What is ESL?

English as a Second Language (ESL) is a highly effective instructional program for students whose dominant language is not English. Through a structured immersion experience, students increase their English language skills so they can meet academic standards, achieve success in the classroom, and adjust to American culture. The goal of the ESL program is to increase students’ English language proficiency and academic content knowledge simultaneously.

ESL instruction is provided in an individualized, student-centered learning environment. ESL teachers have extensive experience working with English language learners. They use a variety of instructional techniques to help students increase their English language proficiency and access challenging academic content. At some of our ESL sites, paraprofessionals speak one or more of the various languages of the students and may assist both students and families. The ESL department and the teacher at your site will be happy to discuss this in more detail.

ESL Instruction is a Good Option if:

- A student understands, speaks, reads, and writes his or her native language fluently, but does not understand, speak, read, or write any English.
- A student understands and speaks his or her native language, but has limited or no ability to read and write that language, and does not understand, speak, or read any English.
- A student has limited understanding of spoken English but does not speak it.
- A student understands and speaks English on a limited basis, but is unable to read or write it, or if the student speaks, reads, and writes a non-standard English such as Jamaican or Liberian.

What is the School Day Like?

ESL students take advantage of all the options and offerings available to English-speaking students, including electives and physical education. During the course of the school day they attend math, science, social studies, and other general education classes along with English-speaking students, but they also will receive ESL instructional support in a variety of forms. This may include co-teaching or direct instruction by an ESL teacher.

PPS students speak 46 different languages, and come from families with roots in 57 different countries. In the past two years, more than 180 ESL students enrolled in our District.
We will help you enroll!

Do not hesitate to visit the ESL office, located in the Oakland neighborhood of Pittsburgh. Our address is 341 S. Bellefield Avenue, Room 2/3, Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

The ESL office can help you enroll your child in school and answer any questions you may have about Pittsburgh Public or the American education system in general.

While you are here, we will administer a Home Language Survey and a screening test to determine your child’s proficiency in the English language. The test will take approximately one hour. If ESL services are required, we will discuss proper placement.

Please call 412-529-3516 or 412-529-3620 to schedule an enrollment appointment. Kindly bring these important documents with you:

- Proof of birth for your child (birth certificate, passport, or baptismal certificate)
- Two verifications of a local address (utility bills, bank statements, etc.)
- Current immunization records
- If available, any school records from your country or previous American school district

Translation and Interpretation Services to Support Parents

The ESL office provides a variety of resources for non-English speaking parents. We have translated many District documents into their preferred languages, and we also offer oral translation services. All PPS translators and interpreters participate in professional development throughout the school year, maintain full confidentiality, and engage in best practices as defined by the American Translators Association.

For more information, visit [www.pghschools.org/translation](http://www.pghschools.org/translation).

Need to contact the District in your preferred language? Call the NINE Line. Dial 412-529-6463 (NINE), and leave us a message. A District interpreter will contact you within 24 hours.

**Translation and Interpretation Services to Support Parents**

- **Elementary (K–5)**
  - Arsenal Elementary, Banksville, Beechwood, Concord, Colfax and Greenfield
- **Middle School (6–8)**
  - Arsenal Middle, Colfax, Greenfield, and South Hills Middle
- **High School (9–12)**
  - Allderdice and Brashear

Transportation is provided for elementary and middle school students who live more than 1.5 miles from their school, and for high school students who live more than 2 miles from the school.

A letter with bus details will be mailed to you shortly after registration.

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**Need more information?**

Contact the ESL office at 412-529-3516, 412-529-3620 or nkoni1@pghschools.org.

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