

# ESL helping students in Coventry

## Teachers, parents & curriculum adding up to equal proficiency

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COVENTRY — English as a Second Language (ESL) students at all different grade levels and abilities are making strides with the help of their teachers, curriculum and parents.

According to Coventry ESL Director Teresa Medeiros, the school district has 16 students in the ESL program speaking languages including Cantonese, Mandarin, Russian and Ethiopian and ranging in grades Kindergarten to ninth grade with six monitors.

“They’re all functioning at different levels of proficiency which range from level one, a newcomer to level five, making that transition to regular English classes,” Medeiros said. “The program is collaborative with ESL and the general instruction model.”

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See COVENTRY, Page A-3

# Coventry ESL a joint effort

*Continued from Page A-1*

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Along with the ESL class, these students take regular classes with their peers and the ESL instructors work with the teachers in the classrooms as well.

“There’s a lot of collaboration at all levels, which is absolutely critical to the student’s success,” she said. “The ultimate goal is to build strong language proficiency along with academics so they’re at equal parts.”

Medeiros explained how parents also play a critical role because the district also helps them understand the student’s learning as well.

“We provide an interpreter if the parent needs help understanding the programs and anything their child is learning and wished to speak in their native language,” she said.

The program, guided by the U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Civil Rights and Rhode Island Department of

Education (RIDE), released a few updated guidelines as of January of this year to ensure all students’ needs are being met.

“In response, we continue to make improvements through reworking our forms and revising our brochure to for and increase collaboration and developing our professional development to teachers to enhance their strategies that do work in the classroom because we all responsible for these kids and need to provide access to instructional supports for them to be successful.”

She pointed out that because Coventry is considered a “low incident” district, they don’t have the larger staff or other resources that other school districts may have.

“We have to get creative and that’s what we do,” she said. “It’s a lot more challenging to provide services but we are,” Medeiros affirmed. “We’re seeing a little more diversity in our district, which can be great for the learners to see that diversity.”