Who participates in the ESL (English as a Second Language) program?

Students whose primary language is one other than English, or whose first learned language is one other than English, could qualify for the ESL program. To qualify the student must have a level of English language proficiency below that of a native speaker in any of the language domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. A student’s level of English language proficiency is determined by the test results of the W-APT (WIDA Screener) and/or ACCESS for ELLs. The ESL teacher in your school will administer this assessment.

How does the school system know what a child's first language is?

Upon enrollment in any United States school system, the parent or guardian is asked to complete a Home Language Survey (HLS). The following questions concerning a student’s language are asked:

* What is the first language you learned to speak?
* What language do you speak most often?
* What language is most often spoken in your home?

The child’s home language survey is given to the ESL teacher who determines if further assessment of the child’s English language proficiency is needed.

Do the English as a Second Language teachers speak Spanish?

No. It is not a requirement to speak Spanish (or any other language) to teach ESL.

What do I do if I have a child in my class that cannot speak English?

Use your resources! Connect with the ESL teacher at your school to ask questions, gain feedback, obtain a copy of your student’s ILP (Individualized Learning Plan), etc.

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If my student cannot read English but can read Spanish, can I translate their assignments?

You can translate a student’s work into the language that they can read and understand. There is not a policy against this. However, the goal is to teach the student how to speak, understand, read, and write in English. It is best practice to expose the student to grade level curriculum with appropriate accommodations and modifications to make content accessible. Use your professional judgment and common sense to help your students learn. Meet them where they are at but make realistic goals and set high expectations.

What if the ESL teacher does not speak Spanish and I need a translator for a parent/teacher conference/IEP meeting to translate?

Contact the ESL teacher at your school. ESL teachers are not responsible for translating at a parent/teacher conference or IEP meeting. The ESL Department will provide assistance.

How do you communicate with parents who do not speak English?

Members of the ESL department are happy to help with written communication translation. Google Translate is a great resource for quick translation (We use this with students often!)! However, note that this service often uses formal language(s) and words and phrases can get lost in translation. Furthermore, some parents may not be able to read in the language in which they speak. When this is the case with students, a strategy to use is to record whatever information you need to convey in the student’s home language by using the audio feature within Google Translate (Remember, this will not be perfect translation.). Text/Remind App the audio recording!

**What types of testing accommodations are available to ESL students?**

Some ESL students may qualify for testing accommodations based on their most current WIDA ACCESS or Screener scores. These accommodations may be used on local assessments as well as the state End of Course and TCAP tests. Please visit this [LINK](https://www.livebinders.com/b/2244559?tabid=c30a560c-7e09-0d2f-59cd-5d0e79b79e4f) and navigate to Slides 11-14 for accommodations that are allowable for any student that has an ILP (Individualized Learning Plan). The ESL teacher will meet with the classroom teacher and together they will discuss testing accommodations for the student. These accommodations must be implemented in classroom instruction and assessments for it to be an eligible accommodation on state assessments. [Click Here for Test Administration Windows in TN for the 2022-23 School Year](https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/events/2022-23_Assessment_Calendar.pdf)