and affects educational outcomes in many areas” (p. 325). As district leaders, we must do all that we can to ensure teachers want to work in our district. Our students deserve the best, and we must provide them with nothing less.

Sharplin, O’Neill and Chapman (2010) state the importance of supporting teachers in many different ways in order to increase retention and improve the learning experiences of students. Sharplin, O’Neill and Chapman (2010) believe that taking action as leaders in the building can improve retention rates, especially of new teachers.

Sharplin, O'Neill and Chapman (2010) go on to say that empowering new teachers with coping strategies for stress and mental health is a necessity in order to boost retention rates (p. 139).

Murnane and Steele (2007) state:

If the United States is to equip its young people with the problem-solving and communication skills that are essential in the new economy, it is more important than ever to recruit and retain high-quality teachers. In recent years, the demand for quality teachers has increased as enrollments have risen, class sizes have fallen, and a large share of the teacher workforce has begun to retire. At the same time, because women and minorities have more career options today than ever before, it is increasingly difficult to attract and retain the many high-quality teachers that are needed. Moreover, schools are often limited in their ability to identify and reward the most effective teachers. As a result, schools now face high turnover and hiring problems in subjects with high opportunity costs and in the schools with the most difficult working conditions. ( p. 35)

Castor, Kelly and Shih (2009) conducted a study where "...urban and rural teachers reported problems with the intensive bureaucratic demands (paperwork, grading, meetings, non-instructional activities), curriculum delivery, parent communication, and classroom management" (p. 624). The demands on a teacher are many. To combat this, schools must make the workload more manageable for teachers.

Another strategy to increase teacher retention is through building relationships within the educational community, as suggested by Minarik, Thornton, and Perreault (2010, p. 231). When teachers are in isolation, they do not feel connected to the educational community and have less job satisfaction. Building interconnected relationships in an educational setting helps teachers feel a sense of belonging. “If improved connectedness, relationships, and collaborative professional interaction create meaning and improve intrinsic rewards, a school that provides these will increase its employee retention rate” (Minarik, Thornton, and Perreault, 2010, p. 233). Teachers who feel isolated tend to leave the profession and have lower job satisfaction.

Anderson (2010) suggests the need for creating ties to the local community as well as the professional community. Anderson (2010) suggests the “value for schools and districts in recognizing, enabling, and rewarding the work of educators who draw on community assets in the interest of student development and school change. To this end, local leaders might make concerted efforts to earmark resources and provide opportunities for teachers to develop ties within and beyond school and professional boundaries” (p. 564). Minarik, Thornton, and Perreault (2010) support the thinking that teachers have increased job satisfaction when they are connected to the community as a whole. Teachers need to develop relationships within the community in order to gain a sense of belonging. Feeling connected increases teacher retention (p. 233).

Guarino, Santibanez, and Daley’s (2006) research supports the need for relationships within the school. Guarino, Santibanez, and Daley (2006) claim, “schools

that provided mentoring and induction programs, particularly those related to collegial support, had lower rates of turnover among beginning teachers. Schools that provided teachers with more autonomy and administrative support had lower levels of teacher attrition and migration (p. 201). Malloy and Allen (2007) also point out the importance for educators to receive encouragement from administrators and colleagues. They go on further to point out the importance of having several opportunities to engage in discussions with experienced colleagues.

In regards to building relationships within the school community, mentoring programs are a way to increase teacher retention. According to Sharplin, O'Neill and Chapman (2009),

Effective mentoring programmes result in increased retention, improved focus on student learning, and increased job satisfaction and efficacy. Smith and Ingersoll reported that 91% of mentored novice teachers found the experience helpful, reducing by 30% the risk of departure at the end of the first year. (p. 138)

Providing teachers with a mentor not only builds positive relationships within the school, but it increases job satisfaction, which in turn increases teacher retention rates.

Long (2009) supports the idea of mentoring for beginning teachers. Long (2009) suggests that effective mentoring programs “become a vehicle for change and renewal as it is integrated into the school’s wider professional learning networks rather than delivered as a stand-alone program where mentoring as a single strategy for induction is not enough” (p. 323). Guarino, Santibanez and Daley (2006) also support the practice of

mentoring programs in order to increase retention. According to Callahan (2016) effective mentoring programs that utilize highly qualified mentors are connected to increased student achievement as well as increased teacher enthusiasm (p. 8).

Research done by Van Zandt Allen (2013) shows that pairing veteran teachers with novice teachers was critical to beginning teachers' development and retention.

...when new teachers specifically participated in a mentoring program, they were more committed to their jobs, had higher job satisfaction, and were more likely to stay within the profession of teaching. In addition, studies have shown that mentoring programs afford new teachers the ability to perform at a higher level in aspects of teaching, such as keeping students on task, developing effective lesson plans, utilizing appropriate questioning techniques, adjusting classroom activities to meet student interests, cultivating a positive classroom environment, and establishing successful classroom management. (p. 75)

One reason teachers leave the profession is due to the demands of student performance. Ladd (2011, p. 237) supports the notion that increasing teacher collaboration has positive effects on student performance. Ladd (2011, p. 237) argues the importance of collaborating with other teachers not only for relationship building, but also for the positive effects collaboration has on students. Thus it can be concluded that a positive teacher retention strategy is to increase opportunities for teacher collaboration in order to build relationships as well as increase student performance, which in turn will increase teachers' job satisfaction.

Stercke, Goyette, and Robertson (2015) offer a different perspective on teacher retention. They believe that happiness is the key to retaining quality teachers. “Happiness--more commonly referred to as “well-being” in the field of positive psychology--is key to keeping new teachers in the workplace for the simple reason that its pursuit informs everyone’s existence, universally” (Stercke, Goyette, and Robertson, 2015, p. 422). One suggestion they offer to foster employees’ happiness is to make teachers familiar with emotional intelligence, systemic thinking, and ethical consciousness. Grayson and Alvarez (2007) state “Ultimately, emotionally and physically healthy teachers exist in environments where the school system and middle management work diligently to enhance self-actualization and esteem in their teachers” (p. 1352). By making teachers aware of their own level of happiness and well-being, we may be able to increase happiness in the workplace.

In conclusion, some effective strategies to increase teacher retention are providing support to teachers to decrease workload, creating positive relationships in the school community as well as outside the school community, increasing collaboration opportunities, and fostering a community of happy teachers. The following section will focus on the current research of ESL teacher retention.

### **Current Research Focus**

Previous research, summarized above, has shown that teacher retention is an issue. Many schools are looking at ways they can keep teachers in the profession for the long-term. As the District ESL Coordinator, this is also my focus in the ESL department.

Although the research is currently lacking in ESL teacher retention rates, as well as effective strategies for retaining ESL teachers, there is sufficient research available to show that there is a shortage of ESL teachers in the United States. As stated by Sutchter, Darling-Hammond, and Carver-Thomas (2016), in 2015-16, more than 30 states have high levels of shortage of ESL teachers. My school district has many unique qualities that sometimes make it difficult to teach in. Because of distance, there are fewer opportunities for department collaboration. We are a rural school district, and this makes it more difficult to attract and hire high-quality staff members. The focus of the current project is specifically on ESL teacher retention in my school district. With the growing number of English Learners (ELs) in the state, it is extremely important that we retain quality ESL teachers. By retaining quality ESL teachers and having time to properly train them, students will have richer learning experiences. My focus is on finding the appropriate supports needed in my school district to help retain high-quality ESL staff members.

My aim is to create a district ESL teacher guidebook in order to provide support and increase retention of ESL staff at the small Midwest school district where I teach. Previous research is lacking in what should be included in this guidebook. I will use informal feedback from current ESL teachers in my district to help guide my decision-making about what to include in the district's guidebook. I will also seek information from neighboring districts to find out if they use something like this to give assistance to their ESL teachers. I will use my past experience as an ESL teacher when making decisions about the important information to include in the guidebook. Since

workload has been outlined by research as an area that causes teachers to leave the profession, I am creating this guidebook to offset some of the demands of the current workload in the district where I teach.

I will also be serving as a mentor to new ESL teachers in the district. This is an additional proven teacher retention strategy that I feel is extremely important to implement. By building relationships with staff members, my aim is to increase teacher job satisfaction and retention. I will incorporate well-being strategies in order to increase teacher happiness in our school district. I am using previous research to guide my work in order to use the most effective strategies that can be implemented to increase ESL teacher retention.

In summary, teacher retention continues to be an issue for many school districts. Teacher retention costs school districts a great amount of time and money each year. This money could be much better used in other places. Student achievement also suffers when there is a high turnover rate. One of the main reasons that teachers leave the profession is an unmanageable workload. Effective strategies for retaining high-quality teachers must be examined and employed in order to best serve our students. A few of the proven effective strategies for retaining teachers are reducing workload, building positive relationships, and fostering overall well-being. My current research project will utilize these strategies in order to retain ESL teachers in the small, rural consolidated school district where I am currently employed. Chapter 3 will outline the approach

adopted to create a potentially effective guidebook that can improve ESL teacher retention.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Methods**

#### **Introduction**

The following chapter discusses the method and process I used to create an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher's guidebook. The teacher's guidebook is intended to help decrease the workload of ESL teachers in the district. By decreasing the workload of ESL teachers in the district where I am employed, I hope to increase teacher job satisfaction, and in turn increase teacher retention rates. This chapter will discuss rationale for what is included in the guidebook.

My main research question is: What should be included in a guidebook for ESL teachers in the district that is aimed at increasing retention of quality teachers? The overall goal of this project is to ease the workload of ESL teachers who are new to the district as well as existing teachers in order to help increase the ESL teacher retention rates in my small, consolidated, rural Midwest school district.

#### **Intended Audience**

My intended audience is the ESL teachers in the small, rural Midwest school district where I am employed. One of the teachers is the ESL teacher at one of our K-8 buildings. This teacher is a veteran ESL teacher who currently serves approximately 25 English Learners (ELs). The other half of her day is spent as a reading interventionist. She is the only ESL teacher in this building.

There are two ESL teachers at a separate K-8 building in the district. These two teachers are new to our district. One of the teachers has 10 years of experience as an ESL teacher. She has knowledge about ESL instruction, but will be new to district processes and procedures. The other teacher in this building was hired as a community expert and is currently enrolled in graduate school to obtain her ESL teaching license. Previously, she was the ESL paraprofessional at our high school building. She has experience with some of the processes and procedures of the school district, but less experience with ESL instruction.

The other ESL teacher in the district is me. I am teaching at the high school half-time, and the other half of my position is serving as the District ESL Coordinator. I have been teaching for sixteen years, with four of those years as an ESL teacher in this district.

### **Research Framework**

For this capstone project, I have chosen a qualitative approach to the research and completion of my project on ESL teacher retention. My main methods for research will be to conduct informal discussion groups, informal interviews, and my previous participation in the district. These methods will uncover the underlying reasons for low retention rates in the school district where I am employed.

### **Project Description**

Since the buildings in our district are geographically spread out and there is not much opportunity for teachers to support each other, I am creating this guidebook to help ease the workload. The following table outlines the main sections of the guidebook.

Figure A: Project Description

<b>Section 1</b>	<b>School Year Calendar:</b> *Tasks *Deadlines
<b>Section 2</b>	<b>Checklists:</b> Beginning of the year End of the year ACCESS Testing
<b>Section 3</b>	<b>Processes:</b> Testing new students ACCESS testing Supply Orders
<b>Section 4</b>	<b>District Contacts</b>
<b>Section 5</b>	<b>District Policies</b>
<b>Section 6</b>	<b>Tips for Success</b>

One of the most important aspects of the guidebook is the calendar. I have created a calendar for teachers to use throughout the school year that includes important deadlines and timelines. For example, I have included timelines for testing students who are new to the district and the procedure and process of how to go about this. I have also included timelines for sending home parent notification letters. Another important timeline included is updating students' cumulative records with their most current testing information. These tasks can all be overwhelming, but are extremely important for effective record-keeping. Having this information laid out in a user-friendly manner will make the workload of ESL teachers in our district more manageable. By making the workload more manageable, I hope to increase job satisfaction and in turn increase retention.

I have also included important dates such as the Minnesota English Learner Educator's (MELEd) Conference, and when registration should be complete, as well as what our district procedure is for requesting professional development activities. In addition to this, I have included information on how to request for a substitute teacher, since this will be necessary during an absence. Other important dates I have included are for Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS) reporting, Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS) testing, school conferences, and end-of-year procedures.

In addition to the calendar, I have provided beginning-of-the-year and end-of-the-year checklists for ESL teachers. These are times of the year when there are many tasks to accomplish, and a checklist will help with the organization of these tasks. There is also a checklist for ACCESS testing as this requires many action steps and materials to successfully complete.

Some of the processes I have included in the guidebook are in regards to assessments. The World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment Consortium (WIDA) has just made available the online version of the WIDA screener. The process for administering the online WIDA screener will be new to all ESL teachers, and it will be important to make this process clear and easy for those involved. ACCESS testing is also a process that carries on throughout many months of the school year, and I have included information about this, such as how to order testing materials and when to take the online training courses.

Another process I have included in the guidebook is how to request supplies and materials through our online ordering system. This is a system that often proves to be confusing and difficult to new teachers. I want to lay it out in a simple fashion in order to ease the workload of the ESL teachers while providing the proper supports.

Other information I included in the guidebook is in regards to important district contacts. The ESL department contacts are included in this section. I have also included contact information for the Director of Special Services since this person oversees our department. I included building secretaries, principals, and Human Resources contact information. Contact information for our bilingual staff members was also provided.

Important district policies I have included in the guidebook pertains to recommended service minutes for ELs in the district. This information is also in the District ESL Manual but has been made available in the guidebook for convenience sake. In the same section, information regarding entrance and exit criteria for ELs has also been provided. This is especially important as the state has just changed and standardized the entrance and exit criteria for ELs.

The final section I have included in the guidebook is for tips on how to have a successful ESL classroom. This section consists of fifteen action steps meant to guide teachers during times they are feeling discouraged or overwhelmed. Some of the action steps include using ELs resources and assets to guide effective, meaningful instruction. Others include connecting language and content to make learning meaningful, and providing opportunities for all ELs to engage in higher-order thinking. These action steps

are meant to encourage highly effective teaching techniques that will benefit ELs as well as ESL teachers.

All of the above tasks, deadlines, processes, procedures and techniques are what make the workload of a teacher at times seem unmanageable. When teachers become overwhelmed with the unmanageability of their workload, they tend to either leave teaching, or move to a different district. With the guidebook as a support, my aim is to decrease the workload of the ESL teachers in our district, and in turn increase retention, as suggested by the authors in my literature review. The following section discusses possible limitations of my project.

### **Timeline**

This project took place in the summer of 2017. As my role as District ESL Coordinator continues, the guidebook will be updated as needed.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Conclusion**

### **Introduction**

The two main purposes of this research project were to gather information about the issue of teacher retention and to find proven, effective strategies that can be utilized to increase teacher retention and decrease teacher turnover. Chapter Four will discuss what I have learned throughout the process of designing this project, as well as what I learned from the research I conducted. I will describe my project, as well as discuss its limitations. I will discuss possible implications of my project and will reflect on my growth and future plans as an educator. The following section will begin by discussing the important things I have learned from this research project.

### **Important Lessons**

I learned many things throughout the process of writing my capstone. The research, as stated in my Literature Review (Brill and McCartney, 2008; Cha and Cohen Vogel, 2011; Sharplin, O'Neill and Chapman, 2011) shows just how important it is that we retain quality teachers. The overarching theme of the research I conducted is that many teachers feel overwhelmed by the workload of teaching profession. This either creates job dissatisfaction or causes teachers to leave the profession. Discovering this research affirmed what I have heard through my conversations with other teachers.

I also learned that research is specifically lacking in regards to ESL teachers. I was unable to find research about what might help retain ESL teachers. I could not find specific difficulties and frustrations that ESL teachers might have in their profession.

From my past experiences, I can predict some reasons why the workload of an ESL teacher could be overwhelming. However, the research that already exists only pointed out reasons that teachers in general are dissatisfied or overwhelmed with their jobs.

The Literature Review further helped me understand how important it is to provide as much support to teachers as possible. The work of a teacher is difficult, overwhelming and exhausting. Providing teachers with the support they need and deserve is extremely important in order to increase retention of high-quality staff. Ways of giving this needed support will be described in the next section, which discusses the overall project.

### **Project Description**

Since the buildings in our district are geographically spread out and there is not much opportunity for teachers to support each other, I am creating this guidebook to help ease the workload. The following table outlines the main sections of the guidebook.

Figure B: Project Description

<b>Section 1</b>	<b>School Year Calendar:</b> *Tasks *Deadlines
<b>Section 2</b>	<b>Checklists:</b> Beginning of the year End of the year ACCESS Testing
<b>Section 3</b>	<b>Processes:</b> Testing new students ACCESS testing Supply Orders
<b>Section 4</b>	<b>District Contacts</b>
<b>Section 5</b>	<b>District Policies</b>

**Section 6****Tips for Success**

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I have also included important dates such as the Minnesota English Learner Educator's (MELEd) Conference, and when registration should be complete, as well as what our district procedure is for requesting professional development activities. In addition to this, I have included information on how to request for a substitute teacher, since this will be necessary during an absence. Other important dates I have included are for Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS) reporting, Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS) testing, school conferences, and end-of-year procedures.

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Some of the processes I have included in the guidebook are in regards to assessments. The World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment Consortium (WIDA) has just made available the online version of the WIDA screener. The process for administering the online WIDA screener will be new to all ESL teachers, and it will be important to make this process clear and easy for those involved. ACCESS testing is also a process that carries on throughout many months of the school year, and I have included information about this, such as how to order testing materials and when to take the online training courses.

Another process I have included in the guidebook is how to request supplies and materials through our online ordering system. This is a system that often proves to be confusing and difficult to new teachers. I want to lay it out in a simple fashion in order to ease the workload of the ESL teachers while providing the proper supports.

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The final section I have included in the guidebook is for tips on how to have a successful ESL classroom. This section consists of fifteen action steps meant to guide teachers during times they are feeling discouraged or overwhelmed. Some of the action steps include using ELs resources and assets to guide effective, meaningful instruction. Others include connecting language and content to make learning meaningful, and providing opportunities for all ELs to engage in higher-order thinking. These action steps are meant to encourage highly effective teaching techniques that will benefit ELs as well as ESL teachers.

All of the above tasks, deadlines, processes, procedures and techniques are what make the workload of a teacher at times seem unmanageable. When teachers become overwhelmed with the unmanageability of their workload, they tend to either leave teaching, or move to a different district. With the guidebook as a support, my aim is to decrease the workload of the ESL teachers in our district, and in turn increase retention, as suggested by the authors in my literature review. The following section discusses possible limitations of my project.

### **Project Limitations**

My project was designed as a support guidebook to ESL teachers in my school district. It provides a calendar, checklists, district processes, district contacts, district policies, and teaching tips. The format of my project is something that could be useful to other districts. However, due to the specific content of the guidebook, districts would not be able to simply print it and use it. Much of the information in the guidebook would have to be changed in order to match each district's specific information.

Another limitation of my project is that it will need to be updated each year. The calendar is specific to the school year. It contains dates that will not be the same in the upcoming year. The section on district processes will most likely stay the same, as well as the checklists, district processes, and district policies. There may be small changes in these sections, but I do not anticipate major changes. The other section that may need updating is the section on district contacts. This will need to be updated if and when they are any staffing changes. The teaching tips section could be added to or changed, depending on the specific needs of the teachers and students.

Another limitation I see with the project is that if I were to leave the district, I do not feel confident that someone else would take over updating the guidebook in order to make it useful for staff. I do not have any assurance that this could be useful in the long-term, unless it is something I commit to keeping updated.

Overall I think the limitations of my project are fewer than the benefits that staff members will receive from using the guidebook. Other districts could use the concept of

my project to create something that would be useful for their staff members. The following section will discuss implications of the project.

### **Project Implications**

Based on my research questions regarding gathering information about the issue of teacher retention, as well as finding proven, effective strategies that can be utilized to increase teacher retention, I see possibilities for my project to make a positive impact in my school district. The gap in the research proved that more can be done for ESL teachers specifically. My project focuses on decreasing the workload of ESL teachers in my district by providing them with the support of a guidebook. The guidebook will provide direction and clarity to the ESL teachers. This support will be accessible in one spot, instead of having to navigate the district website, or having to contact many different staff members to find the answers they are looking for.

I can also infer that the guidebook will help ESL teachers better perform their job duties since they will be less likely to make assumptions about what the district's policies are. They will have those policies and procedures at their fingertips. This will not only make their workload more manageable, but if they are being more effective educators, I would like to assume that they will have higher job satisfaction. Higher job satisfaction rates should increase teacher retention. The following section will reflect on my growth throughout this process as well as discuss my future plans.

### **My Growth and Future Plans**

I have grown immensely throughout the process of creating my project and writing my capstone. Throughout my life, I have overcome many obstacles. However,

through this process I feel I have attained a great amount of grit. It took an incredible amount of time and determination to complete this project. Beginning this process, I definitely doubted my abilities. However, now that it has been completed, I feel like a much stronger, more determined person.

This process also reaffirmed my passion for serving ELs. My students are what drives me to further my education. Furthering my education will allow me to better serve my students. Since the teachers I work with directly affect the ELs in my district, I want them to be powerful, amazing educators. If this project in some way helps them to become better educators, then I know I have accomplished what I set out to accomplish.

My future plans include becoming a strong District ESL Coordinator. Again, I feel this is just another way I can serve the students in my district. If I can continue to grow in my depth of knowledge surrounding ESL topics, best practices, law, etc., then I can pass on that knowledge to the teachers I work with. An additional goal of mine, as the District ESL Coordinator, is to work more closely with mainstream teachers to help them understand and implement best practices regarding ELs. I feel strongly that by supporting and impacting as many teachers, administrators, and paraprofessional support staff as possible, the stronger the educational experience our students will receive. My vision as an educator is that all students will receive what they need. This capstone project is a small step towards accomplishing these future plans and aspirations.

### **Concluding Reflections**

Throughout my time completing my Masters Degree in English as a Second Language at Hamline University, I have appreciated the university's morals and visions.

Hamline School of Education's Conceptual Framework has been a driving force throughout my coursework. It directly aligns with my core beliefs.

The first framework states, "Hamline School of Education is committed to developing educators and leaders who promote equity in schools and society." As an ESL Coordinator, and an ESL teacher, this framework aligns directly with my core beliefs. My life's work includes making sure my school district is providing an equitable education for all students. My project also directly aligns with this framework. I designed the project to help retain quality ESL teachers, which will in turn greatly benefit the ESL students in my district.

The next framework states, "Hamline School of Education is committed to building communities of teachers and learners." Part of this framework discusses acting as an agent of change, being welcoming, and being supportive. This framework also directly aligns with my project. My reason for designing the project was to support teachers as they continue to learn throughout their career. My aim is to make the workload lighter for teachers in order to give them more time and energy to become more effective in their craft of teaching. I am encouraging change in order to develop more effective educators, for the benefit of the students we teach.

The final framework that resonates with my capstone project is, "Hamline School of Education is committed to developing educators who practice thoughtful inquiry and reflection." The research conducted throughout my capstone was directly related to issues that are current and relevant in education. Throughout the research process, I was able to reflect on how I could adjust my practice to benefit other educators. The purpose

of my project is for the benefit of educators who directly affect English Learners. It is my hope that this project will create a ripple effect that makes the world a little better.

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## Appendix A: ESL Teacher's Guidebook

ESL Teachers: Use this guidebook as a tool to help you throughout the school year. The sole purpose of this guidebook is to make your workload lighter. If you have any questions or comments, feel free to contact the District ESL Coordinator by phone: xxx-xxx-xxxx or email: I am here to help!

## Section 1: School Year Calendar

August 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22 New Teacher Workshop	23 New Teacher Workshop	24 New Teacher Workshop	25	26
27	28 Teacher Workshop	29 Teacher Workshop	30 Teacher Workshop	31 Teacher Workshop *Complete WIDA- Screener Online Training		

## September 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4 Labor Day- No School	5 First Day of School  *Finish Schedules *Test New Students, including all Kindergarteners *Prepare "Can-Do" Charts for classroom teachers	6 *Finish Schedules *Test New Students, including all Kindergarteners *Prepare "Can-Do" Charts for classroom teachers	7 *Finish Schedules *Test New Students, including all Kindergarteners *Prepare "Can-Do" Charts for classroom teachers	8 *Finish Schedules *Test New Students, including all Kindergarteners *Prepare "Can-Do" Charts for classroom teachers	9
10	11 *Begin Services *Update LEP Data Sheet	12	13	14	15	16
17	18 Deadline for sending home Parent Notifications	19	20	21	22	23
2	25	26	27	28	29	30

## October 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 *Request to attend/register for MN EL Ed Conference	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10 2-Hour Early Release  K-8 Parent Teacher Conferences	11	12 9-12 Parent Teacher Conferences	13	14
15	16 9-12 Parent Teacher Conferences	17 K-8 Parent Teacher Conferences	18	19 MEA Break- No School	20 MEA Break- No School	21
22	23	24	25	26	27 MN EL Ed Conference	28 MN EL Ed Conference
29	30	31 *Update LEP Data Sheet *Update CUM files with most current test data				

## November 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8 2 Hour Early Release	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23 Thanksgivin g Break- No School	24 Thanksgivin g Break- No School	25
26	27	28	29	30 *Update LEP Data Sheet		

## December 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4 *Communicate with DAC about how many students will be taking the ACCESS test	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13 2 Hour Early Release	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22 *Update LEP Data Sheet	23
24	25 Winter Break	26 Winter Break	27 Winter Break	28 Winter Break	29 Winter Break	30
31						

## January 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Winter Break	2 School Resumes	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15 No School- Teacher Work Day/ Staff Developme nt Day *Complete ACCESS training online	16 No School- All Staff Developme nt Day	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29 *ACCESS Testing window opens	30	31 *Update LEP Data Sheet			

## February 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8 9-12 Parent Teacher Conferences	9	10
11	12 9-12 Parent Teacher Conferences	13 2 Hour Early Release K-8 Parent Teacher Conferences	14	15 K-8 Parent Teacher Conferences	16	17
18	19 President's Day- No School	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28 *Update LEP Data Sheet			

## March 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14 2 Hour Early Release	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23 *ACCESS testing window closes *Update LEP Data Sheet	24
25	26 Spring Break- No School	27 Spring Break- No School	28 Spring Break- No School	29 Spring Break- No School	30 Spring Break- No School	31

April 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 2 Hour Early Release	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30 *Update LEP Data Sheet					

May 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9 2 Hour Early Release	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28 Memorial Day- No School	29 *Make Exit decisions *Update LEP Data Sheet	30	31 Last Day of School		

## June 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Teachers Last Day	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

## Section 2: Checklists

### Beginning of the Year Checklist

- \_\_\_\_\_ Identify students based on most current ACCESS information.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Get HLQs for Kindergarten students.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Check with the office for any new students.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Test new students, including Kindergartners.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fill out/send home parent notifications.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Go over levels, services, and needs with new teachers and any other teacher that is interested.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Coordinate and set schedule with teachers. Send a copy to the Special Services Director. HIGH SCHOOL will need to be working on this with counselors and principal in the SPRING also.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Set up paraprofessional schedules. Give a copy to the office.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Update LEP data Google Doc and give building secretary a list of all LEP students (on-going throughout year)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Send home exit forms for any students who gained proficiency the previous year.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Begin services no later than the first day of the second week of school.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Update CUM file Student Summary Sheets/Create Student Summary sheets for new students, including Kindergartners. (This can be completed in October)

Please print a copy of this form. Sign each line when you have completed each task. When all tasks are complete, give this form to the District ESL Coordinator.

**ACCESS Testing Checklist**

- Information to give the District Assessment Coordinator:
  - Lists of students who will be testing
  - Any testing accommodations your students may need
- Complete online training
- Communicate with the Tech Support Staff in your building regarding where testing will take place.
- Make a testing schedule based on WIDA's recommended time-frames
- Share the testing schedule with:
  - Building principal
  - Classroom teachers
  - Tech Support
- Test your students

**End of the Year Checklist**

- Analyze ACCESS preliminary results.
- Make exit decisions based on the State of MN's most current regulations.
- Notify parents and students of exit decisions.

## **Section 3: Processes**

### **WIDA Screener**

The WIDA Screener is an assessment designed to provide an initial measure of a student's English language proficiency in Grades 1–12. The purpose of this assessment is to help educators make decisions and identify whether a student is a candidate for English language support services.

Follow this link for more information regarding the WIDA Screener:  
<https://www.wida.us/assessment/Screener/screener-online.aspx#about>

Use the same link to complete the WIDA Screener Training.

When you have completed the training, you can identify which students will need to take the WIDA Screener. This would include students new to the district in grades 1-12. When you have student information, contact the District Assessment Coordinator (DAC). She will put their information into WIDA-AMS. When she is finished, you can access the students' test ticket and information through your WIDA-AMS account. (If you do not have a WIDA-AMS account, the DAC can assist you with starting one.) When you have test ticket information, you can begin testing students and scoring the tests. Then you can make entrance decisions based on each score.

### **ACCESS testing**

In November, communicate with the DAC. She will need a list of all students you will be testing. She will also need to know any testing accommodations your students may need. Then in January, complete the online test training. Follow this link to find the online test training: <https://www.wida.us/assessment/ACCESS20.aspx> Before you begin making a testing schedule, make sure you communicate with the tech support staff member in your building to coordinate where testing will take place. Then you can make a schedule based on WIDA's recommended testing time-frames. When you are finished with the testing schedule, share it with your building principal, classroom teachers, and tech support staff member. Then just make sure you test all students within the testing window. Be sure to allow time for make-ups in the likely event that students will be absent for portions of the test.

**Supply/Material Ordering**

Follow this link for directions how to order supplies and classroom materials. Be sure to communicate with your building principal in advance to make sure there is funding available.

**Google Drive Link:**

**Professional Development Request**

Follow this link for directions how to request to attend a professional development activity. You will need this for the MELEd Conference, and any other conferences you wish to attend throughout the year.

**Google Drive Link:**

## **Section 4: District Contacts**

### **ESL Department**

Name:

Phone:

Email:

### **Director of Special Services**

Name:

Phone:

Email:

### **Special Services Office Coordinator**

Name:

Phone:

Email:

### **Building Principals**

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Name:  
Phone:  
Email:

Name:  
Phone:  
Email:

**Building Secretaries**

Name:  
Phone:  
Email:

**Human Resources**

Name:  
Phone:  
Email:

**Section 5: District Policies**  
**Recommended Service Minutes for ELs**

***WIDA Levels 1 and 2***

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Service Model Options</b>	<b>Description of Service Available</b>	<b>Recommended Times</b>
K	Pull-out or Collaboration	Minutes depend on the service model applied in the particular building.	Up to 30 minutes per day
1-5	Pull-out or Collaboration	Minutes depend on the service model applied in the particular building.	Level 1: 45 - 90 minutes per day  Level 2: 30 - 45 minutes per day
6-8	EL Language Arts EL Skills EL Resource BICS/Conversation	Replaces regular Language Arts course Supports Language Arts course Sheltered EL study hall supporting content classes Teaches conversational English and vocabulary, listening and speaking practice	50 minutes per day 50 minutes per day 50 minutes per day 50 minutes per day
9-12	EL Language Arts EL Skills EL Resource BICS/Conversation	Replaces regular Language Arts course Supports Language Arts course Sheltered EL study hall supporting content classes Teaches conversational English and vocabulary, listening and speaking practice	50 minutes per day 50 minutes per day 50 minutes per day 50 minutes per day

***WIDA Level 3***

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Service Model Options</b>	<b>Description of Service</b>	<b>Recommended Times</b>
K	Pull-out or Collaboration	Minutes depend on the service model applied in the particular building.	Up to 30 minutes per day
1-5	Pull-out or Collaboration	Minutes depend on the service model applied in the particular building.	30 - 45 minutes per day
6-8	EL Skills EL Resource	Supports Language Arts course Sheltered EL study hall supporting content classes	30 - 50 minutes per day 30 - 50 minutes per day
9-12	EL Language Arts EL Skills EL Resource Language Arts (co-taught)	Replaces regular Language Arts course Supports Language Arts course Sheltered EL study hall supporting content classes Language Arts course taught by EL teacher and regular Language Arts teacher	30 -50 minutes per day 30 -50 minutes per day 30 -50 minutes per day 30 -50 minutes per day

***WIDA Level 4***

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Service Model Options</b>	<b>Description of Service</b>	<b>Recommended Times</b>
K	Pull-out or Collaboration  EL Paraprofessional Support	Minutes depend on the service model applied in the particular building. In class/EL room support with academic areas	Up to 30 minutes per day
1-5	Pull-out or Collaboration  EL Paraprofessional Support	Minutes depend on the service model applied in the particular building. In class/EL room support with academic areas	30 - 45 minutes per day
6-8	EL Skills  EL Resource	Supports Language Arts course  Sheltered EL study hall supporting content classes	50 minutes every other day  50 minutes every other day
9-12	EL Skills EL Resource Language Arts (co-taught)	Supports Language Arts course Sheltered EL study hall supporting content classes Language Arts course taught by EL teacher and regular Language Arts teacher	30 -50 minutes per day 30 -50 minutes per day 30 -50 minutes per day

**EL Entrance Criteria****New Student**

All students new to the district complete a common set of registration materials. This includes a Home Language Questionnaire (HLQ). The district's HLQ is available in several languages and serves as the primary screening tool to further consider a student for possible EL eligibility and services.

The HLQ is completed at the time of registration and **immediately** forwarded to the school's ESL teacher if the parent indicates a language other than English on **any** of the questions.

A language proficiency exam must be used to determine eligibility. The district currently uses the WIDA ACCESS exam or WIDA Screener score, if there is no WIDA ACCESS score. Kindergarten students will be assessed using the WIDA Screener. Students whose

scores is less than 4.5 qualify for ESL services. If a composite score is at 4.5, all domains must also have a score of 3.5 or higher.

### **Returning Students**

The ESL teacher will analyze data from the previous year to determine if the student continues to be eligible. If the student is eligible, a parent notification will be sent home within 30 days from the beginning of the school year. If a student is not eligible, a letter will be sent home explaining the discontinuation of services.

### **EL Exit Criteria**

Students will exit the ESL program when they reach a composite score of 4.5 or higher on the WIDA ACCESS, with three out of four domains at 3.5 or higher. When a student exits the ESL program, parents and students must be notified. ESL teachers must monitor the progress of exited students in the mainstream classroom for two years to ensure the student's success.

## Section 6: Tips for Success

The following action steps are meant to be used as a guide. You will do many more things in your classroom beyond these 15 steps. These are meant to help give you ideas if you are feeling discouraged or overwhelmed.

<p><b>Action 1</b> Capitalize on the resources and experiences that ELs bring to school to build and enrich their academic language.</p>	<p><b>Action 2</b> Analyze the academic language demands involved in grade-level teaching and learning.</p>	<p><b>Action 3</b> Apply the background knowledge of ELLs, including their language proficiency profiles, in planning differentiated language teaching.</p>
<p><b>Action 4</b> Connect language and content to make learning relevant and meaningful for ELs.</p>	<p><b>Action 5</b> Focus on the developmental nature of language learning within grade-level curriculum.</p>	<p><b>Action 6</b> Reference content standards and language development standards in planning for language learning.</p>
<p><b>Action 7</b> Design language teaching and learning with attention to the sociocultural context.</p>	<p><b>Action 8</b> Provide opportunities for all ELLs to engage in higher-order thinking.</p>	<p><b>Action 9</b> Create language-rich classroom environments with ample time for language practice and use.</p>
<p><b>Action 10</b> Identify the language needed for functional use in teaching and learning.</p>	<p><b>Action 11</b> Plan for language teaching and learning around discipline-specific topics.</p>	<p><b>Action 12</b> Use instructional supports to help scaffold language learning.</p>
<p><b>Action 13</b> Integrate language domains to provide rich, authentic instruction.</p>	<p><b>Action 14</b> Coordinate and collaborate in planning for language and content teaching and learning.</p>	<p><b>Action 15</b> Share responsibility so that all teachers are language teachers and support one another within communities of practice.</p>

<http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/essential-actions-15-research-based-practices-increase-ell-student-achievement>