

Delaware



Department of Education

Opportunity Funding

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Funding Period: Fiscal Year 2022

Delaware Department of Education
Opportunity Funding Form
2021-2022 School Year

Opportunity Funding
Directed Funds for English Learners and Low-Income Students

Application deadline: June 30, 2021

Purpose: The three-year Opportunity Funding initiative led to legislation that now guarantees weighted funding through FY25.

Allocation Method: Local education agencies (LEAs) will receive \$600 per English learner (EL) and \$524.25 per low-income (LI) student. Funding shall be made available to LEAs upon the passage of the FY22 budget so that in early July LEAs may begin to hire staff, procure instructional materials, execute contracts for services, and plan for the upcoming school year. LEAs may use this funding for 100 percent of staff costs, including, but not limited to, reading specialists, math specialists, school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, and other personnel dedicated to initiatives such as trauma-informed practices.

Accountability: LEAs will be held accountable to ensure funds are used to improve outcomes for low income and EL students. Districts and charters will work with Secretary Bunting to set goals at the beginning of the school year, participate in a mid-year progress review, and then evaluate summative performance data during their end of school year conference. Community accountability will be provided in a summit to highlight best practices, in an annual report, and in spotlights showing program successes and challenges across the state.

Metrics: Districts and charters will set goals to reduce the gap between EL students', low-income students', and the overall student population's baseline performance rates and 100 percent by half, thus reducing students' non-proficiency by 50 percent.

In addition to the accountability measure data, the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) will provide support by offering

- Toolkits on evidence-based best practices for improving outcomes for EL and low-income students.
- Guidance for selecting high quality instructional materials.
- Technical support enabling LEAs to take a comprehensive look at their funding streams in order to maximize and coordinate them.
- Professional learning provided by content experts.
- Sharing best practices in a variety of ways including regular meetings with curriculum directors, chiefs/principals, social media and presentations.

DDOE will use a third party to also evaluate

- The effectiveness of funds in improving outcomes for EL and low-income students.
- The successes and challenges/shortcomings of the program, including recommendations for future enhancements.

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School Information

DISTRICT/CHARTER NAME: Las Americas ASPIRA Academy		
DISTRICT/CHARTER STREET ADDRESS: 326 Ruthar Drive	Newark	ZIP CODE 19711

Contact Information

CONTACT NAME: Margie Lopez Waite	CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: 302.292.1463
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Overall Summary

Provide an overall summary of how the Opportunity Funding will be used to improve outcomes for English learners and low-income students in your district or charter school.

Include an explanation of how the work will impact each target population as well as the rationale for selecting the plan.

Since opening in 2011, las Americas ASPIRA Academy (LAAA) has served a large population of English learners (EL) and low-income students (LI). The percentage of students in these populations has changed from year to year, however it has remained consistently about 40% EL and 50% LI students. Increasing the academic achievement of ELs and LI students has been, and will continue to be, a school improvement plan goal.

As a dual language immersion school, we support the language acquisition of all of our students in both English and Spanish. The majority of LAAA's EL population speak Spanish; therefore, our immersion model is supporting their development in both languages. However, based on past years' SBAC, students designated as either EL or LI have not scored as well as the ALL student group when looking at disaggregated data. Although there has been some growth in proficiency from 2015- 2019, an achievement gap still exists for our EL and LI compared to the total LAAA student group. (SY 2020 SBAC is not available due to COVID and SY

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21 data is not available and will not reflect all students). According to SBAC data from the SY2019 administration EL and LI student scored approximately 29 and 19 percentage points lower in ELA and approximately 16 and 13 percentage points lower in mathematics, respectively.

Aside from the achievement gap reflected in the SBAC proficiency levels, our EL and LI students encounter other deterrents in their learning process. Many of the families of our EL and LI students must contend with the daily stress of income, food and shelter instabilities. For some, these struggles are compounded with the uncertainties of a parent's or guardian's immigration status. Many of these families do not seek out state or federal financial support because of their fear of deportation, which limits the options for assistance. Many of the parents/guardians of our EL and LI students are not literate in their first or second language; therefore, they struggle with supporting their children's learning at home. All these factors impact our EL and LI students' ability to attend school ready to learn.

For these reasons, we have developed the following plan to address the whole child, from the academic support to the emotional support needed for their overall mental and physical health.

Trauma- Sensitive School

During the 2019-2021 school years, LAAA engaged in several activities to strengthen their commitment to EL and LI students. This is an on-going commitment. LAAA plans to continue in the following:

- Engage the staff in on-going professional development to support the SEL needs of students.
- Allocate Climate and Culture Specialists to work with staff and students to support a positive learning environment and provide discipline strategies and options that keep students in the classroom; Retain one full time specialist.
- Contract with mental health agencies as needed to provide therapy for students.
- Provide targeted support to families through the LAAA Family Resource Center Coordinator

To support our EL and LI students, we have made an investment in becoming a more trauma-sensitive school by focusing on the whole child. Building on statewide training that all staff attended during SY 20 we will continue to focus on supporting school employees in understanding how trauma and other external factors can affect student learning. As a Responsive Classroom school, we have built an infrastructure to support the social and emotional needs of our students. However, it is important to engage our employees in continued professional learning to build their knowledge and strategies to support all students, especially those identified as EL and LI.

The LAAA Climate and Culture team oversees our school-wide character development program, as well as addresses the social and emotional needs of our students. They take a proactive approach to helping students with conflict resolution and coping skills. To expand their reach, 2 years ago through Opportunity Grant funding we were able to hire a full time Climate and Culture Specialist and a School Counselor who work with students in the lower school. The Climate and Culture Specialist and School Counselor provide targeted support to our EL and LI students. When needed, we also contract with a mental health agency to provide therapy

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sessions during the school day. In addition to the Climate and Culture team, the LAAA Family Resource Center Coordinator provides targeted support to our EL and LI families, which consists of information workshops, literacy classes (English and Spanish), financial assistance (i.e., school uniforms, backpacks, school supplies) and resource referrals.

Academic Support

During SY 22, LAAA will continue the following steps to strengthen our commitment to our EL and LI students specifically:

- Employ four (4) ESL teachers to provide in class and pull-out instruction for EL students to increase their English language proficiency and support them in meeting with success in their content area coursework. Opportunity Funding will continue to support the salary for one (1) ESL teacher.
- Retain a full-time Biliteracy Coach who works with teachers providing them professional development, coaching and instructional support to improve their instructional practice and increase specifically EL and LI students' achievement in ELA and mathematics.
- Provide targeted coaching and support by the Math Supervisor for teachers of mathematics to improve the instructional delivery and increase achievement in math as measured by SBAC and curriculum-based measures, specifically EL and LI students

As evidence by our SBAC proficiency scores, our EL and LI students need additional supports to close the achievement gap. To increase their scores in ELA and mathematics we need to continue to dedicate more resources to address the academic needs. We will employ four (4) ESL teachers to support our growing population of EL students. One of the four ESL teachers will be funded through Opportunity Funding. In addition, the biliteracy coach will be a fulltime position to support all teachers with strategies that support language acquisition. Research shows that supporting a child's first language will help them acquire a second language; therefore, the Biliteracy Instructional Coach will help teachers deliver sheltered instruction that has proven effective in addressing the needs of EL and LI students. Our Math Supervisor will provide targeted support to address the achievement gap among our EL and LI students. This support will consist of instructional coaching for math teachers, as well as assistance with math small group instructional strategies and targeted instruction.

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Investment and Goals

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Provide additional detail about the plan in the chart below by listing each Opportunity Funding investment with its associated cost and proposed impact. *For each investment, include baseline data and numeric targets to measure impact. A state budget sheet will be completed by the district after the plan has been approved.*

Investment	Cost	Expected impact (Check all that apply)					Is this a continued Opp. Funding investment from 2020-21? (yes/no)
		Raise EL student achieve- ment	Raise LI student achieve- ment	Increase attendance for EL students	Increase attendance of LI students	Other, specify	
(Please list your priority. Examples: - "Hire full time 1 social worker" - "Purchase RULER for grades 7-9")	For 2021- 22 (\$)						
<i>EXAMPLE. Purchase Second Step curriculum for use with grades K-4 students</i>	<i>842,000</i>	X	X			Increase LLL & LI student self- awareness skills	<i>yes</i>
Bi-literacy instructional coach to provide PD, coaching and support for immersion teachers to improve instructional delivery and student outcomes.	125,000	X	X	X	X	Support teachers in delivering sheltered instruction so that LAAA is advancing students first language as well as their second language.	Yes
Climate and Culture Specialist	95,041	X	X	X	X	Support behavioral interventions that keep students in the classroom	Yes

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Salary for ELL Teacher	110,000	X	X	X	X	Provide support to classroom teachers around strategies to support ELL and those can do descriptors for the students in their classroom	Yes