



ESOL Program

Parent/Guardian Information



What does ESOL mean?

What does EL mean?

ESOL is an abbreviation for English to Speakers of Other Languages. EL refers to a student who is an English Learner.

What is the ESOL Program?

English Learners (ELs) face unique challenges in the classroom as they strive to learn academic content while their English language skills are still developing. The Fulton County ESOL program provides support for English language acquisition and development of skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing through content based instruction.

Instruction is delivered by ESOL teachers who are experts in second language acquisition and content knowledge. By combining language-rich classes with standards-based instruction, teachers create an environment that is both nurturing and academically rigorous as they prepare students to fully participate in general education classrooms.





How do you determine that a student is eligible for the ESOL program?

When information gathered at enrollment indicates the need for language screening, the Kindergarten student will be given the W-APT language placement test, for grades 1 to 12 it will be the WIDA Screener.

Eligibility Test

The parent/guardian will be notified of the screening results within ten days of enrollment. The school system is required by law to identify and screen students who may qualify for the ESOL program, thus parent/guardian permission is not needed to screen. If a student qualifies, the parent/guardian is notified and services are begun.

Each year, students who qualify for ESOL services are tested with the *ACCESS for ELLs* test to measure language growth and to determine continued eligibility for the program.



How do students benefit from participating in the ESOL program?



Although many students can communicate socially, they struggle with the language used for academic purposes. It can take many years for students to develop this academic language that includes complicated text structures, formal grammar use, and abstract concepts.

The ESOL program assists students to acquire both social and academic language in English by providing direct instruction on a daily basis. The program provides targeted support that enables English learners to master the skills needed for success in American schools.



YES

NO

What if I do not agree that my student needs to be served by the ESOL program?

Parents/guardians have the right to refuse daily ESOL services and sign a waiver of services for the current school year. Students whose parent/guardian waives services do not receive the benefits of direct instruction given in the ESOL program.



Parental Waiver of ESOL Services (Continued)



Their language deficits may increase and may negatively affect their academic performance as they continue in school. In particular, they may not be able to match their peers in terms of writing skills and their ability to comprehend complex text.

A student whose parent/guardian has waived daily ESOL services for the current year continues to qualify for services and per federal requirements will receive appropriate support in all classes. The ESOL teacher will be actively involved in the student's education in a variety of ways such as consulting with the student's teachers, close monitoring of academic progress, participating in student support meetings, and contacting the parent/guardian.

The parent/guardian has the right to waive daily ESOL services, or to cancel the waiver at any time. If the waiver is canceled, the EL student will be placed in ESOL classes as soon as possible.

Parental Waiver of ESOL Services (Continued)

If a waiver has not been signed for the current school year, the student will be directly served in the ESOL program per federal requirements.

Since waived students are still English learners and qualify for services they must take the annual *ACCESS for ELLs* test. Based on the test results and exit criteria set by the Georgia Department of Education, ESOL/Title III Office, students will either be eligible to receive services the following school year or will exit the ESOL program.

In late May ESOL services are offered to all students who qualify, regardless of whether the parent/guardian has waived services in the past. If the parent/guardian wishes to refuse services for the coming school year, they must sign a waiver again.





*What ESOL services
will my student
receive?*

Elementary School

ESOL students in kindergarten through 3rd grade typically receive one ESOL class daily. Students in grades 4-5 receive one or two ESOL classes each day. The number of classes will depend on a variety of factors, including number of ESOL teachers, number of ELs at the school, student proficiency levels, etc.

ESOL services may be delivered in either a sheltered or a push-in class. In both models, the ESOL teacher has elementary certification in addition to specialized ESOL training.

- Sheltered class - students are taken out of general education class to receive Language Arts or Reading instruction, as well as English language instruction, in a small-group setting.
- Push-in class - students remain in the general education class where they receive instruction from the content teacher (language arts, reading, math, science, social studies) and language assistance from the ESOL teacher.

Middle School

ESOL students in grades 6-8 receive one or two ESOL classes each day. The number of classes will depend on a variety of factors, including number of ESOL teachers, number of ELs at the school, student proficiency levels, etc.

ESOL services may be delivered in a scheduled ESOL class, a sheltered Language Arts class, or a push-in content class. In all models, the ESOL teacher has middle grades certification in addition to specialized ESOL training.

- Sheltered class – students receive English language and Language Arts instruction in a small group setting.
- Scheduled class - students receive English language and Reading instruction in a small group setting.
- Push-in class - students remain in the general education class where they receive instruction from the content teacher (language arts, math, science, social studies) and language assistance from the ESOL teacher.

High School

ESOL students in grades 9-12 may be enrolled in up to five classes providing ESOL support. The number of classes will depend on a variety of factors, including number of ESOL teachers, number of ELs at the school, student proficiency levels, etc.

ESOL services may be delivered in a scheduled ESOL class, a sheltered content class, or a push-in content class.

- Scheduled ESOL classes – students receive targeted English language instruction in a small group setting.
- Sheltered classes – students who are at the early stages of English acquisition receive content instruction (language arts, math, science, social studies) in a class containing only English learners.
- Push-in classes – students remain in the general education class where they receive instruction from the content teacher (language arts, math, science, social studies) and language assistance from the ESOL teacher.

How will my student's progress be monitored by the ESOL Program?

Your student's English proficiency will be measured with *ACCESS for ELLs*, the test chosen by Georgia to meet the federal mandate to assess language proficiency growth in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing each year.

The main purpose of the test is to help teachers, administrators, parent/guardians, and students better understand a student's developing English language proficiency. The test is also used to help determine when a student no longer needs ESOL services.



About Testing

What does the ACCESS for ELLs test include?

ACCESS for ELLs measures the four key language skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing. The listening and reading portions use multiple choice questions. Speaking is assessed through a scripted face-to-face interview. The writing portion includes three or four writing tasks.

When does my student take the ACCESS for ELLs test? When will he/she exit the ESOL Program?

The testing window for *ACCESS for ELLs* is January/February, with results arriving in the district in mid-May. Scores on *ACCESS for ELLs* will determine whether students meet the exit criteria. For Kindergarten: If the composite/overall score is 5.0 or greater, and writing is 4.5 or greater and listening, speaking and reading are each 5.0 or greater, the student meets the criteria to exit from language support services. For grades 1 to 12: If the Overall CPL is 4.3 or greater, the student meets the criteria to exit from language support services. The parent/guardian will be notified of test results and informed whether or not their student continues to qualify for ESOL services in late May.



What happens when my student exits the ESOL program?

When students no longer qualify for the ESOL program they are monitored for two school years to ensure a smooth transition into general education classes, per federal guidelines.

Each school has a designated person who is responsible for monitoring students. During the two year monitoring period, these students are eligible for instructional and testing accommodations if needed. The school will create an annual accommodation/testing plan for each student.

In rare circumstances, a student who exited the ESOL program does not demonstrate the academic language proficiency needed for success in general education classes. The student support team may recommend re-entry to the ESOL program in such cases. Once the two year monitoring period has ended, re-entry to ESOL is not permitted by federal guidelines.

What are accommodations? Does my student receive accommodations?

Accommodations are supports given to make instruction and assessments understandable to students. Appropriate accommodations for English learners are determined each year through ESOL and content teacher recommendations.



Teachers complete an individualized plan for classroom and standardized testing accommodations.

A copy of the recommended accommodations for standardized testing are shared with parents/guardians.



World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)

What are the WIDA Standards?

Georgia has adopted the five WIDA English language development standards for classroom instruction. The WIDA standards cover:

- social and instructional language
- the language of Language Arts
- the language of Mathematics
- the language of Science
- the language of Social Studies

More information is available at www.wida.us.

Will my ESOL student receive the same instruction as other students?

Yes. All teachers are guided by the Georgia Performance Standards; therefore ESOL students have access to the same content as other students. Instruction for ESOL students is enhanced by the WIDA standards for English language development. ESOL teachers may use different materials and strategies to provide access to content and support their students' language development.





How can I support my ESOL student?

Support Learning at Home

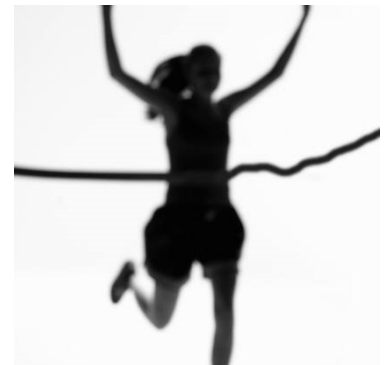
- Limit television/video games/internet use
- Provide quiet spaces to study
- Establish a routine at home (set times for homework, bedtime)
- Promote communication in your home language/English (discuss school/community/world events, friendships, challenges, stress, goals, etc.)

Support Learning at School

- Ensure that your student attends school daily, completes homework, and participates fully in classes.
- Use Home ACCESS Center to monitor school attendance and grades. (<http://www.fultonschools.org/en/sp/pages/default.aspx>)
- Communicate and collaborate with teachers, bilingual community liaisons, counselors, graduation coaches, and principals. In many cases, email is an effective means of contacting school staff members.
- Attend parent/teacher conferences, school events, and activities.
- Know the expectations and consequences for students outlined in the district's discipline handbook.

Support Learning at School continues...

- Be aware of standardized testing dates and ensure that your student arrives at school rested and on time.
- Learn about high school graduation requirements and opportunities for education after high school.
- Encourage your student to participate in extra-curricular activities such as after-school clubs, sports, band, etc.
- Ask for other resources available from ESOL teachers, bilingual community liaisons, social workers, and counselors



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