

# Monthly Happenings: January 2019

IDOE English Learning Team: Nathan Williamson, Valerie Beard, Nicole Leach, Adam Pitt, Georgina Schneider

## Hispanic Youth Wrongfully Diagnosed

Click [here](#) to read an article and watch an interview that discusses the wrongful diagnosis of speech disorders in Hispanic students. Hispanic students are being diagnosed with speech disorders at a higher rate than others, when often it is a language acquisition issue rather than a speech disorder. The article details the causes and effects of this issue.

## Indiana EL Data from USDOE

This report from the U.S. Department of Education, [Academic Performance and Outcomes for English Learners](#), highlights EL data surrounding math, reading, and graduation rates from across the nation. Indiana was among the top states in growth from 2009 to 2017 in nearly every category!

## A Closer Look: Academic Conversations

Chapter four of *Academic Conversations: Classroom Talk That Fosters Critical Thinking and Understanding* by Jeff Zwiers and Marie Crawford presents the features needed to create effective conversation tasks for the classroom. The seven features that should be included in these tasks are:

1. Require both partners to talk
2. Require critical and creative thinking
3. Take advantage of controversies and conflict
4. Recognize and reduce ambiguity
5. Encourage thinking based on principles, laws, and approaches of the discipline
6. Build in opportunities for transfer of knowledge and skills
7. Provide choice and ownership

Each feature is further detailed within the chapter. Zwiers and Crawford also state the importance of having a strong initial prompt on which to base conversation activities. "A powerful initial prompt helps to energize, focus, and shape a conversation." (p. 63) The following four bases for developing effective academic conversation prompts are explained: a deep question, a thinking skill that students need, a task or product that shows students' learning, and a life experience that connects to learning.

## Upcoming Professional Learning Opportunities

**February 13 – EL Leadership Virtual Meeting** – 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. ET – Access Webex [here](#). Enter code: 739 904 314

**March 12 – The Noisy Classroom: Making Meaning through Purposeful Discourse** – all day session – Fort Wayne, IN (FWCS) – Request to register [here](#).\*

\*This session is limited to 2 spots per school district. Only one person per school district needs to register to request spots. See a session description within the link below.

Check out the "[Upcoming English Learner Professional Learning Opportunities](#)" for details on these sessions, and a full list of upcoming EL-focused PD around Indiana.

## IDOE Math Framework - EL Teachers Needed!

The Office of School Improvement's math team is looking for EL teachers to be a critical part of the development of the Mathematics Framework. These should be teachers who can provide relevant classroom considerations through an EL lens for implementation of the Indiana Academic Standards for K-12 mathematics classrooms. Click [here](#) to show your interest in serving on these committees.

## Assessment Specialist Opening

The position of Assessment Specialist with a focus on Accessibility is open, and IDOE is seeking quality candidates. This position oversees and provides guidance on WIDA ACCESS and placement tests. If you are interested, see position details, requirements, and apply [here](#).

## Welcome, Georgina!

Our team is excited to welcome Georgina Schneider as a new EL Specialist. Georgina comes from Perry Township, where she was an EL teacher, then a district EL coach. She brings a wealth of experience, especially in serving refugee students and in secondary instruction.

## Become a WIDA Fellow

WIDA has announced a call for nominations for the first class of WIDA Fellows. Seven WIDA Fellows will be selected to be featured as exemplars of practice in videos and to provide guidance and feedback on the development of PD materials. More information, including requirements for nominees and instructions for nominating, is available on the [WIDA website](#). We'd love to see a talented Indiana educator represented!

## The WIDA ACCESS Window

The WIDA ACCESS window is now open! For guidance, the [ACCESS for ELLs Online Checklist](#) for Indiana is a comprehensive resource to keep you on track for ACCESS testing. In the meantime, here are some helpful tips to assure a smooth test window...

- Stay on the lookout for new student enrollees and transfers! Communicating effectively with past schools will be critical in determining what assessments need to be given. See guidance on transfers in the WIDA-AMS User Guide.
- Review the [State-Specific Directions](#) for assistance with handling and returning materials, bubbling test books, and applying appropriate labels.

**REMINDER:** If a potential EL student enrolls during the ACCESS window, they must be identified as an English Learner with a placement test or by acquiring past, up-to-date WIDA assessment results prior to administering WIDA ACCESS.