

## Vision Statement

DeKalb International Student Center will support a rigorous integration and utilization of technology resources for effective learning experiences that advances the language acquisition mission, as assessed by the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) diagnostic tool known as the WIDA-ACCESS and the Placement Test (W-APT).

It should be noted that DeKalb International Student Center provides a unique language acquisition program. A 100% student body of refugees and immigrants, students are referred to the center due to poor or non-existent English language skills. The program is two schools within one building, and building technology services are shared/overlap. The two academic programs are *Intensive English Program* for newcomers and the *ESOL Language Acquisition Based (LAB) Program* for immigrant/refugee students.

Students recommended for the *Intensive Language Program* have typically had more than six years of academic attendance or a series of uninterrupted formal school participation experience and are accustomed to formal educational practices. Ages 12-21, students are placed in the middle grades (there mature size is too great for elementary school, however their lack of English and academic language makes the rigors of traditional middle school impossible). While definitely identified as high-need students, this group does not present the same learning challenges represented within the more common ESOL programs.

Our ESOL *LAB* students meet the criteria for “SLIFE:” Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education” or “SIFE:” Students with Interrupted Formal Education. These students have had little to no prior formal schooling and are older than the average 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade student in American schools. SLIFE students have experienced interrupted education due to civil conflicts, wars, patterns of family migrations, and/or work responsibilities. In many cases their education was limited to an impoverished rural school setting and/or a refugee camp where they had little to no opportunity of traditional participation in academia.

Throughout any given school year, ESOL *LAB* students continuously enroll as they arrive to the United States; and although we have students new to class up to the last month of the school year, all students are given the CRCT standardized test when it is administered during the month of April; no matter when they arrive prior to the test administration day. The CRCT is one assessment of seven assessments. The majority of assessments are language proficiency, reading, or writing tests designed to determine how schools are progressing with the new English language skills. These assessments include: ACCESS, WAPT, WRAT, Audio-Lingual, Scholastic Reading Inventory, Scholastic Lexile Inventory, and CRCT. Although the current SIG application requires annual tracking of the CRCT student scores, and the DISC leadership wants to include annual improvement goals around all utilized language and mathematics assessments.

### Students:

Students will achieve academic gains reflective of curriculum objectives, state standards and assessments, indicative of their higher understanding.

All students will have access to appropriate and effective technology resources and tools as needed for learning participation.

Students will be provided 21st century technology integrated instruction that further develops critical thinking, analysis of real world information for problem solving tasks, across key curriculum subjects, such as Language Arts, Reading, Math, Social Studies, and Science.

All students will be able to navigate a curriculum interface, transmit asynchronous and synchronous communications and format appropriate digital documents and files.

Students will advance in computer skills required for online course work participation, to better prepare them for the path of successful completion of required high school credits in a timely manner.

All students will be able to navigate a curriculum interface, transmit asynchronous and synchronous messages and format appropriate documents.

### Teachers:

Teachers will have access to appropriate and effective technology resources and tools as they plan for and achieve the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS), and curriculum standards through the SIOP sheltered instruction models, with proficiency, and technology integration.

Teachers will integrate web base tools, such as student publishing and online analytical tools, along with specific uses for online communication and resources that further engage students in authentic learning and collaboration in the community and globally, to achieve academic goals and standards.

Teachers will provide greater collaboration of technology instruction, and support and enable rigorous growth in engaging and authentic learning experiences, with the of the district technology and technical staff.

Resources, including modern hardware and software are delivered through a safe, fast, reliable technology infrastructure using secure, systematic procedures.

Flexible professional learning opportunities for technology use and integration will be available to fit varying schedules and needs through peers, online courses, district courses, and point of need support for teachers at their sites.

All staff will have access to data tools to work efficiently and accurately in their areas of instruction, such as classroom instruction, special education, administration, and community relations,

Assessment data will be available to staff to monitor and assess student needs on as needed basis, with all data warehoused and available online in the student information system.

Teachers and students will share their work with each other and the community through online resources, web pages, blogs, or video and audio presentations such as podcasts or voice threads.

Technology tools and resources will enable timely flow of information between school, home and community, enhancing communication and collaboration and strengthening relationships.

Administrative and operations staff will be supported through immediate, reliable access to effective, upgraded technology resources and professional learning to support their need for productivity, access to data, collaboration, communication, and to serve as role models in use of technology.

Fast, reliable, seamless access to all technology resources will make the technology an accepted, dependable tool instead of being the focus of the work, and a tool to help students learn and gain life skills.

Reference:

WIDA Consortium. (2012). *WIDA performance definitions - Speaking and writing grades K-12*. Madison, WI: WIDA Consortium, Wisconsin Center for Education Research. Retrieved from <http://www.wida.us/get.aspx?id=543>.