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ESL Newsletter



2006 Annual State English Language Proficiency Assessment Procedures

Please note: The report described below *MUST* be completed by ALL school districts whether the district has LEP students or not.

On January 10, 2006, PDE sponsored a statewide videoconference to share recent changes to the annual state Harcourt Stanford English Language Proficiency (SELP) assessment procedures. Within the next few weeks, the Harcourt company will send training manuals and CDs for the new SPECTRUM online data entry system for the SELP assessment reporting and ordering process. Spectrum replaces the former CERVS data system for the SELP. If your district does not receive the SPECTRUM training manuals and CDs, immediately contact Harcourt at this address:

customersupportcenter@harcourt.com, or call 1-800-763-2306.

The complete timeline and instructions for the SELP are lengthy. For detailed information, go to the PDE-ESL homepage and click on: <http://www.pde.state.pa.us/esl/cwp/view.asp?Q=99949&A=3&eslNav={6253}&eslNav={6253}>

Harcourt has resources for school districts, charter schools, and full-time AVTSs to use as training materials for teachers new to the Stanford English Language Proficiency assessment or as a review for teachers who have administered the test previously. There are at least ten different options to choose for assistance with administering the SELP.

The following is a list of tips to ensure your success with the SELP.

1. Exited ELLs do NOT take the SELP.
2. Order the tests by building and not by where the tests are given.
3. ALL tests must be returned.
4. Do not borrow tests from one school to use at another school.
5. SAVE the boxes that arrived with the SELP; you will return the tests in the same boxes.
6. Spectrum specifically informs you when the SELP materials arrived, location, and who signed for the boxes.
7. Be sure to assess the students and return the assessments promptly.



PDE ESL Videoconferences at IU8 in Johnstown Proving To Be a Big Success!

IU8 has been selected by PDE as a site for ESL videoconferences. Immediately, interest was high. As many participants noted, "This beats driving to

Harrisburg or Pittsburgh!" Other advantages are free registration, free parking, free catered meals, and Act 48 credits. Trainings by videoconference are a priority for vital ESL

information, drawing dozens of ESL teachers and ESL administrators. Tuesday, March 14 is the next scheduled ESL videoconference.

Did you know that...

- As China continues to develop into a global economic superpower, the number of U.S. schools that now offer Mandarin Chinese language instruction is on the rise, as educators seek to prepare students for the new global economy.
- Officials with the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) launched a Mandarin Chinese language program in 1999. Chicago's Chinese program began with three schools and is now present in 20 district elementary schools (grades K-8) and high schools (grades 9-12). Chinese language instruction begins in kindergarten.
- Other states such as Kentucky and Oregon have similar programs.
- Mandarin Chinese is the most widely spoken language in the world.

Source: www.eschools.com

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“Teacher Feature”: Bedford Area School District’s Walter Brown

A 1970 graduate of Bedford Area School District, Walter Brown has taught at Bedford since 1977, and his wife, Ann Marie, teaches second grade at Bedford Elementary. Walter has a B.A. and an M. Ed., both in elementary education from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. He completed studies for certification as an ESL Program Specialist in 2004 through IU8. Walter is a versatile and talented teacher, having taught grades 4 and 6 as well as gifted and ESL students in his 32-year career. His primary duties now are teaching students in the gifted program and the ESL program.

When administering English language assessments to ESL students, Walter prefers using the Woodcock-Munoz Language Survey (WMLS) for preliminary assessment and placement and then uses the IDEA Proficiency Test (IPT) for diagnostic measures. He enjoys assessing students of different cultures and is skilled at putting them at ease. Walter has assessed students who speak Spanish, French, German, Icelandic, Urdu, and Pushtu, an Indian dialect.

Walter also notes, “My ESL students started with me at the kindergarten level and I’ve gotten to know them well in the years I’ve taught them. I have exited two students and I monitor their progress. I use ‘Phonics Street’ with great success and supplement it with books from ‘Reading A-Z.’ We use games and art activities to direct discussions, practice pronunciation, and develop vocabulary.”

Walter enjoys reading science fiction, traveling (especially to the Outer Banks of North Carolina), gardening, and singing in the church choir and local choruses. He also has sung with the Mendelssohn Choir and the Pittsburgh Symphony. Walter and his wife, Ann Marie, enjoy spending time with their daughter, Marie, her husband, Scott, and granddaughter, Ava Marie.



Walter Brown

New ESL Program Specialist Classes Starting

A new ESL Program Specialist Class, Cohort D, will start Wednesday, March 1, 2006. The first course in the series of classes leading to Pennsylvania certification as an ESL Program Specialist, K-12, is the course entitled “Language Acquisition I.” All the details, course outlines, dates, times, and a registration form have been sent in a brochure to the 35 districts, the Admiral Peary Area Vocational-Technical School, and the Somerset County Technology Center, all members of the ESL Consortium. Additionally, an online version of the brochure is available at: www.iu08.org.

For members of the ESL consortium, there is no cost for the first participant in the daytime classes, which are scheduled from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The 12-credit, graduate course sequence takes one calendar year to complete. Absences from the classroom for participants have now been kept to a minimum. Currently,

62 teachers from Consortium member districts have completed the program and have received certification from the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

To date, 12 area educators are enrolled in the new cohort. In order to enroll, a participant must hold either a Level I or Level II Pennsylvania certification in any teaching field, and must be employed by a school district in a full-time, part-time, or substitute teacher capacity. For more information, please contact Leonard Shurin at ljs@iu08.org, or by phone at 814-940-0223 x339.

