

Freehold Regional High School District ESL Program FAQs:

1. How many students are there in ESL/Sheltered classes?

Class size averages around 12-15 students. Levels 1-2, 15 students and levels 3-4, 20 students. The program utilizes homogeneous grouping.

2. Which countries do ESL students come from?

The majority of the students come from Spanish-speaking Latin-American countries, however there a number of native languages spoken in the program like Chinese, Russian, and Gujarati.

3. How many English Language Arts periods do ESL students have per day?

The FRHSD ESL Program is a high-intensity program, with students receiving up to two periods of English instruction. The two classes are entitled English and English Language. Additionally, students are offered a workshop class, where a certified reading specialist teaches language arts and assists the students in their content areas where needed.

4. What do ESL students learn in ESL class? Do they learn English grammar? Do they have a lot of homework?

Daily instruction in the development of the four skill areas: listening, reading, speaking, and writing.

Students learn phonics, vocabulary, reading comprehension, literature study, grammar, and writing skills.

Daily homework assignments are completed. Weekly assignments and projects assigned in all classes. Expectations include that students maintain an agenda of their written homework assignments. Teachers also post assignments on teacher websites.

5. What is the language used in the class?

The ESL program is an English-only high- intensity program; however, there are two bilingual (Spanish/English) paraprofessionals who assist the content-area teachers with translation, when needed.

Curricula for each of the subjects is located at www.frhsd.com

6. Are ESL students a part of other classes?

ESL students are in regular classes for math, science, social studies, and special area subjects like art, music, health, and physical education.

7. Can ESL students get help after class or after school?

Teachers are available during the day or after school according to scheduled times posted on teacher websites.

Additional help is also available in the media center on Tuesdays and Thursdays, beginning in October.

8. How long will ESL students stay in the program?

Achieving fluency is an individual process. The child's English language proficiency level is determined upon arrival. Students usually gain one proficiency level or more each year. If a student is a beginning level (1 out of 6), it may take up to five years to achieve proficiency, however students at lower proficiency levels often show greater growth and reach proficiency sooner. Typical achievement is within three years. However, it is important to remember that each child is unique in his/her language development. There is no limit to the number of years (1-4) allowed in the program.

9. Can ESL students catch up with the others after leaving ESL class?

The ESL teacher recommends exiting only for students who have reached the academic and language level of their peers. The ESL program is the only program in the district designed to improve the language skills of English learners.

10. Is it difficult for ESL students to make friends at school?

It is typical that ESL students experience feelings of isolation, which is why activities in all classes are cooperative (students work in pairs and groups daily to promote interaction and English speaking skills in content class and ESL class). Native language partners and paraprofessionals are available to assist students in content classes. The Colts Neck High School, where the program is housed, has school clubs, performance groups (band, chorus, orchestra), and sport teams (soccer, volleyball, basketball, football, baseball) to help them make friends outside of class.

11. What privileges can ESL students have? For example, can they use a dictionary when testing?

All English learners receive extended time and the use of a bilingual dictionary on quizzes and tests, including standardized tests. Students at beginning and intermediate levels of proficiency receive modified work and assessments.

12. How can the parents of ESL students know of their children's academic behavior at school? What tests do ESL students take?

ESL students are administered an English language proficiency screening assessment when they arrive to determine their incoming proficiency level in English using the WIDA Screener. Parents receive a letter indicating their child's proficiency at entry.

All students must take the state standardized (PARCC) math test and English Language Arts tests with the rest of the population.

In addition, all students take the ACCESS 2.0 test of English in the winter/spring.

13. How can I prepare my children in advance for this program?

Children will need two-way bilingual dictionaries are given to students for use during the day, but if you would like to purchase one for your student to use at home, that would be helpful. Students are allowed to use bilingual dictionaries in all classes and on all tests. They should be reading and writing about native language books- both fiction and non-fiction- on a regular basis.

Audio books are a great way to expose children to the sounds of English- be sure that your child is reading along as he/she is listening to the book.

14. What are the benefits of being in the ESL program?

Language is a powerful force in our lives- in both social and academic settings. ESL students have the opportunity to develop English language skills and academic knowledge simultaneously in a sequential course of study. Students also learn unique aspects of American schools and study cultural topics. ESL students are a resource to our community and our schools. They are valued for their knowledge and background as contributors to school learning communities.