



Sycamore Community Schools English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Program

Parent Handbook

Welcome To Sycamore Community Schools!

We are glad that you are here! We take much pride in the cultural and linguistic diversity we have in Sycamore Community Schools and continue to explore ways to support the transition process into our school district. Whether this is your first year in Sycamore Community Schools or you have been a part of our school and local community for many years, the transition into or back to school can be challenging for both students and families. We value the involvement of all of our student's parents and have many opportunities for parents to become a part of the school community. You can contact your school's ESOL teacher, building administrator, counselor, or any other school or district personnel with questions or for more information.

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About Us

The vision, mission, and priorities of Sycamore Community Schools are guided by the following:

Vision Statement

Our vision is to empower all learners to reach their full potential in a globally competitive world.

Mission Statement

Create a culture of academic excellence through inclusive and innovative learning opportunities for the whole child.

ESOL Parent Information

Interpreter Services

Interpreter services related to communication between parents/guardians and staff of Sycamore Community Schools are provided FREE of charge. For phone calls and short communications, please request a telephonic interpreter. For in-person meetings, please contact your building to schedule the meeting and request that an interpreter be present.

- We want to hear from you! If you want to learn more about something, please ask us.
- Tell the person you wish to speak with that you need help understanding English and would like someone who speaks your native language.
- This is a free service and should always be provided to you.

Registration [Click Here](#)

- If you require an interpreter, we will provide one free of charge. When you schedule your appointment, please request an interpreter at this time.
- At the time of registration, students will be placed into the appropriate grade level as designated by birthdate.
- Many forms are available in other languages including English, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Russian, Spanish, and Uzbek



Purpose of Screening Your Child

Federal and State laws require that if a parent or guardian has indicated that a language other than English is spoken in the home by a parent/guardian, student, or caregiver; a standardized English Language Proficiency Test must be given.

Sycamore Community Schools uses the Ohio English Language Proficiency Screener (OELPS) to find out if the student qualifies for English to Speakers of Other Languages services. The OELPS screens the student's English proficiency in the following domains: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. If the OELPS results show the student has limited English proficiency (LEP) the tests will help teachers decide on the appropriate support for the student and make helpful instructional decisions for the student with your permission.

U.S. Laws and Parent Rights

A. United States Federal Policies for English Learners

All children in the United States are entitled to equal access to a public elementary and secondary education, regardless of their or their parents' actual or perceived national origin, citizenship, or immigration status. This includes recently arrived unaccompanied children, who are in immigration proceedings while residing in local communities with a parent, family member, or other appropriate adult sponsor. Source: (<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/rights/guid/unaccompanied-children.html>)

Ensuring that State Education Agencies (SEAs) and school districts are equipped with the tools and resources to meet their responsibilities to Limited English Proficient (LEP) students, who are now more commonly referred to as English Learner (EL), Multilingual Learner (ML) or English Language Learner students (ELL), is as important today as it was [with the establishment of the Civil Rights Act]. It is crucial to the future of our nation that these students, and all students, have equal access to a high-quality education and the opportunity to achieve their full academic potential. Source: (<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-el-201501.pdf>)

B. National Codes and Policies for the Instruction of English Learners:

1. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964: Title VI prohibits discrimination on the base of race, color, or national origin in any program or activity that receives Federal funds or other Federal financial assistance. For English Learners (ELs), this is interpreted that ELs cannot be denied participation in any activity that receives federal funds, including school enrollment, based on their inferred national origins or their lack of English language proficiency.

2. Lau v. Nichols: U.S. Supreme Court decision from 1974, unanimously ruled under the Civil Rights Act that any school district receiving Federal funds must provide non-English speaking students with instruction in the English language to ensure they receive an equal education. A



guideline for following this decision, the Lau Remedies, was created in 1975, specifies methods and approaches for schools to follow in order to provide a meaningful education to students with limited English proficiency.

3. Castañeda v. Pickard: U.S. Supreme Court decision from 1981 that requires programs that educate children with limited proficiency in the English language to be (a) based on a sound educational theory and (b) adequately supported, with adequate and effective staff and resources, so that the program has a realistic chance of success; and (c) periodically evaluated and, if necessary, revised.

4. Plyler v. Doe: U.S. Supreme Court decision from 1982 which ruled that all children, regardless of immigration status, have a constitutional right to a free public education from kindergarten to grade 12. This ensures that school districts receive funds, and do not have funds withheld, for educating children with unknown citizenship status. This allows minor children protection under the 14th Amendment.

In compliance with federal and state law, Sycamore Community Schools provides services to English Learners (ELs) who qualify for ESOL services. We will ensure the following:

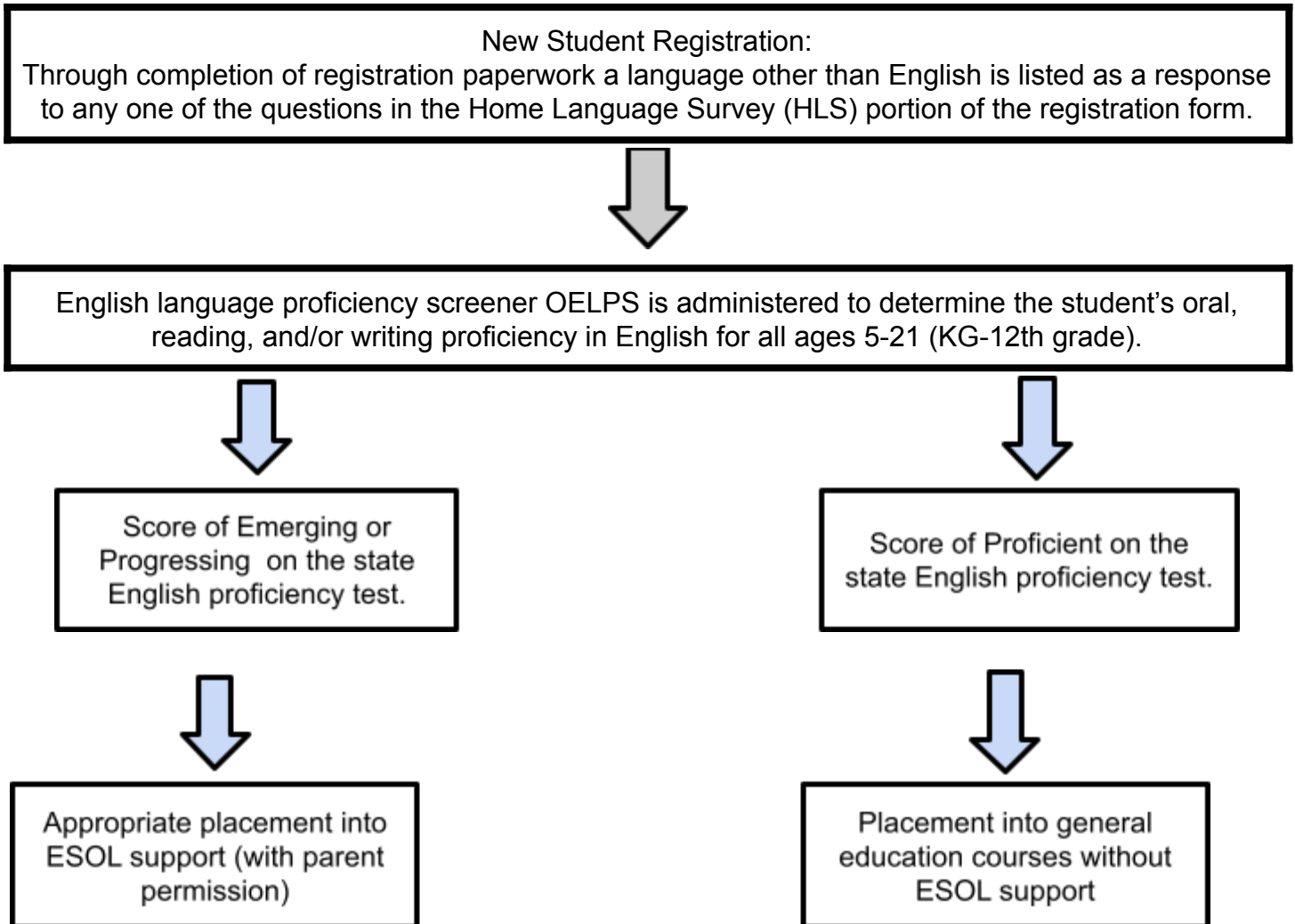
- Identify and assess all potential EL students in a timely, valid, and reliable manner
 - Ensures equal opportunities for English Learners in the state of Ohio.
 - Ensures that ELs who have or are suspected of having a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are identified, located, and evaluated in a timely manner and that the language needs of the students who need special education and disability related services because of their disability are considered in evaluations and delivery of services.
 - Provide sufficiently well prepared and trained staff and support the language assistance programs for EL students
 - Ensure that EL students have equal opportunities to meaningfully participate in all curricular and extracurricular activities
 - Avoid unnecessary segregation of EL students
 - Meet the needs of ELs who opt out of language assistance programs
 - Monitor and evaluate ELs in language assistance programs to ensure their progress with respect to acquiring English proficiency and grade level content knowledge, exit ELs from language assistance programs when they are proficient in English, and monitor exited students to ensure they were not prematurely exited and that any academic deficits incurred in the language assistance program have been remedied
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of Sycamore Community School District's EL program to ensure that ELs in the program acquire English proficiency and that the program is reasonably calculated to allow ELs to attain parity of participation in the standard instructional program within a reasonable period of time
 - Ensure meaningful communication with parents who have limited English proficiency (LEP)
- Source: (<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essatitleiiiiguidenglishlearners92016.pdf>)



What is the Federal definition of an English Learner (EL)?

- An English Learner (EL) is a student:
 - Who is aged 3-21;
 - Who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary or secondary school;
 - Who was not born in the United States OR whose native language is a language other than English; and
 - Where difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual
 - the ability in meeting the State's proficient level of achievement on State assessments;
 - The ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or
 - The opportunity to participate fully in society.

Initial Eligibility Determination for ESOL Services





ESOL Program Information

The goal of the Sycamore Community Schools ESOL Program is for all students to attain the necessary academic language proficiency in English to participate fully in all mainstream classes in which the target language is English. Research indicates that it can take 5-7 years to acquire the academic language proficiency skills needed to fully participate in classes in English at the same level as native English-speaking peers.

Overview of ESOL Curriculum

Instructional services for English Learners (ELs) in Sycamore Community Schools are based on researched best practices that provide students with the greatest accessibility to the curriculum possible. The student attends regular classes in the content areas in addition to his/her English language development program. The content area teacher will scaffold the curriculum to meet the needs of individuals at varying levels of English proficiency in collaboration with the ESOL teacher. Progress monitoring will be ongoing and conducted through both formal and informal measures by both the ESOL teacher and content area teachers.

Students' English development growth is measured annually through the Ohio English Language Proficiency Assessment (OELPA). Annual OELPA results are used in conjunction with other student growth data to determine the most appropriate English supports for the student and are adjusted throughout the year based on the ongoing data collection around speaking, listening, reading, and writing English proficiency levels. Consequently, the time it takes a student to transition out of the ESOL program will differ with each individual. The typical path of an ELL is from full support to minimal support to monitoring and consultation by the ESOL teacher before the student is exited from the program.

State Assessment and ESOL Exit Criteria

Assessment Participation

The Ohio English Language Proficiency Assessment (OELPA) is administered every Spring and is mandatory for all students who are designated as EL. In addition, all ELs will participate in all other progress monitoring assessments conducted throughout the district. Finally, ELs will participate in all assessments mandated by the Ohio Department of Education. However, in some cases, an EL may qualify for special testing accommodations. Eligibility for testing accommodations will be determined by the ESOL team and building test coordinator. The rate of graduation for ELs should be the same as the general population of Sycamore Community Schools.



Ohio's ESOL Exit Criteria

A student designated as an EL will qualify to exit the ESOL program when he/she has earned the overall proficiency level of “Proficient” by earning an overall score of 3 on the OELPA.

Overview of ESOL Instructional Programs

The goal of the ESOL program is for students to reach full English proficiency in the areas of speaking, listening, reading, and writing in both social and academic settings. To support the needs of each EL in achieving full English proficiency in all skill areas, the ESOL program at your child's school may include one or more of the following research-based instructional approaches:

- **ESOL Sheltered Instruction:** Students in grades K-12 may receive content instruction in a sheltered setting with an emphasis on building reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Each student's growth is measured using research-based formative instructional practices and summative assessments.
- **English Pull-out Support:** Individualized or small group instruction is available at the elementary level and follows the Ohio ELP Standards. The focus is on building the oral language and literacy skills students need for future academic success and social interactions. The classroom and ESOL teachers conduct regular progress monitoring of each student.
- **Co-taught Content Instruction:** In a co-taught setting, the class is taught by two teachers, one licensed in the content area (science, English Language Arts, etc.) and one licensed in teaching English Learners. The curriculum content is maintained to meet expected state and national standards. However, scaffolding strategies are used to address the specific language proficiency needs of students and make the content more accessible to ELs.
- **ESOL Language Development:** Students learn to use specific strategies that guide them to discover the deeper meaning of various types of language, reading comprehension and/or fluency, writing production, and/or oral language development. In addition, the courses emphasize vocabulary building which will increase language comprehension and production skills.
- **ESOL Academic Support:** Some additional academic support may be appropriate for students at various levels of English proficiency. The ESOL teacher works in collaboration with other building staff to determine the extent of the support and to monitor students' progress.
- **Consultation and Monitoring:** The ESOL teacher and classroom teacher(s) periodically consult to determine student success and the effectiveness of the current instructional practices. The student's standardized assessment data and class performance data around the mastery of content standards are collected to monitor student progress.



English Language Plans

Every student who qualifies for ESOL services in grades K-12 will have an English Language Plan. The purpose of this plan is to collaboratively determine and document individualized instructional supports/accommodations for English Learners (ELs) and to help ensure consistency in the application of those supports. This plan is to promote English for communication, academic purposes, and social/cultural support. Included in this plan is a place to accept or decline the services being recommended for your student. ESOL services can be amended, accepted, or declined at any time. Please contact your student's ESOL teacher with questions.

ESOL Grading Policy

Students in the ESOL program may be eligible for pass/fail grades. This will be indicated and explained in each student's English Language Plan. Official eligibility is determined by a team of content area teachers, ESOL teachers, possible counselors, and administrators. When students meet the state of Ohio's criteria to exit the ESOL program, or if the ESOL services are declined by a parent/guardian, the student will receive regular classroom grades.

Evaluating Special Education Students for EL Services

If an EL student is also identified as having a disability or accelerated academic ability, the student will be dually identified and must receive both language assistance and disability-related services or gifted/advanced academic services, both of which are entitled under Federal law.

However, EL students should only be considered for Special Education services to help close gaps in academic progress if members of the EL team and Special Education team have ruled out language acquisition as a determinant factor. Conversely, language acquisition alone should not be an excluding factor if an EL student demonstrates signs of giftedness. Students should be equitably assessed and placed in appropriate learning settings that are the least restrictive environments for the student.



ESOL Acronyms

ELL: English Language Learner

EOC: End of Course (high school tests for graduation requirements)

ESOL: English to Speakers of Other Languages

IEP: Individualized Education Plan (for students with special needs)

ELP: English Language Plan (student instructional plan for learning English)

KRA: Kindergarten Readiness Assessment

LEP: Limited English Proficiency

MAP: Measures of Academic Progress (reading and math assessment given fall, winter, and spring)

ML: Multilingual Learner

ODE: Ohio Department of Education

OELPA: Ohio English Language Proficiency Assessment (test of English proficiency each spring)

OELPS: Ohio English Language Proficiency Screener (test of English proficiency at start of U.S. school)

OST: Ohio State Tests

RIMP: Reading Improvement Plan for Ohio's Third Grade Reading Guarantee

TGRG: Third Grade Reading Guarantee



EMIS CODE – For our ELs, four Education Management Information System (EMIS) codes exist, indicating a

student's time in United States' schools, or their language proficiency:

- L – Enrolled less than 180 days in U.S. schools (first year in U.S. schools)
- S – Enrolled less than 360 days in U.S. schools (second year in U.S. schools)
- Y – Enrolled more than 360 days in U.S. schools (three or more years in U.S. schools)
- N – Student is not coded as LEP, or has exited services

How to Visit the School

- Park in a visitor parking spot
- Enter/Buzz into the main office doors
- Sign in with the secretary and badge system
- Put badge sticker on
- Scan your badge to exit before you leave

Report Cards

- A report card shows you how your child is doing in their classes at school.
- You will get a report card four times a year.
- Your teacher may leave a comment to say more about your student.
- Teachers are always happy to answer any questions you may have.

School Resources to Ask About

- Our schools participate in free or reduced-cost breakfast and lunch.
 - An application can be found on the Sycamore website under Services/[Child Nutrition](#)
- Our schools offer student clubs and organizations.
- Our high school offers help planning for college or work after high school.
- Our schools support students with individual learning or social-emotional needs.



How to Get Involved in Your Child's Education

1. **KNOW** the school policies and expectations.
 - a. [K-6 Handbook](#)
 - b. [Junior High Handbook](#)
 - c. [High School Handbook](#)
2. **TALK** to your child's teachers—you are an important part of your child's education.
 - a. Ask to see a sample of your child's work
 - b. Ask the teacher questions like
 - i. Is my child learning to read and write?
 - ii. What are my child's strengths and weaknesses?
 - iii. What can I do at home to make sure that my child is successful?
3. **ATTEND**
 - a. Curriculum Preview Night (offered at the very beginning of each school year)
 - b. Parent/Teacher Conferences (varies by school)
 - c. Open House (offered at the very beginning of the school year)
 - d. School events such as athletics, concerts, festivals, dances, and plays
4. **JOIN IN:**
 - a. Classroom Volunteer
 - b. Library/Cafeteria volunteer
 - c. Recess volunteer
 - d. Field Trip chaperone
 - e. Assistance with interpreting/translating
 - f. PTO (Parent Teacher Organization)
5. **READ** to your child and have him or her read to you every day for at least 15 minutes
 - a. Ask your child to retell a story in his or her own words by telling what happened first, second, and third
 - b. Look for opportunities in everyday places to build your child's vocabulary
 - c. Be sure your child has a library card - many libraries have book clubs and family activities that make reading fun for the entire family
6. **ASK** questions when you are not sure about something. We are here to help!