

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

May 15, 2019

MEMORANDUM

To: Member of the Board of Education
From: Jack R. Smith, Superintendent of Schools
Subject: English for Speakers of Other Languages Staffing

Ms. Silvestre requested information regarding a letter received from Ms. Jackie R. DeLucia, English for Speakers of Other Languages resource teacher, discussing strengths and challenges of the ESOL Program in Montgomery County Public Schools.

Question 1A

ESOL staffing over the years. Why did it change from what was recommended by the ESOL staffing workgroup?

Response

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) staffing formulas are designed to provide additional positions to students/schools that have the most need. Given the rise of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students, it is imperative that every teacher in MCPS has the capacity to teach ESOL students. As such, the proficiency-based staffing formulas recommended by the members of the work group were implemented in Fiscal Year (FY) 2015. However, due to budget constraints, the formulas were adjusted in FY 2016. These changes resulted in lower staffing allocations than the 2015 staffing formulas and for non-Title I schools the staffing also was less than the ratio-based staffing model in 2014. For FY 2020, ESOL staffing formulas are being adjusted for Title I and Focus schools to move them closer to their FY 2015 staffing levels.

Question 1B

Would it be feasible to reconvene the ESOL staffing workgroup?

Response

A multistakeholder work group (including teachers and school-based administrators) will convene in summer 2019 and will meet throughout next school year to improve ESOL programming. Part of the work will include a review of staffing allocations.

Question 2

Schools without ESOL leadership positions even though it is in the contract.

Response

The Montgomery County Education Association contract does not require schools to have an ESOL Team Leader. Elementary schools are provided funding for seven team leaders that the principal assigns based on the needs at the school. A school must have more than three ESOL teachers in order to assign a team leader. There currently are 18 schools with 3 to 5 ESOL teachers. In most of these schools, if an ESOL teacher is a team leader, the role also includes a grade level or content leadership role.

In the 24 schools with more than 5 ESOL teachers, there is more likely to be a dedicated ESOL team leader. In middle schools, three to six team leader positions are allocated based on size and school type (e.g., Focus) and there is no minimum teacher threshold for assigning a team leader. However, if we use the greater than 3 rule from elementary schools, only 10 schools would be eligible for an ESOL team leader. In general, middle schools use their positions for grade level team leaders.

Question 3

The many part-time ESOL positions that go unfilled.

Response

While ESOL positions remain unfilled throughout the year, we generally are able to fill positions with minimal impact on instruction. The following table illustrates the vacancy rates at the beginning of the year and at mid-year for all schools.

Teachers

| | Positions Allocated To Schools | | Positions Vacant | | Vacancy Rate | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| | FT Teachers | PT Teachers | FT Teachers | PT Teachers | FT Teachers | PT Teachers |
| August 2017 | 456 | 118 | 3 | 8 | 0.7% | 6.8% |
| January 2018 | 457 | 129.3 | 1 | 1 | 0.2% | 0.8% |
| September 2018 | 511 | 82.3 | 2 | 3 | 0.4% | 3.6% |
| January 2019 | 512 | 90.6 | 0 | 0 | 0.0% | 0.0% |

FT=Full-time; PT=Part-time

Paraeducators

| | Positions Allocated To Schools | | Positions Vacant | | Vacancy Rate | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|---------|------------------|---------|--------------|---------|
| | FT Para | PT Para | FT Para | PT Para | FT Para | PT Para |
| September 2017 | 40 | 16.25 | 0 | 3 | 0.0% | 18.5% |
| January 2018 | 40 | 16.25 | 0 | 1 | 0.0% | 6.2% |
| September 2018 | 35 | 12 | 0 | 3 | 0.0% | 25.0% |
| January 2019 | 35 | 12.75 | 0 | 1 | 0.0% | 7.8% |

FT=Full-time; PT=Part-time

The primary challenges in filling part-time positions are:

- Many employees prefer full-time employment versus part-time employment;
- Oftentimes the allocations do not provide a match that may be paired to provide an employee a larger allocation; and
- It can be difficult to find qualified staff for allocations released late in the year.

Question 4

Inequity in how SSL hours are granted to ESOL students.

Response

While more than 90 percent of all students complete the required Student Service Learning (SSL) hours by the time of graduation, we recognize that ESOL students do not complete their SSL hours at the same rate. The following table illustrates the progress toward meeting this requirement by grade level as of May 3, 2019.

Current Grade 9–12 Students

ESOL Level 1-5

| Grade | Total # Students | # Students Completed SSL | % SSL Completed |
|-------|------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 9 | 307 | 23 | 7.5% |
| 10 | 161 | 35 | 22% |
| 11 | 68 | 25 | 37% |
| 12 | 93 | 74 | 80% |

Current Grade 9–12

ALL Students

| Grade | Total # Students | # Students Completed SSL | % SSL Completed |
|-------|------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 9 | 13,787 | 4,310 | 31% |
| 10 | 12,782 | 5,727 | 45% |
| 11 | 11,192 | 6,891 | 62% |
| 12 | 11,415 | 10,410 | 91% |

In an effort to increase student participation and access to SSL opportunities, and with the Office of Student and Family Support and Engagement (OSFSE) approval, through a school-sponsored event, a new form, MCPS [Form 560-59: School Hosted Student Service Learning \(SSL\) Opportunity–During the School Day](#), was created to encourage schools to explicitly plan for and embed service-learning opportunities within the school day. The coordinator currently is working with the Gaithersburg High School ESOL Club to help plan for embedding service-learning opportunities during their in-school meeting times (lunch and advisory period). Students had an opportunity to attend an Introduction to SSL Program presentation and received materials in English and Spanish. Students participated in their first project, earning one SSL hour, and were coached to complete the SSL verification form. OSFSE leadership will work toward expanding this model to include similar student programs across the district.

In addition, staff in OSFSE is collaborating with staff in the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs to discuss a process to review SSL graduation requirements with school registrars and counselors as a new student enrolls. Furthermore, these staff members are working to identify potential schools to develop an SSL partnership with students at Montgomery College.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Maria V. Navarro, chief academic officer, at 240-740-3040.

JRS:MVN:SS:lsl

Copy to:

Executive Staff

Ms. Webb