Okemos Public Schools

Multilingual Learner (ML) Program

PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK

Welcome to Okemos Public Schools Multilingual Learner Program

Together educating with excellence, empowering every learner for life.

The Okemos Public Schools seeks to provide every child, regardless of national origin or native language, high-quality and meaningful educational instruction. In keeping with this mission, students who are Multilingual Learners (MLs) are provided instructional services through an ML program that is designed to meet their unique needs.

This manual is designed to answer questions you may have about the Okemos Multilingual Learner program. Please be sure to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
ML Staff of Okemos Public Schools

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Frequently Asked Questions about the Okemos ML Program

What is a Multilingual Learner (ML)?
MLs refers to students whose first language is not English, and encompasses both students who are just beginning to learn English and those who have already developed considerable proficiency.

How are Multilingual Learners identified?
The Home Language Survey is to be completed at the time of registration and includes two questions:

- What language is used most at home?
- What language is used most by the student?

If a student is identified as speaking a primary language other than English or as having a language other than English spoken in the home, the student may be eligible for ML services.

How does a student qualify for ML services?
Within ten (10) school days of enrollment in our district, the WIDA Screener or W-APT for MLs assessment is completed to determine a student's language skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and comprehending English. The ML teacher will determine if a student qualifies for ML services using the Michigan Department of Education's English Learner Program's Entrance and Exit Protocols (Page 10). Parents will be notified with a Student Eligibility Letter that will be sent home after screening is completed.

How is my child's English language proficiency assessed from year to year?
Once an English Learner has been identified, they will take an annual assessment, the WIDA ACCESS for MLs.

What are the Language Proficiency Levels for English Learners?

Language Proficiency Levels Measured by the WIDA-ACCESS Assessment

Level 1 ENTERING Score 0 – 1.9	Level 2 BEGINNING Score 2.0 – 2.9	Level 3 DEVELOPING Score 3 – 3.9	Level 4 EXPANDING Score 4 – 4.8	Level 5 BRIDGING Score 4.8 – 5.9	Level 6 REACHING Score 6
Knows and uses minimal social language and minimal language with visual and social support	Knows and uses some social English and general academic language with visual and graphic support	Knows and uses social English and some specific academic language with visual and graphic support	Knows and uses social English and some technical academic language	Knows and uses social and academic language working with grade level material	Knows and uses social and academic language at the highest level measured by this test

How can I find out my child's language proficiency level?
Your child's proficiency level is located at the top of the Eligibility letter. This letter is sent home every school year with updated scores from the most recent WIDA-ACCESS test. Please contact your child's ML teacher for a full explanation of your child's scores or progress made.

Do ML students attend general education classes with their peers?
All ML students are placed in age-appropriate general education classes. In addition to receiving general education services, ML students are also entitled to receive varying degrees of English language support and instruction through ML services. ML staff may work directly with a student in the classroom in conjunction with the classroom teacher.

What ML services are provided for my student?
Okemos Public Schools may include ML programs as listed below, as determined by student need and building level:

- Small group instruction that aims at developing fluency and literacy in English
- Support from ML teacher within the general classroom
- Secondary ML class within the school day
- Summer school program
- Secondary Academic Learning Center
- Computer assisted instruction that allows for individual learning, problem solving, and acceleration of students' language and skills.
- Opportunities to be included in all district interventions, enrichment and accelerated programs

Below is the guide for Title III program instruction described by level of language proficiency and level of instruction.

Proficiency Level	Elementary (Grades BK-4)	Secondary (Grades 5-12):
Level 1 ENTERING WIDA ACCESS for MLs **Score 0 – 1.9**	**Type of Service**: English language instruction and/or support in the general education classroom or pull-out services provided by the ML teaching staff. **Amount of Time**: A minimum of 30 minutes 4-5 times per week.	**Type of Service**: English language instruction class period and/or support in the general education classrooms provided by the ML teaching staff. **Amount of Time**: One class period (approximately 50 minutes 5 times per week) by the ML teacher.
Level 2 BEGINNING WIDA ACCESS for MLs **Score 2.0 – 2.9**	**Type of Service**: English language instruction and/or support in the general education classroom or pull-out services provided by the ML teaching staff. **Amount of Time**: A minimum of 30 minutes 4-5 times per week.	**Type of Service**: English language instruction class period and/or support in the general education classrooms provided by the ML teaching staff. **Amount of Time**: One class period (approximately 50 minutes 5 times per week) by the ML teacher.
Level 3 DEVELOPING WIDA ACCESS for MLs **Score 3 – 3.9**	**Type of Service**: English language instruction and/or support in the general education classroom or pull-out services provided by the ML teaching staff. **Amount of Time**: To be determined by consultation between the ML teacher and classroom teacher.	**Type of Service**: English language instruction class period and/or support in the general education classrooms provided by the ML teaching staff. **Amount of Time**: One class period (approximately 50 minutes 5 times per week) with ML teacher, or determined by consultation with the classroom teacher.
Level 4 EXPANDING WIDA ACCESS for MLs **Score 4 – 4.8**	**Type of Service**: As needed per consultation with the classroom teacher. **Amount of Time**: To be determined by consultation between the ML teacher and classroom teacher.	**Type of Service**: English language instruction class period and/or support in the general education classrooms provided by the ML teaching staff. **Amount of Time**: To be determined by consultation between the ML teacher and general education teachers.
Level 5 BRIDGING WIDA ACCESS for MLs **Score 4.8 – 5.9**	**EXITED from ML Program** Monitored for four years as designated by the State of Michigan. If, during the four year monitoring period, it appears that the Former English Learner (FEL) is not succeeding in the regular education program, the staffing team will meet to determine if further assessment of the student is warranted, if the student will be reentered into theTitle III/ML program, or if other services are appropriate.	
Level 6 REACHING WIDA ACCESS for MLs **Score 6**	**EXITED from ML Program** Monitored for four years as designated by the State of Michigan. If, during the four year monitoring period, it appears that the Former English Learner (FEL) is not succeeding in the regular education program, the staffing team will meet to determine if further assessment of the student is warranted, if the student will be reentered into theTitle III/ML program, or if other services are appropriate.	

What does an ML teacher do?

ML teachers:

- provide content instruction and language development;
- assume the same functions as the mainstream teacher when they are the teacher of record in the classroom;
- meet regularly with the mainstream teacher to determine the academic needs of English Learners enrolled in their classes;
- teach basic school procedures and skills to the most limited English proficient students;
- assist general education staff about culture and language of the ML and the family;
- provide the mainstream teacher with the cultural and linguistic background of the language minority students in the class;
- work collaboratively with staff to develop curriculum;
- identify, assess, teach, and counsel each ML; and
- provide staff development on English language instruction and cultural awareness.
- ML Paraprofessionals assist ML teachers and mainstream teachers in providing content instruction and language development.
- Additional standardized and curriculum-based assessments inform the decision of the instructional team. Criteria used to exit a student will be placed in the student's CA-60.

Can I opt-out or refuse ML services?

It is your right as a parent to refuse ML services. If you DO NOT want your child to receive the services, you can opt-out by filling out the Parent Refusal Letter and returning this letter to your child's school. Your child will still be designated an "English Learner" and have his or her English proficiency assessed once per year with the required WIDA assessment until he/she no longer meets the definition of an English Learner.

How do students exit the ML program?

Students in grades K-12 who meet the minimum criteria established in the Entrance and Exit Protocol will be auto-exited from the Title III/ML Program. Students exited from the ML program are then considered FEL (Former English Learner) for four years. We will monitor student progress for four years following exit from the ML program. Report cards and test results will be used to monitor progress. This information can be used to determine further support for your child. Okemos Public Schools references the Michigan Department of Education's English Learner Program's Entrance and Exit Protocol.

How can I communicate with the ML teachers?

Regular meetings are offered for parents and families of ML students during fall and spring parent teacher conferences. The ML teacher may use other forms of communication to notify parents of program information. Communication from Okemos Public Schools may be offered in translated forms. The use of an interpretation service (such as Language Line or Talking Points) may be available for translation and communication purposes.

What if my child is struggling academically?
If an English Learner (ML) is having difficulties obtaining linguistic, academic and social expectations, which are unrelated to the student's English Language Proficiency, the ML teacher can refer the student to the school Academic Intervention Team for additional intervention services.

How will my child adapt to the culture and expectations of school?
All students need time to learn how to interact in an American school setting. Consideration is given to having the ML staff explicitly teach about the culture and language of schools. Consideration is also given to alternative means of assessment for the English Learner.

Are there other staff in the school who support English learners?
Special Services staff members, including principals, counselors, social workers, and reading coaches, are essential for the success of English Learners in elementary, middle, and high schools in Okemos Public Schools.

The following staff should be part of the team working with ML students:

- Classroom Teacher(s)
- Counselor
- Instructional Coach
- Social Worker
- Psychologist
- ML Instructor/Paraprofessional
- General Education Resource Teacher
- Principal

The ML teacher and ML paraprofessionals assigned to the building will provide instructional support and materials. When concerns arise regarding a student's program, curriculum or placement, the team outlined above will address these issues at a Building Instructional Team meeting. The Building Instructional Team referrals may be requested by any staff member. The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction will be notified when a particular MLs problem persists after interventions have been implemented as recommended by the Building Instructional Team.

DEFINITIONS

ACCESS for MLs refers to the annual assessment given to all students participating in the Title III/ESL program. It is more commonly referred to as **WIDA**.	***Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS)*** refers to a student's social English language skills. Research indicates that a student takes 1-3 years to acquire functional social language skills. (Cummins, 1981)
CA-60 File This file is kept in the school office and is the official record of the student. It contains: birth certificate, immunization records, registration documents, standardized test scores, report cards, and other official school documents.	***CALP*** Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) refers to the English language skills necessary to function successfully in an academic/school environment. Research indicates that it takes a student from 3-7 or more years to acquire such academic language skills. (Cummins, 1981)
Content-based Language Development Programs Content-based Language Development programs group MLs from different languages together in classes where teachers use English as the medium for providing content area instruction. Teachers modify classroom language to the proficiency level of the students.	***Co-Teaching*** Co-teaching is defined as having an ML teacher assist in the instruction for content area classes where there is a significant population of MLs.
ML / ML / ESL English Learner (ML) / English Language Learner (ML) / English as a Second Language (ESL). The three acronyms are used interchangeably, but all mean the same thing.	***ML Programs*** ML programs emphasize learning English for both social and academic purposes. English is the language of instruction. ML instruction is used to teach English language components (grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation) and language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension) as well as content areas.
ML Class Period A student receives ML instruction during a regular class period, often grouped by English language proficiency levels.	***ML Instruction*** ML is defined as a structured language acquisition program designed to instruct a student in the English language (speaking, reading, writing, and comprehending) and core academic content.
ML Teacher An ML teacher is required to be certified and have specific training in ML instruction. The ML teacher may provide ML instruction or support services to ML students and may provide consultative services to regular classroom teachers.	***FEL Students*** A Former English Learner (FEL) has been exited from Title III/ESL program because the student has scored proficient on the ACCESS, W-APT, and multiple district assessments.

Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP) Under Title VI and the EEOA, LEAs must provide a language assistance program that is effective—educationally sound and proven successful. Consistent with ESEA section 3124, the Department does not recommend any particular curricula, program of instruction, or instructional materials, nor does it prohibit any language instruction educational program used with MLs that is consistent with Title III of the ESEA and other laws, including Title VI and the EEOA.	***Title III*** Title III is an entitlement program under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The purpose of Title III, Part A, is to help ensure that children and youth who are limited English proficient, Native American and/or immigrants, attain English language proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment in English, and meet the same challenging academic standards that all children are expected to meet.
W-APT / ***WIDA Screener*** W-APT stands for WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test. The W-APT is an English language screening assessment given to students new to Okemos Public Schools, when indicated on the home language survey, that a language other than English is spoken in the home.	***WIDA (or WIDA-ACCESS)*** refers to the annual assessment for English proficiency given to all students participating in the Title III/ESL program.