



The Ten Most
Frequently Asked
Questions
About
English as a Second
Language
(ESL)

North Allegheny School District
September 2020

Welcome to North Allegheny School District!

The North Allegheny School District welcomes all parent(s)/guardian(s) of English as a Second Language (ESL) students to our school community!

We are delighted to have your child(ren) enrolled in our schools and we look forward to joining with you as your child begins his/her educational career in North Allegheny schools.

We are pleased to present you with this booklet filled with Frequently Asked Questions about our English as a Second Language Program and the North Allegheny School District. Also included in this pamphlet is information about our twelve schools and the many programs and services offered to all students, grades Kindergarten through 12. We hope that this booklet will serve as a welcoming and useful reference guide as you begin your participation in the North Allegheny School District.

If you need additional information not found in this guide, please contact your child's school or the Student Services Department at (412) 635-4110.

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Welcome

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Ten Most Frequently Asked Questions About English as a Second Language

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ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
(Grades Kindergarten through 5)

Bradford Woods Elementary School (724) 935-5081

Principal, Jaime Eimiller
School Counselor, Marci Bontempo

Franklin Elementary School (412) 366-9663

Principal, Jeff Anderchak School
Counselor, Erica Zinsser

Hosack Elementary School (412) 366-9664

Principal, Amanda Mathieson, Ed.D.
School Counselor, Danielle Landy

Ingomar Elementary School (412) 366-9665

Principal, Tracie Michalowski, Ed.D.
School Counselor, Julia Sweeney

Marshall Elementary School (724) 935-4044

Principal, Marc Thornton, Ed.D.
Assistant Principal, Rachel Fields
School Counselors, Kelly Kevan and Jamie Flesher
ESL Teachers, Emily Otteni and Amy DeGregorio
ESL Magnet Program for Bradford Woods and Marshall Elementary

McKnight Elementary School (412) 635-4105

Principal, Christopher Shute, Ed.D.
Assistant Principal, Carla Hudson
School Counselors, Christie Biro and Katie Wisniewski
ESL Teachers, Melissa Zarra and Nicole Tutino
ESL Magnet Program for Franklin, Hosack, Ingomar, McKnight, and Peebles Elementary
Schools

Peebles Elementary School (412) 366-9667

Principal, Susie Bjalabok
School Counselor, Jenna Stand

MIDDLE SCHOOLS
(Grades 6-8)

Carson Middle School

(412) 369-5520

Principal, Katherine Jenkins
Assistant Principal, Erin Crimone, Ed.D.
School Counselors, Chance Petro and Courtney Vadnais
ESL Teacher, Aliceann Boyle
ESL Magnet Program for CMS and IMS

Ingomar Middle School

(412) 348-1470

Principal, Dave Deramo
Assistant Principal, Jason Harding
School Counselors, Lynne Earley and Darla Allerton

Marshall Middle School

(724) 934-6060

Principal, Daniel Swoger
Assistant Principal, Matthew Buchak
School Counselors, Shannon Salpeck and Jeff Smalley
ESL Teachers, Amy DeGregorio

HIGH SCHOOLS

North Allegheny Intermediate High School

(Grades 9 and 10)

(412) 369-5530

Principal, Caitlin Ewing
Assistant Principal, John Morey
Assistant Principal, Jenna Fraser
School Counselors, Matthew Butler, Diane Feliciani, Bryan Kiggins, Meghan Mayhew,
and Rianna Liebenguth.
ESL Teacher, Marcy Marshall
ESL Magnet Program for NAI and NASH

North Allegheny Senior High School

(Grades 11 and 12)

(724) 934-7200

Principal, John Kreider, Ed.D.
Assistant Principal, Angela McEwen
Assistant Principal, William McGahee
School Counselors, Rhonda Bielawski, Michelle Buettner, Jared Smith, Jennifer Rosato,
and Kevin Thompson

North Allegheny School District Website
www.northallegheny.org

1. What is the English as a Second Language (ESL) Program and how does North Allegheny School District implement it?

What is English as a Second Language?

The English as a Second Language (ESL) Program is for students in kindergarten through grade 12 who enroll in the North Allegheny School District from homes in which English is not the primary language spoken on a daily basis. ESL provides the language skills needed to participate successfully in content area classes. To meet this goal, ESL instruction addresses the English as a Second Language and PA Core Standards in English Language Arts to enable full participation.

An important objective of the ESL Program is to provide a source of support as the student seeks to understand and adapt to his or her new cultural and academic setting. ESL teachers work to develop an appreciation of their students' strengths within the school setting and to ensure the child's full access to the range of educational opportunities available in the schools.

How are ESL needs determined?

When enrolling a child in the North Allegheny School District, every parent(s)/guardian(s) is required to complete a Home Language Survey indicating if any other languages are spoken in the home. If another language is spoken in the home, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania mandates that the student be assessed by an ESL Specialist using a State Entrance ESL exam. The results of the assessment determine if the student will receive ESL services and how many hours of instruction they will receive.

What method is used?

The North Allegheny School District ESL Program provides students with the language skills needed to participate successfully in content area classes. The ESL Program is an immersion program. The immersion program uses direct and intense instruction to help English Language Learners (ELLs) learn the language and be able to fully participate in their mainstream classes. ESL teachers focus on vocabulary, learning strategies, and literacy as they consider the PA Core Standards in English Language Arts.

Who teaches ESL?

The North Allegheny School District provides teachers of English as a Second Language and instruction for students who qualify. The District will continue to focus on effective practices with English Language Learners through their professional development offerings, regular classroom visits, and program specialist certification coursework initiatives.

The North Allegheny School District is committed to providing content area teachers with training that stresses best practices in meeting the needs of English Language Learners. When students participate in content area classes, the classroom teacher is responsible for accommodations and modifications and will collaborate with the ESL teacher, as necessary. 6

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When do students receive ESL instruction?

English as a Second Language instruction is scheduled to occur during the English Language Arts, English, or Reading periods in a student's schedule. In some instances, a student may be given additional ESL support during the content area class, in which case the classroom teacher will collaborate with the ESL teacher to make accommodations or modifications, as necessary.

When do I know my child no longer requires ESL services?

ESL Exit Criteria – The Pennsylvania Department of Education has established the following ESL Exit Criteria to determine when a student no longer requires ESL Services. An EL must demonstrate the ability to access challenging academic content and interact with other students and teachers both academically and socially in an English language setting in order to be considered for reclassification. Evidence of this ability is demonstrated by the student on the annual English language proficiency assessment, ACCESS for ELLs®, and gathered by teachers using standardized language use inventories. Using the following system, the ACCESS for ELLs® and the language use inventory together produce a single score. If that score exceeds the state-defined threshold of 10.5, then the student is eligible to be reclassified.

Once a student is exited from the ESL Program, they will be monitored for a four-year period to ensure that they are making adequate academic progress.

2. What are the following school activities?

Curriculum Night:

ELEMENTARY

In the Elementary Open House is an evening event. All parent(s)/guardian(s) are invited to their child's school. Parents will have an opportunity to meet their child's teacher(s). Grade-level teams of teachers present their grade-level curriculum in all subjects to the parent(s)/guardian(s). In addition, teachers will speak about expectations for academics, homework, and school behavior. Teachers will explain how to contact or communicate with teachers and what parent(s)/guardian(s) can do to support their children at North Allegheny. All parent(s)/guardian(s) are encouraged to attend.

Open House:

MIDDLE SCHOOL, INTERMEDIATE, and SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

At the Middle Schools and Intermediate and Senior High Schools, Open House is an evening event. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are invited to their child's school and given the opportunity to follow their child's school schedule. They meet their child's teachers and learn about their child's courses, as well as the District's expectations for students' academic and social behavior.

Field Trips:

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Field trips are an integral part of North Allegheny School District's curricular program. Field trips are planned by the teachers to extend and enrich the school curriculum by providing a different educational setting for learning. Most of the costs of field trips are paid by the parent/teacher organizations (PTA, PTO, PFA). However, on occasion, students may be asked to contribute a minimal cost for these events. Students might visit the Carnegie Museum, or hear the Pittsburgh Symphony, or travel to Old Economy, an educational replica of a colonial American village.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Middle School field trips generally pertain to relevant curriculum. They are initiated by teachers in the individual curricular areas, as well as by teams of teachers. The nature of field trips varies from choral and band trips to academic and sports competitions. Middle school children enjoy a variety of school-related learning field trips to places such as the Pittsburgh Playhouse, the Pittsburgh Rivers Dam and Lock Cruise, or the Heinz History Center

INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Intermediate and High School field trips generally pertain to the relevant curriculum. They are initiated by the individual curricular area teachers. The nature of field trips at the high school level varies and may include opportunities such as shadow studies that provide students with opportunities to follow a professional through his/her work day; choral and band trips; academic and sports competitions; visits to the city courthouse for a Social Studies class; or visits to a mental health facility for a psychology class.

Classroom Parties:

Classroom parties are held only at the elementary school level. Classroom parties are sponsored and funded by the parent organization in each building. An assigned room parent is responsible for coordinating all parties. Parties generally consist of a craft, a game, and sometimes a food treat. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) can assist by volunteering through the parent organization at the building. Elementary school buildings generally have three parties during the school year.

3. What do you do when you have questions about the bus, homework, or parent volunteering?

Bus:

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL

If a problem occurs on the bus, the parent/guardian is asked to call their child's school to report the incident. The parent/guardian will be directed to the school counselor, bus monitor, or Transportation Department depending on the nature of the bus incident.

INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are asked to call the Transportation Department regarding any questions or difficulties in this area. The Transportation Department can be reached at (412) 369-5500.



DID YOU KNOW THAT...

...each year students are notified of the "when" and "where" for bus stops about two weeks before school starts? Emails are sent indicating bus stop location, bus stop time, and bus number information. Bus safety rules are also included.

Homework

If parent(s)/guardian(s) have questions or concerns about homework, they should first contact their child's teacher. If questions or concerns persist, then parents may contact their child's school counselor for support.

For additional help, the After School Achievement Program (ASAP) is available at the three middle schools and the Intermediate High School. It affords students an opportunity to receive a structured homework time after school in academic subject areas. Students wishing to participate should contact their school counselor.

Parent Volunteer Program

For information on how to obtain the proper clearances to be a volunteer in the North Allegheny School District, please visit the District's website at northallegheny.org – click the +Parent tab and then scroll down to the Volunteer Clearances link. Please note that a valid Passport can be used in place of a Social Security number.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

At the elementary level, parent(s)/guardian(s) may contact the building Parent/Teacher Organization or their child's teacher for opportunities to volunteer. Parent organizations are designated differently at each school. Some are called PTA (Parent/Teacher Association), others are called PTO (Parent/Teacher Organization), or PFA (Parent/Faculty Association). Phone numbers for current officers of these organizations may be obtained from the building secretary or the District's Activities calendar. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) may contact the parent/teacher organization at any time throughout the school year.

Requests for parent volunteers will be communicated throughout the school year via Peachjar, special announcements, and memos. Parent volunteers may be asked to help with activities like: assisting in the classroom, chaperoning events and trips, helping students with craft projects, or presenting to a class on a special topic. —

The North Allegheny School District utilizes Peachjar to provide families with information relevant to the elementary programs. Each week, families of elementary school students will receive an email containing the listing of all fliers available on the webpage.

By selecting the appropriate date, parent(s)/guardian(s) may view each flier electronically, including previous fliers. Up to six weeks of information will remain on the page at a given time.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Volunteering in the Middle Schools is facilitated through the parent organization called Key Communicators or through the school librarian. Key Communicators is a middle and high school parent organization that assists the teacher and is involved in a variety of volunteer projects. You may contact your child's school to obtain additional information about how to participate. Parent/Guardian volunteers at the middle school level may be asked to help with these kinds of activities: chaperoning events, preparing food for special events, helping in the library, becoming a guest speaker for a classroom or school, or providing study skills support to students.

INTERMEDIATE HIGH SCHOOL

At the Intermediate High School, interested parent(s)/guardian(s) are asked to call the school office at (412) 369-5530. Some typical parent volunteer tasks include: chaperoning events, helping to build the nature trail, helping in the library, decorating for dances, tutoring students, and assisting booster/fundraising groups.

SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

At the Senior High School, the parent volunteer program is facilitated through the Key Communicators. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) may obtain appropriate phone numbers by contacting the school at (724) 934-7200. Parent volunteers at the Senior High School level may be asked to help coordinate events, become a guest speaker in the classroom, chaperone events, assist with student productions such as plays and concerts, decorate for dances, and work with booster/fundraising groups.

4. What is the procedure for complaint resolution?

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of students receiving ESL instruction are given the opportunity to meet with teachers, principals, and District Administration to resolve any concerns that might arise. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are encouraged to first contact the classroom teacher or ESL teacher, depending on the situation. If the parent/guardian and teacher are unable to provide resolution on the issue, or if the situation continues, the parent/guardian should contact the building principal. In some cases, the assistance of a school counselor may be helpful. The Student Services Department may be contacted, if necessary, at (412) 635-4110.

In addition, an Assistance Request Line is also available to parents through the PA Department of Education. The Assistance Request Line number is (717)-783-6595.

5. How can students foster friendships and social interactions with classmates?

Students can foster friendships in a variety of ways. North Allegheny School District sponsors school activities including intramural sports, after school programs like dance, foreign language, arts and crafts, and family fun nights. Student participation in these activities helps them to build friendships. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are also encouraged to make arrangements with other families to have shared play time.

At the middle schools and high schools, students are also involved in a number of activities during and after the school day. These activities include academic clubs, music programs, and a variety of athletic activities. Students may enjoy one of these activities either as a participant or a spectator. Specific after school activities can be found on each school's website or contact the school office.

6. What special programs are available at North Allegheny School District?

Special Education Services

Special Education services are available for qualified students. Students who qualify for special education services demonstrate a need for specially designed instruction and are found eligible through the determination of the multidisciplinary team. Whether or not a student qualifies for special education services is determined by testing, observation, and team input. The degree and type of service provided is dependent on the individual student's need. Some of the services offered include Emotional Support, Learning Support, Speech and Language Support, Life Skills Support, and Vision and Hearing Impaired Support. Curriculum modifications are sometimes made for students and other accommodations are provided to help a student access the curriculum. A trained staff is available to help students with a variety of learning related difficulties.



DID YOU KNOW THAT...

...in North Allegheny School District's elementary schools, children who are struggling to be successful can be helped through the Elementary Student Assistance Program (ESAP)? The ESAP includes the child's teachers, the principal, the school nurse, the school counselor and the child's parent(s)/guardian(s). Buildings must be certified by the PA Department of Education and use specific procedures to address students' problems.

Gifted Education Services

A student may qualify for Gifted Education services by meeting the definition of mentally gifted and demonstrate the need for specially designed instruction. The definition of giftedness comes from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Special Education Rules and Regulations under Chapter 16 and states that a student who is mentally gifted demonstrates outstanding intellectual and creative ability, the development of which requires specially designed programs or support services, or both, not ordinarily provided in the regular education program. This term includes a person who has an IQ of 130 or higher or when multiple criteria, as set forth in Chapter 16 and in Department Guidelines, indicate gifted ability. Determination of gifted ability will not be based on IQ score alone. Deficits in memory or processing speed, as indicated by intellectual ability subtests, cannot be the sole basis upon which a student is determined to be ineligible for gifted special education. A person with an IQ score lower than 130 may be admitted to gifted programs when other educational criteria in the profile of the person strongly indicate gifted ability. Determination of mentally gifted must include a full assessment by a certified school psychologist.

Once a student meets the screening requirements, a Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE) is conducted. The GMDE must be sufficient in scope and depth to investigate information relevant to the student's suspected giftedness, including academic functioning, learning strengths, and educational needs. The Gifted Written Report (GWR) brings together the findings from the evaluation or reevaluation concerning the student's educational needs and strengths. The GWR must make recommendations as to whether the student is gifted and in need of specially designed instruction, which are considered by the GMDE Team in the development of the Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP). The K - 12 GOAL program (Gifted Opportunities for Advanced Learning) is required by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a part of its special education mandate for those whose needs cannot be fully met in the general education classroom. The GOAL Program provides additional enrichment, acceleration, or both enrichment and acceleration opportunities, both inside and outside of the classroom, for students whose abilities require greater challenge. Contact the school counseling office for further information.

Honors Classes

Honors classes are available in grades 9 through 12. Honors classes are taught at a more accelerated pace, are more in-depth, and generally involve a more rigorous evaluation/testing process. These classes are more heavily weighted than the basic classes when determining a student's Grade Point Average. Placement testing is not required to participate. However, criteria for entrance to Honors classes includes: teacher recommendation, appropriate pre-requisite courses, and demonstration of a degree of proficiency in that subject area. Students should consult with their school counselor for class selection. School counselors are available to assist and support students in attaining overall school success and to discuss individual parental concerns.

Advanced Placement Classes (AP)

Advanced Placement classes are subject to nationally determined criteria that allow high school students in grades 9 through 12 to have the opportunity to receive college credit while in high school. There are 24 Advanced Placement Courses offered at the North Allegheny School District. However, acceptance of these courses for college credit varies at each higher education institution. These classes are weighted more heavily when determining high school Grade Point Average. After completing the course, the student may take a test, if he/she wishes to determine if he/she is eligible for college credit.

Vocational Classes

Vocational classes are offered at A.W. Beattie Career Center and include a variety of courses such as: commercial art, computer technology, public safety, electronics, computer repair, medical technology, cosmetology, and a variety of other career-related subjects. Students and parent(s)/guardian(s) are asked to talk with the school counselor for an appropriate selection of courses.

Translators

Occasionally, a parent/guardian who is enrolling an English Language Learner in the North Allegheny School District may require the help of a translator to gain a clear understanding of registration and school procedures. At your request, the school will provide a translator. The District has contracted with the Allegheny Intermediate Unit for translating services through TransPerfect Remote Interpreting. Please contact the building principal to request utilization of this service.

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

...the “North Allegheny School District Activities Calendar,” mailed to homes in mid-August each year, is also an excellent source of information regarding District employees, services and programs, athletic schedules, and other interesting facts?

7. What standardized tests do North Allegheny School District students take and what do they measure?

Please note: for some standardized tests, students who have been in the USA for less than one year or have an “Entering” proficiency level may be exempt from all or some portions of testing following federal and state law.

Grades 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7

ITBS (IOWA Tests of Basic Skills) - This is an achievement test that is nationally and locally normed in all curricular areas and is used to help assess a student’s progress.

Grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8

PSSA (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment for English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics) - This test is required by the PA Department of Education. The annual PSSA is a standards-based, criterion-referenced assessment that provides students, parent(s)/guardian(s), educators, and citizens with an understanding of student and school performance related to the attainment of proficiency of the PA Core Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics.

Grades 4 and 8

PSSA (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment for Science) - This test is required by the PA Department of Education. The annual PSSA is a standards-based, criterion-referenced assessment that provides students, parent(s)/ guardian(s), educators, and citizens with an understanding of student and school performance related to the attainment of proficiency of the academic standards in Science.

Grade 10

ACT Aspire – This is the first digital, longitudinal assessment system to fully connect student performance from elementary grades through high school. ACT Aspire will provide educators and parent(s)/guardian(s) with the insights they need to help students get and stay on track by better connecting assessment to teaching and learning. ACT Aspire assesses student readiness in English, mathematics, reading, science, and writing.

Grades 10 and 11

PSAT - This test provides students with practice in taking the SAT, which is a college entrance exam. It helps to familiarize students with the format and types of questions that will be asked on the SAT. It is also used as a qualifying test for juniors in a nationwide competition for recognition, awards, and National Merit Scholarships. This test is administered on a Saturday in October. While colleges and universities do not require students to take the PSAT, it can help students be better prepared for the required exams. Students must pay a fee to take this exam. Details are available through the school counseling office.

Grades 11 and 12

SAT and ACT - These are college entrance exams. They are standardized tests that are required by colleges throughout the United States. It is essential that the student talk with his/her school counselor to determine what test is required for each college or university to which the student is applying. The exams are administered on Saturdays throughout the school year. See the school calendar for test administration dates and registration deadline dates. Students are required to pay a fee to take these exams. Details are available through the school counseling office.

SAT (Subject Areas) – These are subject exams in areas such as sciences, languages, writing, literature, etc. Students may “test out” of taking a college course if his/her performance on an SAT exam is high enough. These tests are also used by many colleges to assist in placing students at the correct course level. Students are required to pay a fee to take these exams. Details are available through the school counseling office.

AP (Advanced Placement) – There are over 30 examinations offered by the College Board in the Advanced Placement Program. This is a test that a student may choose to take after completing an Advanced Placement class. The tests are scored in a range from 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest level. Students with scores of 3 or above may earn college credit. Students are required to pay a fee to take this exam. Details are available through the school counseling office.

Keystone Exams – These exams are end-of-course assessments designed to evaluate proficiency in academic content. Beginning with the class of 2017, students must demonstrate proficiency on the Algebra I, Literature, and Biology Keystone Exams to graduate. Students will be offered multiple opportunities to take the Keystones throughout their high school careers. All students in any grade who are enrolled in a Keystone related course are required to participate.



DID YOU KNOW THAT...

The North Allegheny School District publishes a Program of Studies, which describes every course offering for grades 9 through 12. It also reviews all graduation requirements, scheduling timelines, definitions of terms, and special opportunities.

8. How do I help my child prepare to attend an American university?

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and students should consult with their school counselor for information and support for post high school career decisions. Every year, high school counselors facilitate a College Fair, a College Information Night, and a Financial Aid Seminar. Dates and times for these events are listed on the District Activities Calendar.

An academic transcript is a summary of a student's educational history in high school. The official North Allegheny School District transcript includes demographic information, courses, grades, and credits commencing in grade nine. A cumulative quality point average is also included. Class rank is not listed on the transcript.

