

BEMIDJI AREA SCHOOLS Read Well by Grade 3

Supporting Students' Cultural and Linguistic Needs

In Bemidji Area Schools, the highest student minority population is American Indian at 16.2%. Other minority populations include: 1.6% Black, 1.9% Hispanic, and 0.8% Asian. Less than 1% of our students are English Learner Learners. The district supports an Indian Education Program and a full-time EL teacher/coordinator. Training and support is provided to teachers to assist them in effectively recognizing students' diverse needs and instructing with those needs in mind.

How is Data Regarding the Level of Primary and English Learner Acquisition Used to Match Students' Needs with Core and Intervention Supports?

Indian Education Program

When American Indian students register for enrollment in Bemidji Area Schools, parents complete a student enrollment survey, indicating the primary language at home. When a student's home language is Ojibwe and very little English is spoken, the case is referred to the EL program teacher, who follows protocol to determine whether services are needed (see below).

Some of the American Indian students in the school district have difficulty with the vocabulary and language required to read, write, and speak successfully in school. These students may not reach academic screening targets or pass the MCA Reading Assessment. The Indian Education Program in the district has an academic support staff member who travels to four elementary schools and works with students who are not proficient on the MCA. Although intervention priority is currently given to students in Grades 3 through 5, some students in Grades K through 2 also receive assistance from the academic support person based on their MAP Growth scores. As is the case with students of any culture, American Indian students needing support will receive assistance through the schools' Title I, Minnesota Reading Core, or Assurance of Mastery programs.

English Learner Program

Assessment data is used before and during a student's placement in the EL program and prior to exiting a student from the program. All students whose home language is "non-English" (as indicated by a student enrollment survey) are assessed to determine their language proficiency using the Woodcock Munoz Language Survey or the WIDA "Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State" (ACCESS) assessment. Students who are not fluent in oral language and the reading and writing of English are further assessed in their native language to assess literacy in that language. In addition, supplemental assessments and progress probes may be used before or during placement as needed to inform instruction and monitor student gains.

All ELs have an individualized education plan that is developed based on the assessment results. The EL teacher charts student progress weekly and shares this information with teachers and parents during informal meetings, during parent teacher conferences, and during planning meetings. Specific processes and assessments are used to place a student into an EL program and to terminate placement. To view Minnesota procedures used with ELs, please click on the link below:

- [Minnesota Standardized English Learner Procedures](#)

A team of educators and stake holders, including the EL teacher, an administrator, classroom (and other) teacher(s), parents, and sometimes the student meet periodically to examine assessment data at various levels of student placement to make decisions regarding appropriate instruction.

What are the Processes for Allocating and Selecting Resources, and Providing Training/Coaching to Teachers to Help Meet the Needs of Diverse Learners?

Processes for Allocating and Selecting Resources

General K-3 Programming

The school district supports a curriculum review process by which a teacher committee selects reading resources. Curriculum materials are selected based on a number of factors, including: alignment to ELA Common Core Standards, representation of minority groups in both fiction (characters) and nonfiction (as in biographies), and the presence of literature from various cultures written by authors of many races. The district's current curriculum, Houghton Mifflin "Journeys", also includes a variety of resources to support differentiation within the classroom, Title I, and Special Education programs, such as collections of leveled readers and an aligned intervention program. Teachers instruct using both whole group and small, flexible groups based on student need and ability.

Indian Education Program

The district's Indian Education program is funded through district monies and a Title VII grant. The academic support person uses the same core and intervention instructional materials and resources that the classroom and Title I teachers use.

English Learner Program

Title I and Compensatory Education programs support the Bemidji EL program by providing funding to purchase appropriate listening speaking, reading, or writing materials. These materials are aligned to the ELA Common Core Standards. Curriculum, materials, and teaching methods are based upon each EL's goals and objectives on their individualized EL Plan, which will be based upon the Minnesota Department of Education WIDA standards.

Processes for Providing Training/Coaching to Teachers

General K-3 Programming

Bemidji Area Schools has a history of providing teachers training in Ruby Payne's "Framework for Understanding Poverty" and Dr. Olivia Melroe's "Looking at Learning: Supporting Native American Students" programs. In-house trainers are retained by the district, and they provide professional development for staff members as needed or requested.

Teachers of reading are also provided with training in the Houghton Mifflin "Journeys" program and in guided reading by outside professional development facilitators.

For more information on the Bemidji Area Schools' professional development program, please refer to the section of this site entitled "Professional Development Plan for Teachers".

Indian Education Program

The Indian Education support person participates in the same curriculum training as the other teachers in the district. Classroom teachers may also contact the Indian Education Coordinator with problems and concerns. Home Liaisons work with families regarding attendance, home issues, and graduation support. The Indian Education Coordinator also attends students' IEP meetings.

English Learner Program

The EL teacher meets regularly (as needed) with classroom (and other) teachers who have contact with EL students to share student assessment data, records, and notes about progress. In addition, teachers are informed during meetings with the EL teacher regarding lesson design and best practices in working with ELs. (See "What Training, Coaching, and Resources are Available for School Staff...?" section of this site for specific information.) Bemidji's EL teacher is also available to model sample lessons and provide coaching to teachers as needed.

What Kinds of Data Inform Program Improvement Efforts in Core and Intervention Instruction for EL and Minority Students?

General K-3 Programming

Bemidji Area Schools' assessment and data review programs are driven by Response to Intervention protocols. All students participate in formative and summative assessment using a wide variety of tools. Assessments used throughout the year for all students include:

- Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments
- NWEA's *Measures of Academic Progress* in Reading

- Teacher-designed screenings (optional)
- Curriculum tests
- Teacher observations and anecdotal notes

Students who need interventions or additional support may participate in additional diagnostic and progress monitoring assessments, such as:

- Intervention Program Assessments (i.e. the Fountas and Pinnel Benchmarking System or the Read Naturally Placement Assessment)
- Specific phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, or comprehension diagnostic assessments
- Teacher-designed progress monitoring screenings
- Curriculum tests
- Teacher observations and anecdotal notes

For further information on Bemidji Area Schools' assessment and data review, please refer to the section of this site entitled "Reading Assessment Processes and Communication of Results".

Indian Education Program

The district's American Indian children and children from other minority groups participate in the same core screening, diagnostic, and standardized assessments administered to all other children (see above).

English Learner Program

Bemidji's EL program teacher uses a variety of standardized, informal, formative, and summative assessments to inform program improvement efforts. The assessments are listed below:

For program placement, the following assessments are used:

- Woodcock Munoz Language Survey
- WIDA "Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State" (ACCESS) assessment

Also for program placement and for the monitoring of progress during instruction, many assessments are used. These assessments assist teachers in determining student growth and in determining whether a placement or intervention is appropriate.

- Home Language interviews
- Observation and Records (progress reports, report cards, etc.)
- Core Phonics Survey
- "I Can" Assessment (Grade 1 – teacher-made)
- Primary Spelling Inventory
- VoWac Informal Placement (teacher-made) and Unit Tests

- Creative IDEAS assessments
- Anecdotal Records of Language Samples
- District measures such as MAP and MCA
- 6 Traits Writing Informal Assessment
- Qualitative Reading Inventory
- Sight Word Survey
- Various curriculum assessments
- St. Paul Writing Rubric
- Writing Records.

The following assessments are used to determine whether a student is ready to exit the EL program:

- The ACCESS assessment
- The Woodcock Munoz Language Survey (CALP of 4.5 or higher)
- Informal measures such as observation and student records
- Other formal measures such as the MCA and NWEA *MAP*.

What Training, Coaching, and Resources are Available for School Staff Members to Effectively Recognize and Meet Students' Diverse Needs?

General K-3 Programming

Bemidji Area Schools' RtI Specialists and EL Facilitator are available for training and coaching for staff members desiring assistance in differentiation strategies. Two district teachers are available to train staff members in Ruby Payne's "Framework for Understanding Poverty", and two staff members are knowledgeable and may assist teachers applying strategies from Melroe's "Looking at Learning: Supporting Native American Students" program. Occasionally, outside experts provide workshops and training to teachers on differentiation strategies such as guided reading. All Grades K – 3 classroom, Title I, AOM, and Special Education teachers have access to core curriculum materials providing suggestions for meeting students' diverse needs. To view the district's specific professional development proposal, please refer to the section of this plan entitled "Professional Development Plan for Teachers".

Indian Education Program

The Indian Education Program assists the school district in seeking out experts and guest speakers regarding the education of American Indian children. Dr. Anton Treuer, Professor of Languages and Ethnic Studies at Bemidji State University, offers assistance and support for teachers when requested, as well.

English Learner Program

Bemidji's EL teacher is available to model sample lessons and provide coaching to teachers as needed. In addition, classroom teachers are provided assistance with lesson design and curriculum modification for ELs.

How are Parents of Diverse Learners Supported?

General K-3 Programming

Parents of all students, regardless of culture, primary language, or learning needs, are supported through a systematic district communication plan. Parents are informed of their children's assessment results, the need for intervention, and academic progress through a series of conferences and face-to-face meetings, notes home, and phone calls or emails. Parents are also informed regarding the best ways to help their children at home. To view the district's specific communication processes, please refer to the sections of this site entitled, "Reading Assessment Processes and Communication of Results" and "Interventions and Instructional Supports".

Indian Education Program

The Indian Education Director meets monthly with the Local Indian Education Committee (LIEC), which is comprised of many American Indian parents. This committee provides guidance for the Indian Education Program and its initiatives. The members review assessment data and survey results, and often provide input for survey contents.

The Indian Education Program also provides support and assistance for parents and families who are experiencing difficult issues at home.

English Learner Program

Bemidji Area Schools' EL teacher works closely with her students' families. She communicates information about parent and student events, and how to better help their children adjust to school. If information needs to be presented in the native language, she finds a translator to provide that. We are fortunate to have Bemidji State University in our community because they provide tutors for many languages.