Support for 5,300 Students Across Jeffco

You’ll find English Language Learners (ELLs) in every single Jeffco school, whether neighborhood, option, charter, or preschool.

- Jeffco has seen a 13% increase in the number of ELLs over the last 11 years.
- Almost 100 refugee students enrolled last year.
- However only 15% of ELLs were born outside the U.S.
- 128 different languages are spoken in our schools.
- The top 5 are Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, Arabic, and Chinese.
- Only 27% of ELLs are new to English or just beginning to learn English.
- 73% are intermediate or advanced students of English.
- An additional 3,700 students are former ELLs who are now English proficient.
- In Jeffco, former ELLs outperform all other subgroups academically, including Gifted and Talented students.

Highly Qualified Staff Using Research-Based Instruction

Jeffco has highly qualified ESL staff working at both the elementary and secondary level. ESL teachers are required to have a Master’s degree in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education, as well as expertise in their content area or level.

ESL instruction in Jeffco is research-based, with an elementary model that avoids pulling students out of class whenever possible and instead aims to provide ELLs and their homeroom teachers with direct, in-classroom support. At the secondary level, ESL students can enroll in targeted ESL courses, content area classes co-taught by ESL teachers, or even specialized reading classes designed to empower middle and high school ELLs.

English Language Development (ELD)

All ELLs in Jeffco receive ELD to develop their ability to speak, read, write and understand English for a variety of purposes. ELD can be taught as its own subject, or teachers can embed it in daily content area instruction. Either way, ELD is much more than the study of vocabulary and grammar. In Jeffco, meaningful use and interaction are key elements of ELD. Students learn English as they learn through English.

Challenging Curriculum

Students enrolled in ESL receive the same grade-level instruction as other Jeffco students. Their ability to make sense of and master Jeffco’s rigorous curriculum is supported by ESL staff who:

- Build background knowledge and vocabulary.
- Use pictures, models, gestures, and graphic organizers when teaching.
- Provide opportunities for ELLs to ask questions and process with peers.
- Assign hands-on projects.
- Frequently check for understanding.

Family Engagement

ESL staff work to connect ELL families and schools. ESL teachers, tutors, and liaisons work to bridge cultural and linguistic barriers that can otherwise hinder student success. Our translation team provides accurate translations of newsletters and other documents, while department liaisons interpret face-to-face at conferences and other school and district events.

ESL/DL Dept. | Jan. 17, 2018