Proposal for Amendments to Level 5 School Turnaround Plans

UP Academy Holland

June 10, 2016

**Proposal Two: Amending UP Academy Holland ELL Services**

As a school with close to 45% English Language Learners, UP Academy Holland (UAH) is deeply committed to ensuring that all of our students receive the highest quality instruction in the most equitable and effective instructional setting. In our first two years of operation as a Level 5 turnaround school, we have encountered challenges with and unintended consequences of the language-specific ELL program model. As such, UP Education Network, in collaboration with school leaders from UP Academy Holland, propose amending the UAH Turnaround Plan to reflect our desire to create an inclusive Sheltered English Immersion program that aligns with state and federal definitions of high-quality ELL programming.

**Recommendations for Programming Shifts**

***Move from language-specific SEI programs to mixed-language, inclusive SEI classrooms***

We plan to move away from the language-specific SEI strands and, instead, have “hybrid” multi-lingual SEI classrooms throughout UP Academy Holland. This is similar to the model UP Academy Dorchester, which has a majority of Spanish speaking ELLs and also number of other ELLs from lower incidence language backgrounds. Mixing students will allow for more cross-cultural interaction and celebration of different languages and cultures.

This will also provide us with more flexibility in how we place students and teachers into homerooms and allow us to even-out enrollment across homerooms, creating more equitable classroom environments for all of our ELLs. Given the large number of UAH teachers who speak Vietnamese and Spanish and share the cultural backgrounds of many of our students and their families, we believe we will still be able to create a culturally responsive and welcoming environment for all students even without language-specific classrooms.

We are making this programming shift for the 2016-2017 school year because it is in the best interest of our ELLs’ social and academic growth, and since such a small number of language-specific students have enrolled for SY 16-17at each grade level we would not have enough students to open language specific classrooms.

***Defining SEI classes as “any classroom that serves ELLs” (state definition)***

Instead of defining SEI classrooms as self-contained classrooms for ELD levels 1-3, we will adopt the state’s definition of an SEI classroom, which is any classroom that serves ELLs - regardless of ELD level or number of students (MA DESE, 2013, *Transitional Guidance on Identification, Assessment, Placement, and Reclassification of English Language Learners).* At each grade, we will have 2-3 mixed-language SEI classrooms (depending on total ELL enrollment per grade). In one of these SEI classes, we will cluster ELD Levels 1-2 so that they will be able to receive targeted support, differentiation, and ESL pull-out necessary for students at those levels. They will also be mixed with students at higher ELD levels and/or non-ELLs to serve as language models within the classroom. In the other SEI classrooms, we will cluster students at ELD levels 4-5 along with non-ELLs. We will prioritize placing dually-certified content/ESL teachers in these classroom positions so that they can provide ESL services to those level 4-5 students within the classroom at a specified time of day. For level 3 students, the Language Acquisition Team (LAT) will make a case-by-case decision about which SEI classroom is a better placement for the student. We have seen in our other UP Academies in Boston and Lawrence, where level 3s are typically grouped with levels 4 and 5, that many level 3 students benefit from having language models and high expectations with appropriate supports.

**Pilot of Sheltered English Immersion Programming in SY 2015-2016 in Grades 1 through 5**

After implementing the language-specific program in all grades in the 2014-2015 school year and discussing the model’s challenges with families, it became clear that this model limited our ELLs’ ability to progress at a rapid pace. In 2015, UP Academy Holland’s median ELL Student Growth Percentile (SGP) on both ELA and Math MCAS was significantly lower than the median ELL SGPs at UP Education Network’s other schools in their first year of turnaround. See Figure 2 below.



The only significant difference between UAH’s ELL approach and the ELL approaches of the other schools in UP Education Network was that UAH was implementing a language-specific ELL program. For the reasons detailed in previous sections, UAH school leaders and UP Education Network staff felt that the school would be limiting students’ ability to acquire language and content if the school continued to implement the language-specific program. Therefore, school and network staff decided to transition grades 1 through 5 to an inclusive, multilingual model for the 2015-2016 school year.

In preparation for the 2015-2016 school year, the Directors of English Language Learning, Allison Balter and Allison Oduaran, collaborated with Boston Public Schools staff and UP Academy Holland school leaders to transition grades 1 through 5 from language-specific programming to an SEI model that aligns with the state’s definition of high-quality SEI programming. In grades 1 through 5, students were placed in classrooms based on their ELD levels, with ELD 1s and 2s grouped together, 4s and 5s grouped together, and 3s grouped with Newcomers or Intermediates depending on their language proficiency. ELLs were placed in classrooms with ELLs from other language backgrounds and non-ELLs, and these homerooms are taught by SEI-Endorsed teachers.

In 2016-2017, it is the network and school’s desire to transition away from the language-specific SEI model school-wide so that students in K1 and K2 can also benefit from having access to peers from other linguistic backgrounds and peers who are English language models.

**Programming Shifts and Performance on Measureable Annual Goals**

It is our belief that these programming shifts to our ELL model will significantly increase our ability to ensure our ELLs and former ELLs are meeting the Measureable Annual Goals (MAGs) included in the Turnaround Plan. As discussed in previous sections, the inclusive SEI model implemented at our other UP Academy schools has led to significant improvement in ELL academic growth for ELLs at all ELD levels, both in their day-to-day classes and on standardized exams. It is our belief, and is supported by our performance in these areas at other UP Academies, that this shift will positively affect our ability to meet our MAGs. It is our also our strong desire to better serve our existing ELLs in an inclusive SEI model, and we also want to continue to serve the same population of ELLs that UP Academy Holland has always served. Shifting to this new model ensures that ELLs at all ELD levels have access to their English-proficient peers and to high-quality, rigorous instruction.

As a direct result of the language-specific ELL program, in 2015, UP Academy Holland did not meet its Measureable Annual Goals (MAGs) that specifically reference the academic achievement of English Language Learners and Former English Language Learners. See table below.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **UP Academy Holland Measureable Annual Goals for ELLs and Former ELLs**  | **2015 Target** | **2015 Actual** | **Goal Met?** |
| **Narrowing proficiency gaps – ELA (page 64)**All groups are expected to halve the distance between their level of performance in 2011 and proficiency by the year 2017. The 100-point Composite Performance Index (CPI) measures progress towards this goal of narrowing proficiency gaps. (Source: Pre-populated by ESE from accountability data. A minimum N of 20 for all students and 30 for subgroups are required for MAGs to be set.) | 70.7 | 56.4 | **Did not meet** |
| **Narrowing proficiency gaps – Math (page 65)**All groups are expected to halve the distance between their level of performance in 2011 and proficiency by the year 2017. The 100-point Composite Performance Index (CPI) measures progress towards this goal of narrowing proficiency gaps. (Source: Pre-populated by ESE from accountability data. A minimum N of 20 for all students and 30 for subgroups are required for MAGs to be set.)  | 77.5 | 63.9 | **Did not meet** |
| **Narrowing proficiency gaps – Science (page 65)**All groups are expected to halve the distance between their level of performance in 2011 and proficiency by the year 2017. The 100-point Composite Performance Index (CPI) measures progress towards this goal of narrowing proficiency gaps. (Source: Pre-populated by ESE from accountability data. A minimum N of 20 for all students and 30 for subgroups are required for MAGs to be set.)  | 62.7 | 59.6 | **Did not meet** |
| **Growth – ELA (page 66)**All groups (districts, schools, and subgroups) are expected to demonstrate growth in student performance at or near the state median or show high growth each year between 2011 and 2017. Massachusetts uses Student Growth Percentiles (SGP) to measure how a group of students’ achievement has grown or changed over time. To be considered “on target”, a group’s SGP must increase by 10 points or more from the previous year, or a group must achieve or maintain a median SGP at least one point above the state median. In 2013, that figure is 51. | 51 | 46 | **Did not meet** |
| **Growth – math (page 66)** All groups (districts, schools, and subgroups) are expected to demonstrate growth in student performance at or near the state median or show high growth each year between 2011 and 2017. Massachusetts uses Student Growth Percentiles (SGP) to measure how a group of students’ achievement has grown or changed over time. To be considered “on target”, a group’s SGP must increase by 10 points or more from the previous year, or a group must achieve or maintain a median SGP at least one point above the state median. In 2013, that figure is 51.  | 51 | 44 | **Did not meet** |
| **Reducing the percentage of students scoring at the Warning/Failing level on MCAS ELA tests (page 67)**Schools are expected to reduce the percentage of students in all groups scoring in the Warning/Failing achievement level by half by 2017.  | 29.1% | 42% | **Did not meet** |
| **Reducing the percentage of students scoring at the Warning/Failing level on MCAS mathematics tests (page 67)**Schools are expected to reduce the percentage of students in all groups scoring in the Warning/Failing achievement level by half by 2017.  | 20.3% | 35% | **Did not meet** |

**Proposed Amendments to Turnaround Plan**

In order to provide high-quality SEI programming to all ELLs at UP Academy Holland, we propose the following amendments be made to the Turnaround Plan:

**Amendment 1:** UP Education Network and UP Academy Holland propose **removing** the following language in section 3C on page 24 of the UAH Turnaround Plan regarding language-specific programming:

**Language-specific adjustments:** The Holland serves a high percentage of both Vietnamese and Spanish speakers, some of whom are currently in language-specific SEI classrooms. UP Academy Holland plans on continuing to serve these students in language-specific SEI classrooms. Annually, the school will review its language-specific SEI classrooms to ensure that students receive high quality services. In addition, the school will examine student enrollment and assignment patterns to inform decisions about the future size and number of language-specific classrooms.

**Amendment 2:** UP Education Network and UP Academy Holland propose **replacing the word “many” with “all” in sentence one of the section entitled Sheltered Content Instruction in section 3C on page 24 of the UAH Turnaround Plan**. The proposed language would become:

**Sheltered Content Instruction:** UP Academy Holland will use a research-based program model of Sheltered Content Instruction to provide in-class supports to all of its ELLs…

**Amendment 3:** UP Education Network and UP Academy Holland propose **adding language regarding our annual program review practices**. The proposed language would be added to paragraph regarding Sheltered Content Instruction in section 3C on page 24 of the UAH Turnaround Plan. The proposed language would become:

**Sheltered Content Instruction:** UP Academy Holland will use a research-based program model…ACCESS data will be utilized to assess progress and ensure students are provided with the appropriate services. **Annually, the school will review its hybrid multilingual SEI classrooms to ensure that students receive high quality services. In addition, the school will examine student enrollment and assignment patterns to inform decisions about the future size and number of hybrid multilingual SEI classrooms.**