ELL Study: Staff Selection & Capacity Building Framework

Promising Practices:

- ELL-Focused leadership
- Embedded and teacher-facilitated professional development
- Hiring practices to ensure flexibility and growth

Learn more -

In schools with odds-beating ELL achievement, district and school leaders are especially attuned to the needs of the ELL population. In some schools, specific district administrators are assigned to oversee curriculum, instruction, and management of the ESL/ENL/ bilingual program. District and school leaders create instructional programming, schedules, and after-school programs to support ELL achievement. They seek partnerships within the community to provide needed services for ELLs and their families and they develop professional development opportunities to support teachers of ELLs. In most of the odds-beating schools, one ESL/ENL teacher took a leadership role within the school, helping building leaders to meet regulatory compliance requirements and ensure that each ELL receives the most appropriate and inclusive instruction.

As part of the ESL/ENL teacher leadership, many ESL/ENL teachers in odds-beating schools provide professional development opportunities to their teaching colleagues. This may include presenting topics in after-school workshops; peer classroom observations; sending materials, articles, or videos to colleagues; and/or attending conferences and then sharing information with the full faculty. In addition, district and school leaders in these schools often allow teachers to choose their own professional development courses so that they can reflect on areas in which they need more information and find workshop, courses, webinars, and conferences to support those needs.

The hiring practices of district and school leaders in schools with odds-beating ELL achievement demonstrate their focus on ELLs. These leaders look for candidates with professional and/or personal experience in high diversity environments; they look for candidates who demonstrate compassion, empathy, and affection for diverse students; and finally they look for candidates with dual certifications or experience teaching literacy. Hiring teachers with dual or multiple certifications allows leaders to be more flexible with scheduling and class assignments.

Specific Evidence:

In the Newburgh Enlarged City School district, leaders have developed a strategic plan called Vision 2020 to guide curriculum and instruction. Specific to ELLs, the district Supervisor for Language Acquisition created a team of teachers and administrators called the District Language Acquisition Team (DLAT). The team has developed an ELL Framework to serve as the “connective tissue” between the strategic plan and the NYS bilingual progressions.