



PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND SUPPORT

Professional Development Overview

The ELL department offers a variety of professional learning opportunities throughout the year—in the form of workshops, classes, presentations, etc.—for SPPS staff and administrators. These fall into four major areas:

- Professional learning for ELL and mainstream teachers in the areas of language development, literacy, and other content areas—e.g., Readers and Writers Workshop, Language through Content, and cultural competency training.
- Cultural professional learning, so that all staff and administrators can appreciate a variety of cultures and gain sensitivity in their interactions with diverse students and staff—e.g., overviews of Hmong, Latino, Somali, Karen, and other cultures; immigration law information for staff and students.
- Professional learning around collaboration for ELL and General Education teachers, administrators, and other staff to maximize the effectiveness of collaboration in the classroom — i.e., overview of collaboration for principals, presentations to ELL and mainstream staff, on-site implementation support.
- Professional learning for our bilingual paraprofessionals, which provides them with the tools to be successful in the classroom and maintains a high retention rate for our EAs—i.e., sessions to equip bilingual EAs with the tools to assist teachers during Writers and Readers Workshop, a professional conference for EAs.

ELL Teachers on Special Assignment

Each of the district's school sites is assigned an ELL Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) each year. The ELL TOSA serves as a liaison between the school and district regarding collaboration, instructional strategies for language acquisition, and ELL academic programs.

Elementary ELL TOSAs

Elementary ELL TOSAs serve the schools to which they are assigned by:

- disseminating and collecting information about students and instructional services;
- providing in-class support and mentoring of new teachers
- designing and delivering district-wide professional development;
- attending or facilitating collaborative and ELL team meetings;
- working with the staff development or leadership teams in schools to design and lead small-group or whole-staff professional development activities around collaboration, instructional strategies for language acquisition, and ELL academic programs.

Secondary ELL TOSAs

Each secondary ELL TOSA is available for:

- providing in-class support and additional information about ELL programs;
- meeting with counselors and schedulers regarding testing, scheduling, credits, and graduation pathways;
- providing presentations for staff about collaboration, instructional strategies for language acquisition, and ELL academic programs;
- attending or facilitating meetings where decisions regarding ELL students and programs are being considered;
- working with the staff development or leadership team in the school on compliance issues, district-wide initiatives, and curriculum.

Translation Services

Due to the rapid growth of immigrant and refugee families in Saint Paul Public Schools, the ELL department opened the Translation Services office in 2002. Acting in compliance with No Child Left Behind (NCLB) guidelines, the Translation Services office ensures that families for whom English is a second language are given every opportunity to participate actively in their children's education.

The Translation Services office provides translators and interpreters at a minimal cost to schools within the Saint Paul Public Schools district (SPPS). The office also provides translation and interpretation to schools, programs and communities throughout Minnesota. Other districts and communities are encouraged to use SPPS Translation Services as well. The Translations Services office has in-house translators who are familiar with educational terminology and whose skills are tailored to educational settings. We also maintain a cadre of interpreters who are available to work for schools at competitive rates.

The Translation Services office provides the following services:

- Interpreters for district and school events, such as community meetings, school board meetings, parent-teacher conferences, and graduation ceremonies.
- Translations for documents such as parent and community surveys, emergency letters for schools, brochures and fliers, testing information and score dissemination, and welcome letters for schools at the beginning of the year.
- SPPS is one of the few districts in the U.S. that provides its school choice catalog in four different languages (English, Hmong, Somali, and Spanish). Information from the catalog is available online in all four languages.

When scheduling an interpreter for an event, please keep the following in mind:

- Persons that are not entered into the SPPS payroll system cannot be contracted as interpreters.
- Interpreters need to be paid for a minimum of two hours.
- Translation Services and ELL do not schedule interpreters. However, we do maintain a list of qualified interpreters who have been entered into the payroll system. Please contact the Translations Coordinator at 651-767-8334 or alejandra.bosch@spps.org for a copy of the list.

Resources Available Through the ELL Department

The ELL Department creates, promotes and distributes various materials within SPPS, in the community, and in other districts. To obtain or order any of the materials listed below, please contact the ELL Department at (651) 767-8320 or ell.info@spps.org

Materials available:

- **Bilingual Educational Glossaries** – Each glossary contains common English educational terms and recommended translations (available in Hmong, Khmer, Oromo, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese).
- **Picture Dictionaries** – In Hmong, Somali, and Spanish. Each dictionary has approximately 800 words (including common phrases, cultural artifacts, numbers, and more) with corresponding pictures. Talking CDs are available separately to accompany the Hmong picture dictionaries. A Karen/English picture dictionary will be available in 2009-2010.
- **English–White Hmong Dictionary** – This dictionary has continued to expand since it was first assembled in 1995; it now contains more than 9,000 words and phrases. The dictionary is also available on CD-rom.
- **Somalia and the Somalis: A Handbook for Teachers** – For school administrators, teachers, counselors, social workers and paraprofessionals who work with Somali immigrants and want to learn more about their culture. The handbook covers a broad range of topics, including holidays and celebrations, family, food, songs and basic Somali language.
- **The Hmong: A Handbook for Teachers** – This useful handbook includes information on Hmong history, culture, traditions, basic Hmong language, and many other topics. The Hmong handbook is a must-have for those who want to better understand Hmong students, friends, clients, or co-workers. There is also a list of tips which are particularly helpful for educators.
- **Hmong Social Studies Curriculum kits** – These kits serve as guides for educators who would like to embed elements of Hmong culture into the K-3 and/or grades 4-6 social studies curriculum. Each kit contains a curriculum guide, lesson plans, books, CDs with Hmong music, language and more.
- **Hmong Magnetic Words** – This set of Hmong magnetic words includes 180 Hmong words and a list of suggested activities for teachers and parents. The magnets encourage students to have fun while learning the basic elements of Hmong language.