



English Language Learners

Language Instruction Educational

Program (LIEP)

Revised August 2019

The English learner (EL) population in Minnesota has increased more than 300 percent in the last 20 years. Currently, it is the fastest growing student population in the state. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires statewide standardized criteria and procedures for the participation of students in the Learner Instruction Educational Programs. As a result, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) established the [Minnesota Standardized English Learner Procedures](#) for identification, entrance, and exit of English learners. They must be used by all districts and charter schools across the state. [Minnesota Standardized English Learner Procedures](#) can be found on the Minnesota Department of Education website.

Minnesota's Definition of an EL Student (Minnesota Statute 124D.59)

A student, as declared by a parent or guardian (1) first learned a language other than English, (2) comes from a home where the language usually spoken is other than English, or (3) usually speaks a language other than English. The student is determined by developmentally appropriate measures, which might include observations, teacher judgement, parent recommendations, or developmentally appropriate assessment instruments, to lack the necessary English skills to participate fully in classes taught in English.

The goal of the English learner (EL) program is for children to learn English in order to fully participate and learn in school and to be prepared to have a career or go to college.

LIEP Placement Procedures

English learners (ELs) are identified through a two-step process.

Step 1: Determination of the Home Language:

Parents of all new students enrolling in Westonka are required to complete the Minnesota Language Survey (MNLS). Administrative assistants in each school building administer the survey when enrolling students. The survey is a separate form in the enrollment packet. If the parent or guardian is not able to communicate in English, a translated form or an interpreter is provided. A completed form is kept in each student's cumulative folder.

- a. If English is the only language indicated in the survey, the student does not need to be screened for English language proficiency.
- b. If the survey indicates a language other than English or in addition to English, an administrative assistant notifies the district EL teacher who is responsible for student placement.

Step 2: Initial Placement:

The district-wide EL teacher reviews the MNLS and administers the grade-appropriate assessment: WIDA Screener (Gr.1-12) or W-APT (Kindergarten).

- a. Students are eligible for ELD (English Language Development) services if:
 - i. Their composite score on the WIDA Screener is below 4.5 and any domain score is below 4.0.
 - ii. Kindergarten W-APT - 1st Semester:
 1. The total score for the listening and speaking domains is 27 or lower.
 - iii. Kindergarten W-APT - 2nd Semester (January 1 or later) If one of the below statements are true:
 1. The total score for the listening and speaking domains is below 28.
 2. The reading score is 10 or lower.
 3. The writing score is 11 or lower.
- b. The student's home language, EL indicator, and the first day in the language instruction educational program are noted in the Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS).
- c. Upon enrolling a transfer student, an administrative assistant notifies the English learner teacher if the student was classified as an English learner in the former district. EL teacher reviews the student's ACCESS for ELLs or the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs score report which determines placement into LIEP. If a student transfers from a state that does not administer ACCESS, the student is screened for English language proficiency (step 2).
- d. The EL teacher places test scores (WIDA Screener, W-APT, or ACCESS) in the student's cumulative folder and in the EL folder. The EL teacher sends an English Learner Program Placement letter to the parents or guardians. Parents are notified within 10 calendar days of enrollment of an English learner in LIEP. The letter is mailed to the parents. It is written in English and, if necessary, in the home language of the parent or guardian.
- e. Level placement decision is based upon the WIDA Screener or ACCESS scores. The Screener determines initial English language learner eligibility. A recent ACCESS score is used for continuing eligibility. Proficiency level scores in listening, speaking, reading, and writing from the WIDA Screener or ACCESS are used for appropriate placement in the ELD program (levels 1-4). Additional information can be used to ensure appropriate placement: time in U.S. schools, prior education history, proficiency and literacy in the native language, and/or teacher judgement. It may include evaluating the student's classroom performance in the low language domain, writing samples using the WIDA writing rubrics, feedback from the IEP team, and parent input. Studies suggest, "students' writing samples should be used on an ongoing basis to determine areas for improvement. Students' writing samples are excellent sources for formative assessment because they shed light on language challenges common to all children, as well as challenges and opportunities related to primary language influence on English." (Kim and Viesca, *Three Reading Intervention Teachers' Identity Positioning*). The amount

and content of ELD instruction is adjusted to the student's English proficiency level. The student will get more instruction in the domain or domains where his or her skills are lower. Students with less developed English language skills will receive more hours of ELD instruction compared with English learners who are more proficient. Due to the small number of English learners in Westonka, ELD instruction is often in small groups of two or three students, and it is customized to the language needs of each student.

- f. The EL teacher notifies mainstream teachers, IEP team, administrative assistants, and counselors of new students enrolling in LIEP. The EL teacher is responsible for an ongoing communication with general education teachers and other staff members to ensure that all work together to meet language needs of each English learner.

Continuing EL Eligibility

An English learner continues to be eligible for instruction in LIEP if the student does not have a proficient score on the ACCESS test. If a student's overall composite score is not at least 4.5 on ACCESS, the student does not meet the definition of English language proficient and is, therefore, automatically eligible for continuing ELD (English Language Development) instruction and must be enrolled in LIEP the following school year.

There are three outcomes:

1. A student has at least two individual domain scores (listening, speaking, reading, or writing) that are below 3.5. The student is automatically eligible for ELD instruction and must be enrolled in ELD instruction the following school year.
2. A student has all of the domains equal to or greater than 3.5 and has a composite score of 4.5 or higher. The student is considered to be proficient, is no longer eligible for enrollment in LIEP, and must not be enrolled in ELD instruction the following school year.
3. A student has at least three out of four domain scores equal to or greater than 3.5 and a composite score of 4.5 or higher. In this case, additional criteria must be used to determine continuing eligibility. If the student continues to be eligible for participation in LIEP the following year, the student must be enrolled in LIEP and continue to receive ELD instruction (see below).

Applying Additional EL Exit Criteria

- If a student has an overall proficient score but one domain score is below 3.5, the district must apply additional EL exit criteria.
- A district may **only** consider additional language assessment data related to the domain score that is below 3.5. For example, the district may only use a speaking assessment to assess English language ability for the ACCESS speaking domain.
- Only **language** assessments can be used when additional exit criteria is required (see below).

Language Assessments for Additional EL Exit Criteria Used in Westonka

Domain	Language Assessments
Reading	☐ Teacher developed formative assessment ☐ Locally used reading assessment that assesses reading comprehension
Writing	☐ Teacher developed formative assessment ☐ Student work samples evaluated using the WIDA writing rubric or WIDA performance definitions for writing ☐ Minnesota Test of Emerging Academic English (TEAE) writing rubric
Listening	☐ Student interviews or classroom observations evaluated using WIDA performance definitions for listening ☐ Minnesota Modified Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (MN SOLOM)
Speaking	☐ Student interviews or classroom observations evaluated using the WIDA speaking rubric or WIDA performance definitions for speaking ☐ Minnesota Modified Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (MN SOLOM)

The EL teacher collects additional evidence regarding the student's English proficiency in the domain with a score lower than 3.5 and gets feedback regarding this domain from the general education teacher or teachers. All evidence is evaluated and documented by the teachers. Then the decision is made to exit or retain the student. Documentation is kept in the student's cumulative folder and in the EL folder.

Students and their parents or guardians are informed annually (before the end of the school year) whether or not the student will be exiting LIEP the following school year. The EL teacher mails the English Learner Program Placement letter to the parents or guardians in which she

checks the box “Continuing Placement”. The EL teacher mails the English Program Exit letter if the student is considered proficient and will not be enrolled in LIEP the following school year.

Students exiting from LIEP are monitored for two years by the EL teacher and general education teachers. Teachers monitor an exited student’s academic performance and results on standardized assessments. If an exited English learner is not progressing as expected in the core content classes because of the language need, additional language support services are provided. The English language teacher and content teachers document evidence that the student needs language support. The documented evidence is placed in the student’s cumulative folder and the EL folder.

LIEP Description: Amount and Scope of Instruction

Program Model

Research shows that it takes time to learn academic English. Students learn conversational English faster. However, they need to know academic English in order to understand academic content and be successful in general education classes. According to research, students **ages 8 to 11** with **two to three years** of education in their native language took **five to seven years** to test at grade level in English. Students with little or no formal schooling who arrived in the United States before the **age of 8** took **7 to 10 years** to reach grade-level English language proficiency (Thomas & Collier, 1997). That is why it is important to make sure that each English learner gets quality ELD instruction.

After initial identification as an English learner or an annual ongoing English learner placement, each student is placed in a Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP). EL students are placed in the appropriate English language program levels based upon their age and English language ability (levels 1-4). Our district-wide EL teacher provides ELD services for English learners in all four buildings at all grade levels. The EL teacher collaborates with content teachers to determine the amount of ELD instruction a student is eligible to receive, as well as Title I instruction, Gifted/Talented, Special Education, and paraprofessional support.

The ELD instruction program is designed to teach English learners explicitly about the English language, including academic vocabulary needed to access content instruction and to develop students’ English proficiency in all four language domains (speaking, listening, reading, and writing).

In Westonka, we use a pull-out method of EL instruction. This means that an English learner leaves the English-only main classroom for part of the day to receive English learner instruction in a small group setting. English learners participate as much as possible in classes with their peers. They are not pulled out of physical education, art, music classes, and all efforts are made to keep them in math classes with their peers. Only newcomer students may be pulled out of math classes. It is important to provide access to grade-level course content to the highest

extent possible so that English learners participate fully with their peers in the general education classes. The importance of this has been proven by research. “For ELLs, exposure to grade-level course content provides crucial access to the language required for academic achievement and for becoming fully proficient in English (Lily Wong-Fillmore and Charles J. Fillmore, *What Does Text Complexity Mean for English Learners and Language Minority Students?* Stanford, CA: Understanding Language, Stanford University, 2014). During the school year, English learners are often moved to the next level of ELD instruction if they show appropriate gains in learning English.

The current EL teacher is a native speaker of Russian and may provide ELD instruction in both English and Russian to newcomer students who speak Russian. The EL teacher’s knowledge of cultural and linguistic needs of Russian students helps make English language instruction more efficient, especially for students with previous schooling in the Russian language. “It is important to keep in mind that many skills and types of knowledge transfer from students’ first language to their second, and that ELLs may have already acquired core content in their first language. For example, students who have learned math concepts and skills in their first language do not need to relearn the concepts and skills, but do need to learn the English academic language associated with them.” (Cheryl Dressier and Michael L. Kamil, “First- and Second-Language Literacy,’ in *Developing Literacy in Second-Language Learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel and Language-Minority Children and Youth*, 2006). The EL teacher helps such students to take advantage of their home language and skills (i.e., providing bilingual glossaries, teacher explanations in Russian, background materials in Russian). Numerous studies have shown the importance of the support for native languages in the classroom.

“If you drop a student into a classroom where instruction is happening that she can’t understand, she will fall behind academically. She may eventually learn the language, but she will have lost countless hours of subject matter instruction in the progress and will not be on grade-level. If, however, we teach her content in her native language while she is learning English, she will not be behind her peers academically when she is finally fluent in English.” (R. Gomez and L. Gomez).

The goal of LIEP is to develop the student’s academic English in four areas: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The EL program is aligned with English language development (ELD) standards in math, language arts, social studies, science and grade-level standards. The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) adopted the World-class Instructional Design and Assessment English Language Development (WIDA ELD) standards in 2011. WIDA is a multistate consortium focused on academic language development and academic achievement for linguistically diverse students through high-quality standards, assessments, research, and professional development for educators. The standards provide a connection between language development and academic content. ELD standards work along with content standards. ELD standards guide teachers when they plan instruction for multilingual learners. ELD standards highlight the language students need to be successful in grades K-12.

WIDA English Language Development Standards

Standard	Description
Standard 1 - Social and Instructional Language	English language learners communicate for social and instructional purposes within the school setting.
Standard 2 - The Language of Language Arts	English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of language arts.
Standard 3 - The Language of Mathematics	English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of mathematics.
Standard 4 - The Language of Science	English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of science.
Standard 5 - The Language of Social Studies	English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of social studies.

We also use WIDA CAN DO Descriptors to guide teachers when planning lessons and monitoring student progress. It is a practical tool that allows content teachers to see what an individual English learner can do in each language domain (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) at his/her level of English proficiency. It helps the EL teacher to plan ELD instruction and explain test scores (Screener, W-APT, ACCESS) to general education teachers. Using the CAN DO Descriptors, content teachers can then differentiate instruction for multilingual learners.

The CAN DO Descriptors is a tool that we also share with students and their parents at parent-teacher conferences (English and Spanish versions). Students and their parents see what language skills are expected from a student at each language proficiency level in each language domain. It is one of the tools that we use to explain to parents students' progress in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. We also use it for setting goals for an individual student's English language development. Descriptors can be viewed by grade level.

- CAN DO Descriptors, Key Uses Edition: Kindergarten
- CAN DO Descriptors, Key Uses Edition: Grade 1
- CAN DO Descriptors, Key Uses Edition: Grades 2-3
- CAN DO Descriptors, Key Uses Edition: Grades 4-5
- CAN DO Descriptors, Key Uses Edition: Grades 6-8
- CAN DO Descriptors, Key Uses Edition: Grades 9-12

EL Scheduling

The EL teacher works with general education teachers, counselors, and special education teachers to schedule ELD classes based on students' age, English language proficiency, and individual learning needs. The English learner schedule is flexible. ELD services for an individual student may increase or decrease throughout the school year depending on the student's language proficiency and needs. The following table shows an approximate amount of ELD instruction a student may receive.

Grade Level	ELD Level 1 Entering	ELD Level 2 Beginning	ELD Level 3 Developing	ELD Level 4 Expanding	ELD Levels 5/6 Bridging/Reaching
K	60 min/week	60 min/week	30 min/week	30 min/week	Exited from LIEP
1	30 min/day	30 min/day	90 min/week	60 min/week	Exited from LIEP
2-4	60 min/day	60 min/day	90 min/week	60 min/week	Exited from LIEP
5-7	80 min/day	80 min/day	100 min/week	100 min/week	Exited from LIEP
8-12	2 ELD courses/year	2 ELD courses/year	1 ELD course/year	1 ELD course/year	Exited from LIEP

Communication of LIEP Plan Information

The EL teacher will notify parents or guardians by postal mail within 10 business days of initial enrollment or no later than 30 calendar days after the beginning of the school year for continuing students. The notification letter called the English Program Placement letter will be written in English and, if necessary, translated into the primary home language. This letter is part of the annual notification and it will include the following information:

- the reasons for the identification of their child as an English learner

- the child's level of English proficiency and how such level was assessed
- the methods of instruction used in the program in which the child will participate
- how the program will help their child learn English
- exit requirements
- expected rate of transition out of English learner services
- high school graduation rate for English learners in the district
- how the program will meet the needs of the child with a disability (including ELD instruction in the student's IEP)
- parental right to have their child immediately removed from the program upon their request and assisting parents in selecting another program if eligible (i.e., Title I, ADSIS, IEP)

In case of the refusal of English learner services, the EL coordinator and the EL teacher will meet with the parents and explain the benefits of ELD instruction and the risks of removing their child from the English learner program. If the parent/guardian still wishes to decline the services, the form that had been signed by the parent/guardian as part of the English Learner Placement letter will be placed in the student's cumulative folder. This form needs to be signed at the beginning of each school year. A student who has opted out of the EL program will still take the ACCESS 2.0 each year until he or she meets exit requirements.

Parents and guardians who have questions about the LIEP plan can contact the EL coordinator or the EL teacher. The help of an interpreter will be available if requested by parents.

The EL teacher will provide ongoing communication with families regarding the English learner program during parent-teacher conferences.