

Cirrus Academy Charter School ESOL Policy

FY 2019-2020

Introduction

As cultural and linguistic diversity in the state of Georgia increases, school personnel have a critical need for information to effectively instruct English Learners (ELs). Cirrus Academy Charter School will provide assistance with program management and the effective instruction of ELs. Cirrus Academy provides specific information about ESOL/Title III and federal and state guidelines. The goal of Cirrus Academy is to present an organized and clearly written document that facilitates the communication between the ESOL/Title III Department and the schools. This handbook will be updated as needed.

English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is the state-funded language instruction educational program for eligible English learners (ELs) in grades K-8 at Cirrus Academy Charter School (Georgia School Law Code 1981, §20-2-156, enacted in 1985). ESOL language instruction is focused on developing EL students' academic English proficiency in each content area of the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE). The WIDA Consortium English Language Development (ELD) Standards aligned with the GSE guide the work of ESOL teachers. Differentiated instructional practices, both in ESOL and general education classes, ensure that the language development needs of Georgia's EL students are met. In ESOL language programs it is appropriate, when practicable, to use the student's home language as a means of facilitating instruction and providing limited English-proficient (LEP) parents with school-related information.

The goal of the ESOL language instruction educational program for EL students at Cirrus Academy charter School is to increase both English language proficiency (ELP) and academic language proficiency in content-area subject matter. Successful ESOL language programs focus on collaboration and shared accountability for the success of all EL students

The responsibility for the education of English Learners, both in language and academic content, is shared by regular classroom teachers, ESOL teachers, and other instructional staff. All staff serving ELs should plan jointly to determine appropriate modifications needed to make language and content as comprehensible as possible throughout the whole school day for ELs. As a result, all teachers function as language teachers when ELs are enrolled in their classes. Since 1886, English has been designated as the official language of the state of Georgia. It is our responsibility to successfully prepare our students to become college and career ready. This objective requires that our instructional approach be flexible to accommodate the needs of a very

diverse student and parent population. Our goal is to have students succeed both socially and academically. We also wish for them to understand and function successfully in American culture. Thus, as we educate students for the 21st century, we celebrate the languages and cultures that our students bring with them, and we build upon their rich cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Cirrus Academy Charter School will use a state approved model to service EL students as they become identified. Students who qualify will be served through the itinerant model. Recognizing the universal importance of education, the federal government assumed a larger role in financing public schools with the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1965. Through subsequent reauthorizations, ESEA has continued to assist the states financially.

Cirrus Academy is required by law as a Charter District contracts with the State Board of Education, a critical point to consider during deliberations is that participation in either of these initiatives does not absolve either school districts or the state from our responsibilities to students under federal laws and regulations. Federal laws govern most services and policies concerning English Learners (EL) Two prominent examples of such laws are Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI) and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 (EEOA). Title VI requires that districts provide equal educational opportunities to national origin minority students, who may also be limited-English-proficient. The EEOA complements Title VI in that it specifically requires school districts to take action to overcome any language barriers that might impede EL students from equal access and participation in educational programs. The Office for Civil Rights aggressively investigates alleged violations of either Title VI or EEOA law.

Cirrus Academy Charter School will follow the following procedures of Title VI or EEOA:

- provide a language acquisition program to its EL students;
- provide resources to implement its language acquisition program effectively (e.g., an ESOL program lacks ESOL teachers or ESOL materials);
- take steps to identify students who are not proficient in English;
- communicate meaningfully with limited-English-speaking parents and guardians of EL students by not providing such parents and guardians with written or oral translations of important notices or documents;
- exit EL students from an ESOL program when the EL students have acquired English proficiency or exits EL students without written parental or guardian permission before the students acquire English proficiency;
- provide ESOL assistance to EL students because they receive special education services, or provide special education services to EL students who qualify for such services;
- will not excludes EL students from gifted and talented programs based on their limited English proficiency when such programs do not require English proficiency.

Cirrus Academy Charter school understands that federally mandated services and programs cannot be waived as part of a charter system contract with the State Board of Education.

Title VI and the EEOA govern the majority of services to English Learners thus continued compliance is required by federal law

Policy adopted: