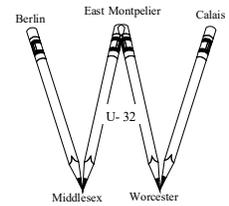


Washington Central Unified Union School District

WCUUSD exists to nurture and inspire in all students the passion, creativity and power to contribute to their local and global communities.

1130 Gallison Hill Road
Montpelier, VT 05602
Phone (802) 229-0553
Fax (802) 229-2761

Steven Dellinger-Pate
Superintendent



Washington Central Unified Union School District Lau Plan September 5, 2025

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Introduction

Who Are Our Multilingual Learners?

In Vermont, Multilingual Learners (ML) refer to students who have not yet met the State's definition of proficiency in English, as measured by the State's English language proficiency assessments and grade-appropriate academic standards. MLs in our school district include children of immigrant, refugee, and migrant families with a variety of diverse backgrounds and languages.

Historically we've had families who have settled here from across the globe including countries in Central and South America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. Our families' languages include Spanish, Bosnian, French, Tagalog, German, Brazilian Portuguese, Russian, Thai, Cantonese, Mandarin, and more. Students' proficiency ranges from Level 1 or Entering to Level 5 or Bridging in the four language domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. MLs bring a wide variety of skills and talents and require different support levels to acquire English language proficiency in the classroom.

We aim to support the five English Language Development (ELD) standards including Language for Social and Instructional Purposes, Language for Language Arts, Language for Mathematics, Language for Science, and Language for Social Studies. The development of academic language in each of these areas leads to successful high school graduation and higher education opportunities.

WCCUSD Mission and Core Beliefs

Mission: Washington Central exists to nurture and inspire in all students the passion, creativity, and power to contribute to their local and global communities.

Core Beliefs:

- **Humanity, Justice, Community, and Belonging:** Schools respect, value, and welcome all people. Our schools build belonging by honoring diversity, centering equity, and celebrating the different experiences we all bring to our community. We will continue to learn and adjust our practices to create a more just and humane world.
- **Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction:** ALL students can learn, thrive, and make a difference in their communities. Schools hold high expectations for all students and ensure they see their lives and the lives of others reflected in a meaningful curriculum. Educators nurture and inspire students so that students can direct their learning, celebrate their developing identities, pursue interests, and create meaningful pathways to graduation and lifelong learning.
- **Well-Being:** Schools are spaces where people feel safe and valued. Our schools must meet the academic, social-emotional, and physical needs of all students. We foster and practice joy, kindness, empathy, inclusivity, and flexibility.
- **Transparent and Responsible Leadership:** All decisions about our schools must be student-centered. We make decisions using data and input from students and the community. Our processes are clear, predictable, inclusive, and transparent.
- **Community Engagement and Relationships:** Strong, positive relationships are essential to our schools, communities, and students. We nurture connections among people and places. The community is engaged in our schools and our students are engaged in the local and global community.

Purpose of This Document

A Lau Plan, named after the landmark Lau v Nichols U.S. Supreme Court Decision of 1974, requires public school districts to provide equitable access to high-quality education for multilingual students by outlining actionable steps to meet specific goals in a plan.

Our program for multilingual learners is informed by the three-part assessment from Castañeda v Pickard ruling and the Equal Education Opportunities Act (EEOA) of 1974. Our program is based on sound educational theory, and effective resources, and demonstrates student progress towards developing English and academic proficiency.

Washington Central Unified Union School District's practices are also informed by the Supreme Court decision Plyler v DOE - June 1982 which states that schools cannot constitutionally deny students a free public education based on their immigration status. Further, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects a student's immigration status and other personal information in their education records from unauthorized disclosure.

The Washington Central Unified Union School District Lau Plan describes how our school district will:

- Identify multilingual learners;
- Design effective programming to meet their academic needs;
- Ensure adequate and appropriately licensed staffing;
- Align the instruction of multilingual learners to state and local content standards;
- Create inclusive environments for multilingual learners;
- Provide ongoing, authentic assessments to ascertain their growth in English language proficiency and comprehension of academic content;
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of programming; and
- Engage in meaningful communication with families.

This Lau Plan was developed by a team of educators and administrators from across the school district in accordance with our school board of directors policy regarding English Learners (C4: English Learners). This Lau Plan is a working document that will be revisited regularly with key stakeholders.

Section 1: Identifying and Screening of Multilingual Students

Upon registering, all families of students in grades PreKindergarten-12 complete a Home Language Survey, embedded in our online registration process, which asks about the primary home language, the language most spoken by students and parents, and the first acquired language. Families are also offered a hard copy of the form that is translated into many languages..

Interpretation services are available to all families who need language support to complete the home language survey and the registration process in general. Interpretation services are available in person, via telephone, or through virtual meetings.

ML staff must screen and place all potential ML students and notify their parents within 30 days of the start of school or 15 days upon registration after the start of the school year.

Home Language Surveys that indicate that a student speaks a language(s) in their home other than English, will be referred to the ML teacher to initiate a screening process.

There are typically three groups of students who could potentially qualify for ML services:

- Students who are new to the country and need a formal screening;
- Students who are already identified as an ML student with services and documented proficiency levels; and
- Students who are born in the United States, and primarily speak a language other than English at home.

The first step of the screening process is a records review and an interview with the family. This can include a review of previous ACCESS for ELs scores, date identified as an ML, review of documents related to ML services and support, and contact with the prior school if needed. The ML teacher will schedule an interview with the family and an interpreter to learn more about the student, their strengths, challenges, and the family's values, hopes, and dreams. The interview also includes a conversation about the support and services the family may need as they acclimate to the school community and community at large.

Next, the ML teacher administers a formal language screening using ACCESS for MLs to assess current reading, writing, listening, and speaking levels. The ML teacher administers the ACCESS screener that corresponds to each student's current grade level.

Students who place at Level 5 or 6 are considered English proficient by the state of Vermont and do not qualify for ML services. Students who place at Level 4 or lower qualify for ML services. The results of the students identified for services are reported to the Vermont Agency of Education.

Families are notified in their preferred home language within 30 (or 15) days about their student's English language proficiency and their rights to opt out of ML services.

Parents may decline ML services but cannot opt out of annual ML assessments. If they choose to decline ML services, they must do so in writing. They may reverse their decision in writing at any point.

The district maintains all assessment results and communication with families as part of the student's record and in compliance with FERPA. Teachers, administrators, and other staff members can access the information they need to best support the student.

ML students are placed in age-appropriate grade levels regardless of their English language proficiency levels. District policy does not retain students based on English proficiency, and all students have equitable access to curricular and co-curricular activities.

Section 2: Providing Multilingual Learners with a Language Assistance Program

Once identified, an individualized language plan is developed to support students in the classroom across content areas. The level of support is based on the results of the World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) screener, a comprehensive records review, and a family interview. WIDA is a national consortium that designs and implements standards and assessments for multilingual learners in Grades K-12. Individualized language plans are developed, with the goal of students achieving proficiency within 4-6 years, which is the standard. Families are involved in the development of the plan and plans are shared with families. Individualized plans are updated as students progress in their language acquisition.

We design instruction to provide comprehensible input, building on background knowledge using effective language learning strategies to build comprehension and communication skills. Students receive individualized instruction and support depending on their proficiency level and needs. The instruction is provided in the general classroom and/or during individualized lessons with the ML teacher and other specialists. The frequency and duration of services depend on students' needs and are responsive as students acquire proficiency in English language learning.

Our students are placed in age-appropriate grades and access grade-level instruction and support. The ML teacher collaborates with classroom teachers, interventionists, and other members of the school community to support students and families so that they can fully participate in educational activities.

ML students access grade-level content and instructional programs, Modifications are made to support access as necessary.

Section 3: Staffing and Supporting a ML Program

Washington Central sought and employed a certified ML instructor. Additionally, we seek and employ a professional staff member who is highly collaborative and able to work well with adults in addition to supporting English language learning for a wide range of students. We will provide staffing levels in accordance with student needs and recommendations, taking into account each student's proficiency level and other MLSS supports.

Newcomers, or Level 1 and 2 students, receive intensive 1:1 and in-class support. Level 3 and 4 students receive regular 1:1 support and occasional classroom support if necessary. Level 5 and 6 students have tested out of service and are monitored by our ML teacher for two years. The length and frequency of service vary by student need.

In developing the service schedule, the ML teacher uses assessment data, including feedback from teachers and input from families and caregivers, to determine students' needs and starts building service schedules based on the greatest need. The ML teacher also considers classroom schedules and the best opportunities to pull students for support and/or provide in-class support.

The ML teacher collaborates with classroom teachers to support lessons and units of study. Classroom teachers are invited to attend regional professional learning opportunities to support ML students. One area for continuous improvement is to more systematically provide professional learning to classroom teachers of ML students.

ML students have access to all of the resources that Washington Central offers. Additionally, ML students have access to materials and resources that are specifically designed to support English language acquisition.

Section 4: ML Students and Other School District Programs

We have committed, dedicated staff members who work hard to connect ML learners with full access to academic and co-curricular opportunities, including ensuring that information is shared in the home language with students and families. Access to co-curricular activities is not dependent on academic eligibility.

These opportunities include, and are not limited to: school activities, field trips, athletic programs, arts programs, dual enrollment and early college, career and technical education, other flexible pathways for high school students, and special events at schools.

Section 5: Creating an Inclusive Environment and Avoiding Unnecessary Segregation

We believe that students acquire language when they are fully integrated in classroom settings with their peers. ML learners are placed in age-appropriate grades with peers and participate fully in all academic, allied arts, and extracurricular activities. Supports are provided to allow full access, participation, and collaboration in class with peers during the majority of the day.

ML or intervention support is scheduled for short blocks to provide targeted instruction. In this way, there is a 1:1 setting for students to safely ask questions and practice new language skills.

We have established a Multi-Layered System of Support (MLSS) and provide progressively more targeted and intensified interventions to all students as necessary. The first layers in our MLSS are general classroom instruction and universal support. When students need more targeted intervention, they may receive support from an interventionist in addition to accessing general classroom instruction and universal support from their classroom teachers. Interventions are more targeted and individualized as warranted by student need, including referrals to Educational Support Teams for evaluations for special education services.

Section 6: Addressing Multilingual Learners with Disabilities

ML specialists participate in student meetings with educator teams when ML students require various interventions and support, including when there is a suspected disability or an evaluation is required. The ML specialist is included in the team to provide information and support to families in the home language through interpretation and translation services. The ML specialist is also invited on a case-by-case basis for students who have been exited from ML services.

We use a guide from the VT AOE to support the evaluation process and evaluations are conducted in both English and the home language when possible. Any Vermont ML learner with a significant cognitive disability may take the alternative assessment to monitor language development.

All efforts are made to evaluate in the student's home language. ML parents are included and informed during the process in their home language, including parental rights, IEP documents, and meeting minutes.

The ML teachers and the evaluators collaborate with each other and across the state to support this process and share resources, tools, and strategies to evaluate diverse linguistic populations and interpret results. These collaborative teams are thoughtful, caring, and conscientious. Evaluations are holistic, and teams have expertise in language development and disabilities.

ML students with IEPs are dually served; they receive both ML services and IEP services and progress is monitored for both. Accommodations outlined in IEPs are also used for WIDA Access assessments.

Section 7: Serving Multilingual Learners Who Opt Out of EL Programs

Parents receive a letter in their home language explaining the results of the ML screening, interview, and records review, including whether or not the student qualifies for ML services. The letter explains the benefits of ML support and their right to opt out of ML services. Opting out of ML services must be done in writing. All students, including students who have opted out of ML services, must participate in the annual statewide assessment.

The ML specialist meets with new families to assist with the registration process, including sharing information about the assessment process and results.

If a family chooses to opt out of ML services, they receive a form in their home language and English which they need to sign, date, and return to the school office. If a family opts out of ML services, the ML specialist meets with teachers to share the assessment scores and to strategize ways to support the student in the absence of direct ML services. The supports could include academic or behavior interventions as articulated in our Multi-Layered System of Supports.

Section 8: Monitoring and Exiting English Learners

In collaboration with the State of Vermont and WIDA, we prepare for the annual assessment in our district. The ML teacher coordinates with the district's technology department to ensure that the logistics are in place within the testing window.

The State of Vermont and WIDA require test administrators to recertify each year, using WIDA training materials. Test administrators are required to provide proof of testing certification to the state coordinator.

We communicate with families our expectation that all students participate in statewide assessments. We inform families who opt out of ML services that they cannot opt out of the ML annual assessment. We let families know that the annual assessment is an opportunity for students to demonstrate their current proficiency and growth. When students or families express concern about participation, we meet with them on a case by case basis to address the concerns and encourage participation.

Vermont has established a statewide exit score. The score is among the highest in the country. When the student achieves the score, the ML specialist informs the student, the family, and the school that the student has achieved the score and will be monitored for a two-year period. The letter includes the dates of the two-year monitoring period. In general, the two-year monitoring period includes occasional check ins from the ML specialist. If any ML supports or strategies are accessed, or if a student becomes eligible for an IEP, these services or strategies are documented. Additionally, all necessary interpretation or translation services remain intact for as long as the student is enrolled in the school district.

At the start of each academic year the ML specialist shares ACCESS scores with the team of educators who are teaching the student and discusses strategies and supports that might help the student. The ML teacher also inquires about whether or not the student might need to be reclassified for ML services. Additionally, the ML teacher provides a required monitoring from the team of educators to complete about how the student is doing academically, the use of any strategies, and any concerns the team might have.

At the end of the two-year program, if the team agrees, the student is formally exited from the ML program. The family is notified in writing in the home language. The formal letter is placed in the student's record.

Section 9: ML Program Monitoring and Evaluation

We collect multiple sources of data related to ML students, English language proficiency development, and academic achievement, including but not limited to: ACCESS scores, state assessments (VTCAP, NAEP), district assessments (Acadience, i-Ready, DESSA), classroom formative and summative assessments, progress monitoring, and teacher observations. Data is collected in alignment with the district's local comprehensive assessment plan.

We analyze ACCESS scores on an annual basis looking for both performance and growth in each domain related to language development and academic growth. Teaching teams analyze assessment data to determine whether students might benefit from intervention (academic, behavioral, executive functioning, social emotional) using the referral and evaluation process established as part of our MLSS.

When students are not meeting programmatic goals, we engage in meaningful conversations with team members and follow our MLSS protocols. Teaching teams review the school's data wall and consider additional interventions and supports that may be necessary for ML learners.

We recognize the need for sustained and systematic support for teachers and staff working with ML students and families.

Section 10: Meaningful Communication with Parents/Guardians

We administer the Home Language Survey as part of our district registration process.

In order to engage in meaningful communication with ML families, we contract with interpretation and translation services and utilize technology platforms that increase parent access and the availability of materials in the preferred home language.

We make a concerted effort to invite parents or guardians to required meetings and have interpretation in their home language as well as translated documents for events such as parent teacher conferences, IEP meetings, concerts, celebrations, art shows, and other family events.