

State issues progress report on English language proficiency in Oregon schools

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

SALEM, Ore. — State Schools Superintendent Susan Castillo announced today the release of the Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAO) report, required under the federal No Child Left Behind Act. The report shows the progress that Oregon school districts are making in teaching English to English Language Learners (ELL), based on test scores from the state's English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA).

In order to meet the federal requirement, school districts must meet the targets in all three AMAO's. The targets for 2006-07 are listed below: — Did at least 35% of ELL students move up by one level of English proficiency? — Did at least 50% of ELL students reach proficiency and exit the program? — Did the school district make Adequate Yearly Progress for their ELL population in reading/language arts and math? — Thousands of Oregon students speak a language other than English, most often Spanish, and I celebrate our state's cultural diversity," Castillo said. — However, in order for a student to be successful in school in Oregon they must learn to speak English. It is essential if students are to succeed in reading, writing, math, science, and other classes. Our goal is to make sure that all students graduate from high school ready for work or college -- and English proficiency is essential for whatever students choose to do. — Statewide results: Target for AMAO #1 -- Did at least 35% move up by one level of English proficiency? 105 school districts met (53.3 %) 2 did not meet (1%) 18 school districts not rated due to small number of students (9.2%) 1 not rated due to insufficient data 71 did not have ELL students (36%) Target for AMAO #2 -- Did at least 50% reach proficiency and exit the program? 72 school districts met (36.6 %) 42 did not meet (21.3 %) 12 not rated due to small number of students (6.1%) 71 did not have ELL students (36%) Target for AMAO #3 -- Did the school district make AYP for ELL students? 37 school districts met (18.8 %) 34 did not meet (17.3 %) 55 not rated due to small number of students (27.9%) 71 did not have ELL students (36%) Overall rating — Did the school district meet all three AMAO targets? 62 school districts met (31.5%) 56 did not meet (28.4%) 7 not rated due to small number of students (3.6%) 71 did not have ELL students (36%) Districts failing to meet the overall AMAOs for two consecutive years will be required to submit a plan of improvement to the Department of Education. The 2006-07 report is different from past reports for several reasons, including changes to the test, the targets, and which students are included in the ratings. The most significant change was the requirement that all ELL students were required to be tested using Oregon's ELPA, which is administered online. When a student completes his/her ELPA test, they get a score that identifies where they fall in five levels of English proficiency (beginning, early intermediate, intermediate, early advanced, and advanced). In the past, schools were allowed to use a variety of tests, but this year we have standardized testing to allow for better assessment and better comparisons across the state. This is important because it means that the state and school districts can better identify which programs may be delivering better instruction for students and which may need improvement. Because ELPA is a new test for many districts, Oregon made changes to the target under AMAO #1. The old target of 85% was inaccurate and unrealistic; however, the new target is based on actual test performance on the ELPA, with input from state Title III directors. School districts are expected to show 10% improvement each year on the target for AMAO#1 (35% in 2006-07; 45% in 2007-08; 55% in 2008-09; 65% in 2009-10; 75% in 2010-2011; 85% in 2011-12; and 95% in 2012-13). By 2013, nearly all students will be required to show substantial progress each year in learning English. The state also made changes to AMAO #2, the requirement to exit students from English language development programs. This year, this the measure only applies to students who have been in a program for five or more years, identified as — advanced — on their ELPA test or were — early advanced — the previous year. This target also increases over time, from 50% to 70% and finally to 90%. There were no changes to AMAO #3. There were 62,084 students enrolled in English Language Development programs in Oregon school districts last year. State and federal funds are designated for programs designed to help students gain skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing English. Oregon state law provides districts with an average of about \$2,700 in State School Funds for each ELL student each year. No Child Left Behind provides about \$135 per student in supplemental federal funding to school districts each year.

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