

Rutland City Public Schools

Lau Plan



Introduction - The Purposes of this Document

A Lau Plan, named after the landmark [Lau vs. Nichols U.S. Supreme Court Decision of 1974](#), resulted in the requirement of public school districts to provide equitable access to high quality education for students who are English Learners by outlining actionable steps to meet specific goals in the form of a plan. The plan describes what a school district will do:

- to identify English Learners
- to design an effective program reflective of their needs
- to employ appropriate personnel with specialized knowledge to serve the needs of EL students
- to align the instruction of ELs to state and local content standards
- to provide ongoing, authentic assessments to ascertain their growth in English language proficiency and in the comprehension of academic content

Each Lau Plan is developed using the specialized expertise of district personnel, but is ultimately approved and adopted by the local board of education as policy. As with any policy, no administrator or other staff member of the school district may veto, alter, or abandon implementation in a way that is contrary to the Lau Plan. They may, however, submit revisions and updates as necessary. A Lau Plan is a "working document" that should be revisited frequently.

(<https://www.brown.edu/academics/education-alliance/teaching-diverse-learners/policy/lau-plan>)

Thus the Lau Plan for Rutland City Public Schools represents the **policy** of the Rutland City Public Schools Board of Commissioners. It also outlines RCPS **procedures** for the identification, placement, and program options for English Learners; qualifications of staff; assurances and expectations for equitable access to all educational and extracurricular opportunities for EL students; communication and partnership with families; and plans for assessment, exit, monitoring, and follow-up of all students initially identified as EL. In order to contextualize both the policy and its procedures, as well as to orient our district towards growth, information is included to help highlight both the present and desired outcomes for English Learners as seen through data. Finally, goals for future growth and support for multilingualism are addressed as values which guide the implementation of all procedures in this document.



Table of Contents

Who are English Learners?	2
Mission and Vision of RCPS EL Program	4
Section 1: Legal Foundation for Providing Effective Educational Services to English Learners	5
Section 2: English Learner Identification	6
Section 3: Development of Individualized Language Acquisition Programs	7
Section 4: Meaningful and Equitable Access to Academic and Extracurricular Programs	9
Section 5: Equitable Personnel, Facilities, and Materials	10
Section 6: Annual English Language Proficiency Test Administration	12
Section 7: Exit and Monitoring	13
Section 8: Ongoing Program Evaluation	14
Section 9: Meaningful Communication with Parents and Guardians	14
Section 10: Support for Multilingualism	16
Additional Resources	17

Who are English Learners?

In Vermont, the term EL refers to those students who have not yet met the State’s definition of proficiency in English, as measured by the State’s English language proficiency assessments which are also linked to grade appropriate academic standards.

ELs in Vermont range in academic language proficiency from Level 1 (Entering) all the way to Level 6 (Reaching), and can have varying levels of proficiency in the different domains of language—i.e., listening, speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension.

ELs need different types and degrees of support in acquiring and using the English language in the classroom, particularly with the complex academic language that leads to successful high school graduation and higher education opportunities.

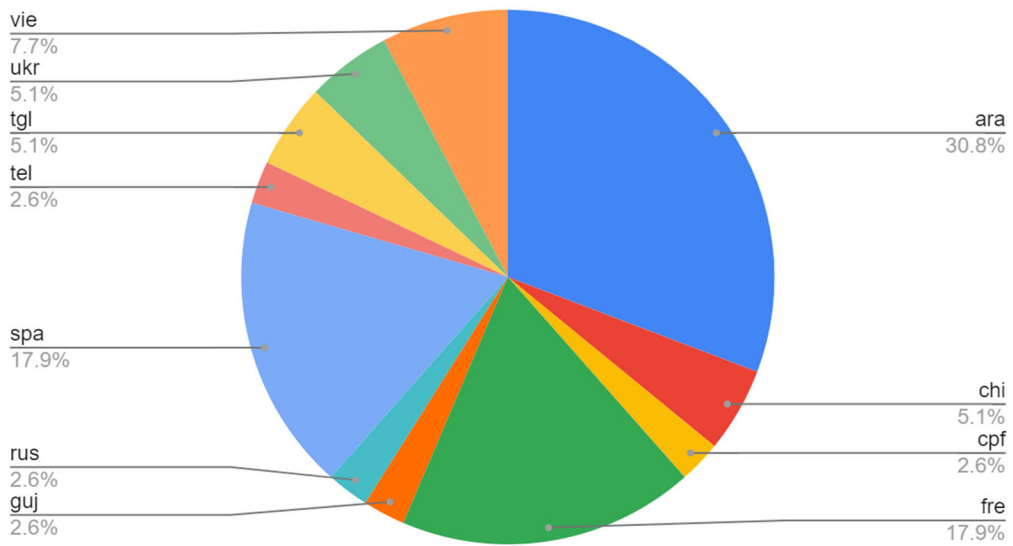


Multilingual Student Demographics for Rutland City Public Schools*

*Data is from 2023-24 "Primary Home language"

2% of RCPS students receive EL support. The chart below shows the breakout of languages spoken among that 2%.

Count of student_homePrimaryLanguage



Titl

Mission and Vision of RCPS EL Program

The mission of RCPS's English Learner (EL) programs is to provide instruction, support and advocacy to ensure that ELs gain all of the linguistic, social and academic skills they need to access their learning as part of the Rutland schools' community.

The vision for all students is, "Rutland City Public Schools cultivates a passionate, diverse, and resilient community of critical thinkers who learn with purpose, create innovative and responsible solutions, and lead lives of integrity." Our goal is to support our EL students in becoming examples of that vision.



Section 1: Legal Foundation for Providing Effective Educational Services to English Learners

Several federal laws and Supreme Court decisions have established the legal requirements for providing English Learners (from here on referred to as ELs) with effective language and content acquisition programming.

Federal Legislation

Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) - Provides for strong accountability for the education of all children and for certain provisions specific to limited English proficient students, especially under Titles I and III of the Act.

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/index.html> (full text)

<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/index.html>

(U.S. Department of Education's official ESSA website)

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 - Prohibits discrimination on the basis of national origin (and other civil rights).

<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/cor/coord/titlevistat.htm> (full text)

Equal Education Opportunities Act of 1974 - Requires schools to "take appropriate steps" to assure equal access as stipulated in the Lau opinion below.

<http://www.law.cornell.edu/topics/education.html>

Dear Colleague Letter (2015) - Provides additional guidance to assist schools in meeting the legal obligations to ensure meaningful and equal participation for ELs in educational programs and services.

<https://www.colorincolorado.org/sites/default/files/colleague-el-201501.pdf>

Supreme Court Decisions

Lau vs. Nichols (1974) - Ruled that providing the same access to curriculum, instruction, and materials for students of limited English proficiency as is provided to English dominant students is not in effect equitable:

http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0414_0563_ZS.html

Plyler vs. Doe (1981) - Ruled that all students in public schools must be appropriately served, including any students who may not be documented as legal immigrants:

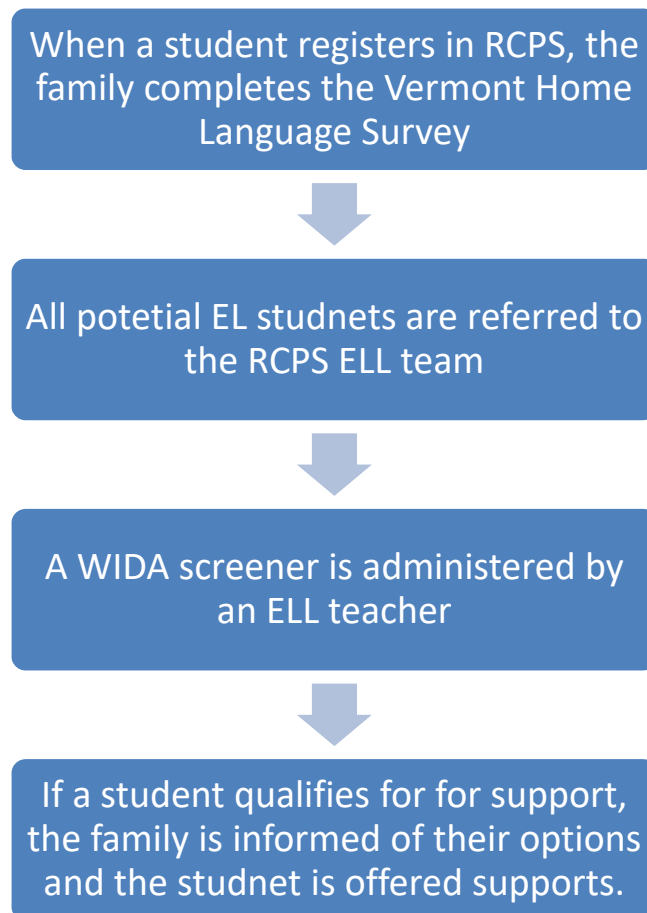
http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0457_0202_ZO.html

Castañeda vs. Pickard (1981) - Case precedent requires schools to use a three-pronged approach to assure that they are following the spirit of the above decisions vis-à-vis: a practice grounded in sound educational theory; effective implementation of an appropriate program; assurance that the program is working through an evaluation and subsequent program modification to meet this requirement.

<https://web.stanford.edu/~hakuta/www/LAU/IAPolicy/IA1bCastanedaFullText.htm>

Section 2: English Learner Identification

In RCPS, English Learners are identified in accordance with federal and state requirements. The following graphics demonstrate the process of identification. EL students should be screened in less than a week, and placed in an appropriate school and classroom as soon as possible.



English Language Proficiency Screening Assessment Requirements		
Grade	Screening Assessment	Minimum Score Required to be Non-EL
1st semester K	Kindergarten MODEL	Oral language proficiency 5.0 (Literacy MODEL administered early 2nd semester) or family request to exit/not enter
2nd semester K/1st semester 1st grade	Kindergarten MODEL	Composite proficiency level 5.0 or family request to exit/not enter
2nd semester 1st grade- 12th grade	WIDA Screener Online	Composite proficiency level 5.0 or family request to exit/not enter

Section 3: Development of Individualized Language Acquisition Programs

All English Learners benefit from an individualized educational program to meet their English language acquisition and academic content learning needs. RCPS provides an effective program relative to each student’s current level of English proficiency, native language proficiency, educational background, disability status, and other factors.



Rutland City Public Schools intends to create individualized programs to best fit the needs of our diverse English Learners. As the number of students receiving EL supports changes, RCPS may adjust program delivery to offer individualized and inclusive programming.

All EL Students receive age appropriate instruction while learning English. We search for social emotional entry points, cultural entry points, and linguistic adaptation.

RCPS is constantly evaluating its EL programming and allocation of resources. Offering a combination of push in, pull out, and group instruction allows RCPS to meet the needs of its students and families.

All EL students receive support from an EL teacher to address language and content needs using any of the models described above.

- ❑ The duration and frequency of programs is differentiated based on an understanding of individual student needs.
- ❑ A predictable schedule is created by EL teachers in collaboration with all classroom teachers, guidance, and scheduling personnel.

If a family **chooses to decline EL services**, this decision is documented after a meeting with the Director of EL programs.

- ❑ Students whose families decline services are monitored by their teachers. Classroom teachers collaborate with EL teachers to draw attention to any challenges related to language proficiency.

All EL students must be assessed annually with the WIDA ACCESS to determine progress, whether or not they are receiving EL services. Parents and school personnel are informed annually of the results of these assessments, and supports are adjusted accordingly. Families receive translated letters in the mail alerting them of these results. Students who demonstrate proficiency in all language domains enter Monitor status.

- ❑ Results from WIDA ACCESS testing, as well as other forms of assessment, are stored in student files, as well as our SIS.
- ❑ EL teachers collect information about student proficiency levels from these sources to create goals to guide their instructional practices.

Our mission is to provide an equitable educational experience which allows our students to become independent and confident members of our school community.

Newcomer Programs – RCPS is constantly assessing programming for the new variety of students we are receiving. The following models are considered when creating programming.

Congruent/Parallel Teaching - EL teachers pull students out of classrooms to offer language support that parallels mainstream instruction in terms of content and skills. Emphasis on literacy and oral language for academic purposes, with other content areas addressed.

Push-in/pull-aside - Specialist teachers and instructional assistants support EL students in mainstream classrooms, collaborating with other educators to address specific needs.

Stand-alone EL Classes - Generally Language Arts and content classes taught in Middle and High school by EL specialists certified in the content area. (EL 1, or EL Math, EL Science, etc. in RCPS - *(please note these classes are being re-named, see below)*)

Co-taught Classes - EL specialist and classroom/content teacher work together to provide content instruction that is appropriate for EL students (currently offered through a grant in RCPS.)

Resourcing, organizing, and appropriately matching students with these diverse supports is an equity-focused imperative that requires consistent, predictable funding.

Section 4: Meaningful and Equitable Access to Academic and Extracurricular Programs

English Learners are entitled to equitable access to all academic and extracurricular programs that their schools offer.

In RCPS we monitor both present ELs as well as all students who were *ever ELs*, to ensure that they are represented across programs and educational opportunities, and that all programs and educational opportunities are made accessible. A commitment is made to supporting students.

Opportunity to Learn Data

Source: Equity & Inclusion Data Report 2018 – 2019

Currently RCPS's 2.0 % of students receiving EL support is far too small a group to collect and share data. However, we analyze each student's:

- Academic Schedule
- Academic Success
- Co-Curricular participation
- Status of credit toward graduation and promotion

Section 5: Equitable Personnel, Facilities, and Materials

English Learners must be provided with sufficient, qualified teaching staff to meet their language learning and academic content acquisition needs, as well as facilities and materials of comparable quality to those of their peers. While all EL teachers possess credentials affirming their specialized knowledge, particular care is given to providing the most vulnerable students with teachers who are the most knowledgeable about their needs and most skilled in addressing them.



EL support in RCPS is delivered by specially trained and certified EL professionals.

- ❑ An EL Instructional Assistant assigned to support “newcomer” programs is also a licensed EL professional.

RCPS assesses support delivery on a quarterly basis to ensure we are making the best use of our resources to support our EL students. We take into account, WIDA levels of students, grade levels, classrooms, and professional staff.

While EL teachers support multilingual students identified as EL as described above, providing equitable access to learning and belonging for English Learners is the responsibility of ALL RCPS educators. Mainstream and content area teachers are provided professional learning opportunities at both the school and district level to ensure that EL students are receiving accessible and meaningful

instruction when in their general education classrooms.

- ❑ Professional learning opportunities are offered to teachers and others who are not EL specialists. Examples include: Co-teaching, Working with Emergent Multilinguals, Collaboration for English Learners, and planned in class accommodations. All RCPS students have access to Chromebooks at all grade levels. Chrome technology allows for an adequate level of translation to access school materials.

Equitable classroom spaces and materials are made available to English Learners.

- ❑ Surveys are conducted periodically to determine whether EL teaching spaces are adequate for the needs of oral language development and literacy.
- ❑ Local funds are used to make instructional materials available to EL teachers, weighted by needs at each school.
- ❑ The team of EL teachers supports school personnel in researching materials most appropriate for students at a variety of proficiency levels
- ❑ Resources are divided equitably based on needs at individual school building
- ❑ Local funds can be supplemented with grant funds from grants specific to refugees, as well as with Title III funds. Currently, RCPS does not have enough EL students to qualify for additional grants, but we are always looking for support.

In RCPS, we avoid segregating English learners from their non-English Learner peers

- ❑ EL teachers provide push in support and coteaching when possible
- ❑ Newcomer programs and newcomer strands are soon to be developed to keep a group of students for no more than a year, at which point they receive EL services using a more fully integrated design.

Section 6: Annual English Language Proficiency Test Administration

All English Learners in Vermont public schools, as well as publicly-funded English Learners in non-public schools, must be administered the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs (or Alternate ACCESS, if applicable) annually.

All current EL students are administered WIDA ACCESS for ELs/Alternate ACCESS annually. EL teachers at each school administer this assessment, with support from the Intake & Assessment Specialist and EL Program Director.

Families do have an opportunity to opt out of EL services after a conversation with the EL teacher or school principal, although this is not recommended. Should they choose to refuse EL services, an opt-out document is completed and placed in student file. Even if a family elects not to have EL services provided for their child, the student is still required to take the WIDA ACCESS assessment annually until they score at least a 5.0 overall.

RCPS personnel analyze the results of the WIDA ACCESS test for each individual student as well as by grade level, school, and first language background. These data are used to and implement changes to both teaching practice and program design in response to patterns in achievement.

- ❑ Careful attention is placed on data regarding what instruction seems to be most successful, where students seem to be struggling most, and where common vulnerabilities are, so that decisions can be made about how to best assist students across all schools and programs.

In addition to WIDA ACCESS testing, EL students also participate in the same assessments as their non-EL peers. This data is also considered and analyzed to ensure that students are making progress and receiving the necessary support.

Section 7: Exit and Monitoring

When an English Learner meets Vermont's definition of English language proficiency on ACCESS for ELLs/Alternate ACCESS, the student is exited from English Learner status. LEAs must monitor the academic performance of all former English Learners to ensure that English language support services are no longer needed.

Exit criterion for EL programming in Vermont is a score of 5 overall on the WIDA ACCESS 2.0 (comprehensive score on all 4 domains).

Former English Learners are monitored by the EL department for 2 years after exiting the program. The classroom teachers of these monitored students report on student progress and proficiency at least twice annually, using the RCPS progress report system.

In the event there is need:

- The EL teacher and classroom teacher collaborate to determine gaps
- Students can be included in small groups with the EL teacher to focus on specific language skills and proficiencies

If a concern arises about a student who was screened for EL status at enrollment, but did not qualify, EL teachers are notified by the classroom teacher.

- The EL teacher and classroom teacher collaborate to determine gaps, and students can be included in small group EL services to address language proficiency needs

Section 8: Ongoing Program Evaluation

LEAs must regularly evaluate the effectiveness of their programs for English learners and make modifications if the desired outcomes, both academic and linguistic, are not being achieved.

Program evaluation is conducted by Vermont Title III/EL Program Director Jim McCobb from the Vermont Agency of Education, as well as by Rutland City Public Schools Assistant Superintendent. RCPS's EL Program data will be delivered to the school board members annually.

Section 9: Meaningful Communication with Parents and Guardians

School districts have an obligation to ensure meaningful communication with parents with a primary/home language other than English in a language they can understand and to adequately notify multilingual parents of information about any program, service, or activity of a school or the district that is called to the attention of monolingual/English-speaking parents.

This essential information includes but is not limited to information regarding: language assistance programs, special education and related services, IEP meetings, grievance procedures, notices of nondiscrimination, student discipline policies and procedures, registration and enrollment, report cards, requests for parent permission for student participation in district or school activities, parent-teacher conferences, parent handbooks, and any other school and program choice options.

In RCPS, we access Language Link. It is a service that provides certified interpretation services to schools and families via phone when meeting are needed or planned. These interpreters speak the languages of the groups present in RCPS

- The school district frequently reviews whether or not parents and guardians, by self-description, require translation services so that we can be confident we are being as inclusive as possible of the language groups in our community.
- With the assistance of School Messenger, all messages that go out by phone to RCPS families are translated into the native languages of parents in the community, so that they receive all information necessary from the schools

The Home Language Survey (HLS) is completed for every student enrolled in the District, and our intake system contains questions about whether or not the parents/guardians of a student require translation and interpretation services.

- RCPS is careful to note that there is no definite correlation between a student's EL status and whether or not their parent is in need of these services.

- ❑ In Infinite Campus, RCPS's student information system, a special icon on a student's page designates whether or not the parent requires interpretation; this is different from the indication of whether or not a student qualifies as an EL student.

All RCPS adminand teachers are aware of our supports and interpretation systems.

- ❑ At new teacher orientation an explanation is provided about both the use of the Multilingual Liaisons, and how to request interpretation and translation services
- ❑ This plan is on our website and highlighted for our entire school community.

The multilingual community has a voice in all advisory groups that help support the district. For example, multilingual parents and students are invited to all school improvement planning sessions Title I meetings, and Parent Family Engagement events

Section 10: Support for Multilingualism

While Rutland City Public Schools, like Rutland itself, is rich in diversity of languages, SES status, and cultures. There has traditionally not been an adequate enrollment of students from any one language group to support the development of a bilingual program of instruction. However, we are firm in our belief, supported by research ([Dana Foundation, 2012](#); [Kodaheart, 2017](#)) that bilingualism and multilingualism provide cognitive advantages, social and emotional advantages, and cultural advantages not only to learners but to the entire community. Therefore we support emergent multilingualism in all its forms, and work to ensure that English Learners are viewed as learners with assets rather than deficiencies. These core beliefs undergird decisions and initiatives such as:

- Supporting rather than just “allowing” the use of students’ other languages in classroom settings to assist in understanding and manipulating concepts and developing parallel skills.
- Developing strands within PTCs and Parent Groups which address family questions and concerns such as what “respect” looks like across cultures, and how to prevent language loss among second generation multilinguals.
- Researching language acquisition programs through an exchange of ideas, resources, and potential students and teachers. One goal is to increase the course offerings at RMS and RHS to allow for credit in language acquisition and bi-lingual studies.

Additional Resources

WIDA Performance Definitions

WIDA Performance Definitions	
At the given level of English language proficiency, English language learners will process, understand, produce or use:	
6- Reaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ specialized or technical language reflective of the content areas at grade level ▪ a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse as required by the specified grade level ▪ oral or written communication in English comparable to English-proficient peers
5- Bridging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ specialized or technical language of the content areas ▪ a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse, including stories, essays or reports ▪ oral or written language approaching comparability to that of English-proficient peers when presented with grade level material
4- Expanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ specific and some technical language of the content areas ▪ a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in oral discourse or multiple, related sentences or paragraphs ▪ oral or written language with minimal phonological, syntactic or semantic errors that do not impede the overall meaning of the communication when presented with oral or written connected discourse with sensory, graphic or interactive support
3- Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ general and some specific language of the content areas ▪ expanded sentences in oral interaction or written paragraphs ▪ oral or written language with phonological, syntactic or semantic errors that may impede the communication, but retain much of its meaning, when presented with oral or written, narrative or expository descriptions with sensory, graphic or interactive support
2- Beginning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ general language related to the content areas ▪ phrases or short sentences ▪ oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede the meaning of the communication when presented with one- to multiple-step commands, directions, questions, or a series of statements with sensory, graphic or interactive support
1- Entering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ pictorial or graphic representation of the language of the content areas ▪ words, phrases or chunks of language when presented with one-step commands, directions, WH-, choice or yes/no questions, or statements with sensory, graphic or interactive support ▪ oral language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede meaning when presented with basic oral commands, direct questions, or simple statements with sensory, graphic or interactive support

[WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Gr. K](#)

[WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Gr. 1](#)

[WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Gr. 2-3](#)

[WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Gr. 4-5](#)

[WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Gr. 6-8](#)

[WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Gr. 9-12](#)

Resource for general ed/content teachers AND EL teachers

<https://www.colorincolorado.org/>

Resources about co-teaching

<http://coteachingforells.weebly.com/>

Resources about equity-focused education for ELs

<https://getsupported.net/about-supported/>