

Regulation

STUDENTS WITH INTERRUPTED FORMAL EDUCATION (SIFE) PROGRAM

A. Definitions

“Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE)” are defined as immigrant students who come from a home in which Spanish is spoken and:

1. Enter the Passaic Public Schools after the second grade;
2. Have had at least two years less schooling than their peers;
3. Function at least two years below expected academic grade level standards in reading and mathematics; and
4. May be pre-literate in their first language.

B. Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) Program Implementation

1. Students with Interrupted Formal Education have needs that traditional English as a Second Language (ESL) and bilingual programs are usually not designed to address.
2. The Passaic Public Schools provide English Language Learners (ELLs) with interrupted formal education with instruction to bridge the gap between SIFE needs and regular language support programs. The objective of this program is to develop students’ English language skills, help them acculturate to U.S. schools, make them aware of educational expectations, and provide opportunities to function on grade level.
3. ELLs with Interrupted Formal Education will be exposed to content subject instruction which parallels the district curricula through the use of native language and English instruction in order to effectively transition into a regular bilingual setting.
4. The goal of a SIFE program shall be achievement of the state standards for mathematics and English language arts, as well as the WIDA English language development standards.
5. The SIFE program shall include instruction, by appropriately highly qualified certified teaching staff members, in all the subjects required by law and offered to English speaking students. Students enrolled in a SIFE program shall be offered all the support services, materials and activities available to other students in the district.

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6. The SIFE program shall include the following features:
 - a. The program should operate on a schedule that is parallel to the regular school schedule;
 - b. A program or set of courses distinct from the regular language support program;
 - c. A plan for English as a second language development;
 - d. Instructional strategies for literacy development;
 - e. Instructional strategies for the integration of language and content;
 - f. Courses to orient students to U.S. schools and the community;
 - g. Assessments must be selected to measure student growth in language and content knowledge;
 - h. Planning for transition must be done well before students exit the program. Ongoing discussions should take place with staff who will receive SIFE ELLs when they exit, and school visits or meetings with counselors should be provided to help acclimate students to their new schools or programs;
 - i. Procedures should be established to monitor students' success after they leave the program;
 - j. Depending on the size of the program and the availability of resources, students should have course options appropriate to their age and educational backgrounds. For example, if possible, high school programs should develop courses that earn students credits toward graduation;
 - k. Bilingual and ESL certified teachers;
 - l. Appropriate materials.

C. Students with Interrupted Formal Education Placement

Determining SIFE status begins at the time of the completion of the Home Language Survey when the parent is asked to indicate prior schooling. If there are indications within the ELL Identification Process that a student has had an interruption or inconsistency in their formal schooling, a SIFE referral form must be completed and submitted to the Division of Bilingual Education/ESL.

The Division of Bilingual Education/ESL will process the request and place the student according to his/her age. All students identified as SIFE ELLs will be annually assessed on the basis of multiple indicators which shall at a minimum, include classroom performance, the student's reading, writing, listening and speaking level in English, the judgment of the teaching staff member and members responsible for the education of the student, and performance on achievement tests in Native language and English. At the conclusion of each school year, a student's proficiency level will be assigned for the following academic year and used to determine appropriate program placement, as described below in Bilingual/ESL Program Description.

SIFE Program Exit

Students enrolled in the SIFE program shall be reviewed for readiness to function successfully in a regular bilingual education program. The process to determine the readiness or inability of the individual student to function successfully in the regular bilingual program shall be initiated by

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the student's performance in literacy language arts and mathematics, in their native language, as measured by district benchmark assessments.

The readiness of the student shall be further assessed on the basis of multiple indicators which shall at a minimum, include classroom performance, the student's reading, writing, listening and speaking level in English, the judgment of the teaching staff member, and members responsible for the education of the student (Bilingual/ESL teachers), and performance on achievement tests in English. These multiple indicators will be analyzed by the Division of Bilingual Education/ESL and a determination for exiting the student will be made. When the exit review process is completed, the student's parents or legal guardians shall be informed in writing by mail of the placement determination.

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