

# GRADED

THE AMERICAN SCHOOL OF SÃO PAULO

A photograph of two young girls playing on a rope bridge in a park. The girl on the left is wearing a pink hoodie and pink pants, leaning over the bridge. The girl on the right is wearing a pink jacket over a white t-shirt with a blue cat graphic and pink pants, standing on the bridge. The background is a lush green park with trees and foliage.

## Guide to English Language Learners (ELL) Program 2026-27

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## Introduction

This guide provides an overview of Graded's English Language Learning (ELL) Program, grounded in a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and informed by the WIDA framework. It is intended to help the entire Graded community—families, faculty, and specialists—understand how English language support is provided at Graded. It outlines the program's purpose and scope, clarifies the role of ELL teachers, and explains how services are implemented across divisions.

By outlining key practices, ethical considerations, and procedural guidelines, the guide promotes transparency and shared understanding while recognizing that individual student needs and school contexts may evolve over time.

## Purpose and Guiding Principles

Graded's ELL team plays a central role in supporting multilingual students with English language acquisition needs. Our work is guided by this principle: ***“We value linguistic diversity to ensure belonging for all. We empower and celebrate multilingual individuals to learn and develop language to access the curriculum and reach their potential.”*** The ELL Program embraces the principle that every student deserves equitable access to a rigorous and supportive learning environment. As part of the school's broader Student Support Services, which also includes Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Counseling, Optimal Learning Services (OLS), and our Intervention team, the ELL team works collaboratively with teachers, families, and leadership to ensure that all students are provided with the tools, strategies, and services required for success.

Please note that the ELL Program carries an additional fee, charged per semester, for students enrolled in ELL services. This fee reflects the specialized staffing, instructional programming, and assessment required to support students in English language development.

Enrollment in the ELL Program is determined by the school through the admissions process and ongoing assessment, as outlined in the guide.

Exemptions to the ELL Program fee apply in the following circumstances:

- **Grade 1 Enrollment Exemption:**  
Students entering grade 1 who have been continuously enrolled at Graded for two or more years prior to grade 1 are exempt from the ELL Program fee.
- **OLS Enrollment Exemption:**

Students who are receiving OLS services are exempt from the ELL Program fee for the duration of their OLS enrollment.

- **Extended Enrollment Exemption:**

Students who have been enrolled in the ELL Program for more than three consecutive academic years at Graded are exempt from the ELL Program fee.

## Admissions Process and Screening

The Admissions team reviews each student's application and, when appropriate, refers the student to an ELL teacher for a remote online screener. Students will be selected for ELL screening if any one of the following applies: their home language is not English, their previous school's language of instruction was not English, or they have previously received English as an Additional Language (EAL) or ELL services. These criteria help ensure that students who may benefit from English language support are appropriately identified and assessed during the admissions process. The admissions ELL screening is conducted online by an ELL teacher using a standardized screener for grades 3-12.

Once the screening is complete, the director of student support services reviews the results alongside additional data, such as MAP test scores and previous school records, and makes a recommendation regarding the student's admission, based on the availability of space in the ELL Program and a comprehensive grade-level file review. Once the student is officially enrolled at Graded, the full WIDA MODEL assessment is administered to confirm eligibility for the ELL Program and to determine the student's English proficiency level, which informs the appropriate level of service provision. The WIDA MODEL Screener is used to assess a student's English language proficiency across the four domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing.



## Criteria and Eligibility for ELL Support

Eligibility for support in the ELL Program is based on a WIDA MODEL assessment score below 5 in any domain, along with a cross-reference of other data such as MAP results and evidence of support received in previous schooling.

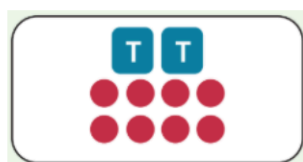
## Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

Graded uses a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework to organize student support for our multi-lingual learners across three tiers.

### Tier 1: Universal Supports

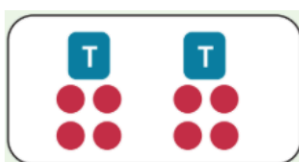
- All students benefit from high-quality, inclusive classroom instruction. Teachers implement strategies and collaborate with ELL teachers to select available accessibility tools and differentiate instruction.
- ELL teachers may co-teach lessons or provide push-in support with the homeroom or subject teachers to support language learning in the classroom.

Models of co-teaching may include:



#### Joint teaching

Both teachers lead the lesson to provide all students with opportunities to learn rich new content and practice or enhance skills.



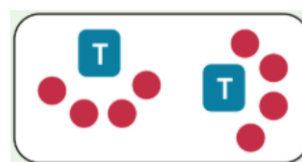
#### Parallel Teaching

Each group is led by a teacher working on the same learning targets but with different modes, languages or approaches.



#### One teaches, one assesses

One teacher leads the lesson while the other collects targeted formative assessment data.



#### Small groups

Each teacher works with a small group of students on related content. May be in or out of the classroom and with or without rotation.

### Tier 2: Targeted Supports

- Students who require additional help may receive targeted support through small-group interventions or short-term pull-out sessions led by ELL teachers.
- These interventions are time-bound, data-informed, and designed to build specific skills in oral language and literacy.

### Tier 3: Intensive Supports

- Students with more complex or ongoing language-acquisition needs receive intensive support, such as a daily beginner language-acquisition group or an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) class in middle school.

In the upper school (middle & high school), Graded offers a range of language supports based on students' WIDA proficiency levels and individual needs. Support models may include an EAP class meeting for 85 minutes every second day, push-in support, and/or co-teaching with subject teachers.

| UPPER SCHOOL                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| WIDA Levels 1.0-3.9*                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                           |
| Middle and High School                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                           |
| Students enrolled in one block of EAP may have BrSS and/or Portuguese courses waived if determined by the Student Support Team (SST) and with parent permission. Push-in support during core subjects as much as possible through scheduling and prioritizing by need. |                                                                           |
| WIDA Levels 4.0-5.0                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                           |
| Middle School                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | High School                                                               |
| Push-in services in the core subject area and/or enrolled in EAP.                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Enrolled in one block of EAP and/or push-in support into subject classes. |

ELL teachers collaborate with homeroom and subject teachers to schedule both pull-out and push-in support based on student needs and class schedules. Co-teaching arrangements require dedicated shared planning time between ELL teachers and classroom teachers to ensure effective and aligned instruction. Students are placed strategically in groups or classes to optimize the level and type of support they receive.

### Case Management

ELL teachers serve as case managers for the students on their caseloads. Case management ensures that students receive coordinated, consistent, and responsive language support across their school experience. ELL teachers assess and maintain student language profiles, support inclusive instructional practices, deliver targeted interventions, document student progress, and provide indirect services through

consultation. When acting as a case manager, an ELL teacher assumes a leadership role in coordinating the student's support. Responsibilities include:

- Maintaining and updating each student's language profile and records on language development
- Collaborating and communicating with classroom and subject area teachers to ensure appropriate scaffolding and inclusive instructional practices are implemented consistently across settings
- Monitoring student academic progress using data from classroom performance, standardized assessments, and teacher input
- Collecting and organizing student learning data to inform instructional decisions and support planning
- Leading or co-facilitating SST meetings when needed
- Coordinating transition meetings across divisions and between grade levels to ensure continuity of support
- Ensuring all records are current, securely stored, and accurately reflected in school systems, including updates to the master student support services caseload and documentation of key case maneuvers as log entries in PowerSchool



## Annual WIDA Assessment and Progress Monitoring

Every student in the ELL Program is assessed annually using the WIDA assessment at the end of the school year. The results of this assessment help determine whether a student will be considered for exiting the program. The WIDA assessment is used to measure a student's English language skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It helps schools understand how well a student can use academic English to learn and participate in the classroom. The results guide decisions about the level of language support a student may need and whether they are ready to exit the ELL Program.

The annual WIDA assessment will also inform the student's language profile, which is based on the WIDA Can-Do Descriptors—a set of research-based statements that describe what multilingual learners can do with language at different stages of English development. Families who would like more information can learn more on the [WIDA website](#).

### Mid-Year WIDA Assessment:

Students may be eligible for a mid-year WIDA assessment in December if the ELL teacher, based on ongoing classroom data and observation, believes a student may meet the exit criteria of 5.0 or higher in all four domains—listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Mid-year assessments are not routine and are conducted at the school's discretion. If a student is assessed mid-year, the standard exit criteria and processes are followed.

### WIDA English Language Proficiency Levels:

| WIDA Level          | Description                                                                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1 Entering</b>   | Beginning to understand and use simple language.                                  |
| <b>2 Emerging</b>   | Starting to use general language related to content areas.                        |
| <b>3 Developing</b> | Using more complex sentences and academic vocabulary with support.                |
| <b>4 Expanding</b>  | Demonstrating increasing competence in academic language use with some support    |
| <b>5 Bridging</b>   | Using academic language independently across content areas.                       |
| <b>6 Reaching</b>   | Full proficiency in academic English comparable to native English-speaking peers. |



## Exiting the Program and Monitoring

Exit decisions are based on multiple measures and professional judgment. In general, students may be considered for exit when the following criteria are met:

1. The student achieves a **WIDA score of level 5.0** or higher in all domains—listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
2. The student demonstrates consistent classroom performance aligned with grade-level expectations, as reflected in the school's reporting systems (trimester/semester report cards).
3. The ELL teacher and the homeroom or subject teachers agree that the student can access instruction independently without specialized language support.

### ELL Program Exit Process:

In the lower school, the exit process involves a meeting between the ELL teacher and the homeroom teacher to determine whether the student has met the exit criteria.

In the upper school, the ELL teacher presents the student's data during a Student Support Team meeting, where a collective decision is made regarding whether the student has met the exit criteria.

In both divisions, the final decision is reviewed and approved by the director of student support services.

Students who receive both English Language Learning (ELL) and Optimal Learning Services (OLS) are jointly case-managed by the ELL and OLS teachers. These students follow a specialized exit protocol that takes into account their formally identified learning needs.

### **Monitoring After Exiting the ELL Program:**

After exiting the ELL Program, the student is monitored by the ELL teacher for 12 months. During this time, the ELL teacher maintains contact with the student's homeroom or subject teachers to review classroom performance and progress. Monitoring includes reviewing report cards and, when appropriate, holding meetings with teachers to discuss the student's ongoing language development and access to instruction. This monitoring period is intended to ensure a smooth transition and does not imply automatic re-entry into the program.

### **Family Partnership and Communication:**

Families are informed through formal entry and exit letters when a student enters or exits the ELL Program. Parent information sessions are offered at Back to School Night and other events throughout the year to explain the ELL Program and its services. Regular updates on student progress are shared during parent-teacher conferences and are also included in report cards and progress updates. Families are encouraged to reach out to the ELL team with questions at any point during the year.