

Blount County Schools

EL District Plan



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EQUAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Pursuant to the requirement of Every Student Succeeds Act and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act of 2001, all foster care, homeless, migratory, immigrant, and limited English proficient children in the district will have access to the education and services needed to ensure that an opportunity is available to meet the same academic achievement standards to which all students are held.

The district will ensure that foster care, homeless, migratory, immigrant 5, limited English proficient students are not stigmatized nor segregated on the basis of their individual status. The student will be admitted to the district school in the attendance area in which the student is actually living or to the student's school of origin as requested by the parent, guardian, education decision maker or homeless liaison in the case of an unaccompanied youth, and in accordance with the student's best interest (*BCS Board Policy, 5.01*).

INTRODUCTION

This plan is in place and in compliance with Title III, Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students, of the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*. It is designed to ensure service for students who have a primary home language other than English, who are identified as immigrants and/or limited English proficient, and where one or more learners are in need of support. The Blount County Schools EL District Plan is in place whether or not Blount County Schools currently have English Learners (ELs) enrolled and regardless of Title III eligibility. The BCS EL District Plan addresses each aspect of the LEA's program at all grade levels and in all schools throughout our system. This plan contains sufficient detail so that every staff member can understand how our plan is to be implemented. The district recognizes that English Learners enrich our schools through their diverse languages, cultures, and experiences, and is committed to providing equitable opportunities that support both English language development and academic success.

The BCS EL District Plan is available online (www.blountboe.net) at the Blount County District Website and in each principal and/or counselor's office at each of our schools. This plan details how Blount County Schools provide programs, services, and resources to students identified as language minority and English Learners (ELs) or students with limited English proficiency (LEP). Blount County Schools provide appropriate services to EL students at all grade levels and all schools in the school system. It is the goal of all school personnel to help each student make yearly progress on standardized evaluations and reach the highest possible levels of English language and academic proficiency in the shortest time possible.

DEFINITION of ENGLISH LEARNERS, IMMIGRANT, & MIGRANT

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), an **English Learner (EL)** is an individual who:

- Is aged **3 through 21**;
- Is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school; and
- Meets one of the following criteria:
 - Was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English;
 - Is a Native American, Alaska Native, or native resident of an outlying area and comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; or
 - Is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant.

In addition, the individual's difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding English may be sufficient to deny the individual:

- The ability to meet the challenging State academic standards;
- The ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or
- The opportunity to participate fully in society.

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), an **Immigrant Child or Youth** is an individual who:

- Is **3 through 21 years of age**;
- Was **not born in any state**; and
- Has **not attended one or more schools in any one or more states for more than three full academic years**.

Under Sections 1115(c)(1)(A), 1304(c)(2), 1115(b), and 1309(3) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), and 34 C.F.R. § 200.103(a), a **migratory child** is a child who meets **all** of the following criteria:

- Is **not older than 21 years of age**;
- Is entitled to a free public education through Grade 12 under state law, or is not yet at the grade level at which the local education agency (LEA) provides a free public education;
- Made a **qualifying move** within the preceding **36 months** as a migratory agricultural worker or a migratory fisher, or moved with, or to join, a parent, guardian, or spouse who is a migratory agricultural worker or migratory fisher; and
- Made the qualifying move due to **economic necessity** from one residence to another, and:
 - From one school district to another;
 - In a state consisting of a single school district, from one administrative area to another within that district; or
 - In a school district larger than 15,000 square miles, moved **20 miles or more** to a temporary residence.

ASSURANCES of TITLE III and TITLE I SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICES

EL Program Administration

The Blount County Schools Superintendent and EL Coordinator assure that the district implements its English Learner (EL) program in accordance with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Title III, Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) guidance, and applicable federal civil rights requirements.

Blount County Schools developed its EL District Plan in consultation with classroom teachers, EL teachers, school administrators, parents, community stakeholders, and institutions of higher education. The plan is reviewed annually by the district EL team, which includes representatives from each school community, the EL Program staff, and the Federal Programs Coordinator. Revisions are based on stakeholder feedback, changes in state or federal guidance, and updates to district curriculum and instructional practices. The EL District Plan is reviewed and approved annually by the Blount County Board of Education.

WIDA Standards

Blount County Schools implements the WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition, in accordance with ALSDE requirements. WIDA English Language Development Standards and Can Do Descriptors are available to all classroom and EL teachers through ELlevation, the WIDA Secure Portal,

and each school's shared EL resources. Classroom teachers have access to the ELLevation profiles of their English Learners to support appropriate instructional planning and accommodations.

Qualified Personnel

All certified teachers employed by Blount County Schools meet Alabama State Department of Education certification requirements and demonstrate proficiency in English, the language of instruction. The district ensures that personnel providing language instruction and support services possess the qualifications necessary to effectively serve English Learners.

Identification and Enrollment

Blount County Schools ensures that all schools follow state and federal procedures for identifying and serving English Learners. As part of the enrollment process, every family completes a Home Language Survey (HLS). Translation and interpretation services are provided as needed, and all personnel responsible for student enrollment receive training on proper administration of the Home Language Survey.

Consistent with district policy and federal law, enrollment of migrant, immigrant, homeless, and English Learner students will not be denied or delayed because of the lack of:

- Birth certificate;
- School records or transcripts;
- Immunization or health records;
- Proof of residency;
- Transportation;
- Guardianship or custody documentation; or
- Social Security number.

Students are enrolled in accordance with district policy, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, and applicable federal and state requirements.

Translation and Interpretation

Blount County Schools provides qualified translation and interpretation services to ensure meaningful communication with parents and guardians. District and school communications, including notices, report cards, and other important documents, are translated into families' preferred languages whenever practicable, and oral interpretation is provided as needed.

Equal Access

English Learners have equitable access to all district educational programs and services, including but not limited to special education, gifted education, career and technical education, extracurricular activities, and before- and after-school programs. Eligibility for these programs is determined using the same criteria applied to all students.

Parent Rights

During each Individual English Learner Plan (I-ELP) meeting, parents or guardians are informed, in a language they understand whenever possible, of their rights regarding EL services. District personnel explain the Title III supplemental language instruction program, the student's instructional program, assessment requirements, and available supports.

Parents may decline or waive participation in Title III supplemental EL services. If a parent chooses to do so, the district provides the appropriate waiver documentation in English and the family's preferred language whenever available, along with oral interpretation as needed.

Regardless of whether supplemental Title III services are accepted or declined, Blount County Schools remains responsible for providing an appropriate educational program that enables English Learners to meaningfully participate in the district's instructional program. English Learners will continue to receive required English language development instruction, appropriate accommodations, and annual English language proficiency assessment through WIDA ACCESS, as required by state and federal law.

EDUCATIONAL THEORY AND GOALS

A. GOAL

The goal of Blount County Schools is to ensure that every English Learner (EL) develops English language proficiency while achieving the Alabama College and Career Readiness Standards. Through high-quality language instruction, meaningful access to grade-level content, and appropriate instructional supports, ELs will be equipped to attain academic success and graduate prepared for college, career, and life.

B. THEORY AND PRACTICE

Blount County Schools is committed to providing English Learners with equitable access to rigorous, grade-level instruction while supporting the development of English language proficiency. All ELs receive instruction aligned to the **Alabama College and Career Readiness Standards** and the **WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition**, as adopted by the Alabama State Department of Education.

English Learners receive language instruction through the district's core instructional program and, when eligible and not declined by a parent or guardian, supplemental language instruction supported through Title III and other applicable federal programs. Service delivery may include a combination of pull-out instruction, push-in support, collaborative teaching, consultation, and other evidence-based instructional models designed to meet individual student needs.

Blount County Schools utilizes evidence-based instructional practices, including **Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE)** and sheltered instruction strategies, to ensure English Learners can meaningfully access grade-level content. Teachers receive ongoing professional learning to effectively support language development across all content areas.

Instructional strategies include, but are not limited to:

- Building and activating background knowledge;
- Explicit vocabulary instruction;
- Scaffolding complex texts and academic tasks;
- Using visual supports, graphic organizers, and manipulatives;
- Providing comprehensible input through appropriate pacing and language;
- Encouraging structured academic discourse;
- Incorporating cooperative learning and meaningful student interaction;
- Integrating language objectives with content objectives;
- Differentiating instruction based on students' English language proficiency levels; and
- Using ongoing formative and summative assessments to monitor student progress.

EL teachers and classroom teachers collaborate regularly to review student progress, analyze assessment data, plan instruction, and implement appropriate language supports and accommodations.

The district's instructional program meets the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) by integrating English language development with grade-level academic content and ensuring English Learners have meaningful access to the district's educational program.

C. INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Blount County Schools recognizes that English Learners represent diverse linguistic, educational, and cultural backgrounds. The district employs a comprehensive instructional framework that considers each student's individual strengths and needs when determining appropriate services.

Instructional decisions are informed through multiple sources of data, including:

- WIDA Screener and WIDA ACCESS assessment results;
- State and local academic assessment data;
- Classroom performance and teacher observations;
- Home Language Survey information;
- Student educational history;
- Prior schooling experiences;
- Native language proficiency, when available; and
- Social, cultural, and environmental factors that may influence learning.

This information guides the development of each student's Individual English Learner Plan (I-ELP) and the selection of instructional strategies, language supports, accommodations, and service delivery models.

Blount County Schools integrates language development with academic instruction by establishing both **content objectives** aligned to the Alabama Course of Study and **language objectives** aligned to the WIDA English Language Development Standards. This approach ensures that English Learners develop the academic language and skills necessary to participate successfully in rigorous grade-level instruction while progressing toward English language proficiency.

EL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The English Learner (EL) Advisory Committee supports Blount County Schools in providing equitable educational opportunities for English Learners by offering input on district policies, instructional programs, family engagement, and services. The committee serves in an advisory capacity and provides recommendations regarding the development, implementation, and annual review of the district's EL Program and EL District Plan.

A. REPRESENTATION and MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA

The EL Advisory Committee reflects the diverse perspectives of stakeholders involved in the education of English Learners. Membership may include:

- Parents or guardians of current English Learners;
- English Learner students (secondary level, when appropriate);
- EL teachers;
- General education teachers who serve English Learners;
- School administrators;

- Federal Programs and district EL staff;
- Translators, interpreters, or family engagement specialists; and
- Representatives from community organizations, businesses, faith-based organizations, or institutions of higher education that support English Learner families.

The district strives to ensure representation from multiple schools and grade levels throughout the district.

B. NOMINATION and RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Blount County Schools actively recruits committee members through a variety of methods to encourage broad stakeholder participation.

Parent and Community Recruitment

- Multilingual invitations are distributed to English Learner families.
- Families are invited during registration, parent-teacher conferences, school events, and family engagement activities.
- Translation and interpretation services are provided as needed to encourage meaningful participation.

Staff Recruitment

- Principals, EL teachers, and district administrators recommend educators who have experience serving English Learners or supporting multilingual families.

Student Recruitment (Secondary, as Appropriate)

- Secondary EL teachers may recommend English Learner students who demonstrate leadership, engagement, and an interest in representing the perspectives of their peers.

C. SELECTION and APPOINTMENT

- Committee membership is coordinated by the Blount County Schools Federal Programs Office and EL Program staff. Membership is reviewed annually to ensure broad representation while maintaining continuity through returning members. The district encourages participation from stakeholders representing various school communities, grade levels, and areas of expertise.

D. MEETING FREQUENCY, PURPOSE, AND DOCUMENTATION

The EL Advisory Committee meets a minimum of **two times each school year**, typically once during the fall semester and once during the spring semester. Additional meetings may be scheduled as needed.

Committee responsibilities include:

- Reviewing district English Learner demographic and achievement data;
- Reviewing annual WIDA ACCESS results and other program data;
- Providing input on the district EL Program and annual EL District Plan;
- Evaluating the effectiveness of instructional services and supports;
- Identifying professional learning needs for educators;
- Providing recommendations to strengthen family engagement and communication with multilingual families; and
- Advising the district on policies, procedures, and resources that support English Learners.

Documentation for each meeting includes agendas, sign-in sheets, meeting minutes, presentation materials, recommendations, and translated communications when applicable. Records are maintained by the Federal Programs Office as evidence of stakeholder consultation and continuous program improvement.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

Blount County Schools is committed to ensuring that all eligible children have equal access to a free public education regardless of national origin, immigration status, or English language proficiency. Enrollment will not be delayed or denied because a student or family lacks documentation that is not required by federal or state law.

Registration Forms

Each school provides registration forms for all enrolling students. Forms are available in English and Spanish, and translation or interpretation assistance is provided in other languages as needed to ensure meaningful communication with families.

Proof of Age

Acceptable documentation may include:

- Birth certificate;
- Passport;
- Health records;
- Family Bible;
- Parent affidavit; or
- Other official or unofficial documents indicating the student's date of birth.

While a birth certificate is requested, enrollment will not be delayed if proof of age is unavailable at the time of registration.

Immunization Records

Parents are asked to provide a valid Alabama Certificate of Immunization (Blue Card) or other available immunization records. If records are unavailable, families are referred to the Blount County Health Department or a licensed physician to obtain the appropriate documentation or establish an immunization schedule. Translation and appointment assistance are provided as needed.

Social Security Number

A Social Security number is not required for school enrollment. If a student does not have a Social Security number, Blount County Schools assigns a unique student identification number for school records.

Home Language Survey (HLS)

Every student enrolling in Blount County Schools completes a Home Language Survey (HLS) as part of the registration process. The HLS assists the district in identifying students who may require screening for English language proficiency.

- The HLS is completed by the parent or guardian for elementary students and may be completed by the student or parent for secondary students, as appropriate.

- Translation and interpretation services are provided whenever needed.
- The survey identifies the languages spoken by the student and family and the preferred language for school-home communication.
- The completed HLS becomes part of the student's permanent educational record or is maintained electronically in PowerSchool.

If any response on the Home Language Survey indicates the use of a language other than English, the registrar forwards the survey to the appropriate EL staff member for review and, if applicable, administration of the WIDA Screener in accordance with Alabama State Department of Education procedures.

The presence of a language other than English on the Home Language Survey does not automatically identify a student as an English Learner or require placement in an EL program.

Previous School Records

Parents or guardians are encouraged to provide report cards, transcripts, or other educational records from previous schools, including schools outside the United States.

When records are unavailable, Blount County Schools requests records from previous schools whenever possible and evaluates available documentation to determine appropriate grade placement and course credit.

Students will not be denied enrollment or appropriate placement because previous school records cannot be obtained immediately.

Migrant Employment Survey

Each parent or guardian completes the Migrant Education Program Employment Survey during student registration. Completed surveys are forwarded to the district Migrant Recruiter for review and follow-up to determine eligibility for Migrant Education Program services.

Proof of Residence

Acceptable documentation may include:

- Lease or rental agreement;
- Mortgage or purchase agreement;
- Utility bill; or
- Other documentation approved by district policy.

If a student is identified as homeless under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, residency documentation requirements are waived. Enrollment will not be delayed while residency issues are being resolved.

Registration and Health Forms

Parents or guardians complete all required registration and health forms during enrollment. Translation and interpretation services are available as needed to ensure families understand all required information and documentation.

School Nutrition Program

Blount County Schools participates in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). Breakfast and lunch are provided at no cost to all enrolled students.

Original Entry Date

The student's initial enrollment date in Blount County Schools is recorded in PowerSchool and used when completing student demographic information for state reporting and WIDA ACCESS for ELLs assessments, as applicable.

IDENTIFICATION and SCREENING PROCEDURES

A. BLOUNT COUNTY SCHOOLS ESL FLOW CHART (APPENDIX B)

Blount County Schools maintains an English Learner (ESL) Identification Flowchart outlining the procedures for identifying, screening, placing, monitoring, and exiting English learners. The flowchart is provided to enrollment personnel, EL teachers, school administrators, and counselors to ensure consistent implementation of district and Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) procedures.

B. HOME LANGUAGE SURVEY (HLS)

Blount County Schools identifies potential English Learners (ELs) during the enrollment process through the administration of the Home Language Survey (HLS). Every student enrolling in a Blount County school must have a completed Home Language Survey entered into PowerSchool. The completed survey becomes part of the student's permanent educational record.

The Home Language Survey assists the district in identifying students whose primary or home language may be other than English and who may require further assessment of English language proficiency. The survey includes questions regarding:

- Country of birth;
- Previous enrollment in U.S. schools;
- Language spoken most often in the home;
- Parent or guardian need for written translation or oral interpretation;
- Student's native language; and
- First language acquired by the student.

Whenever possible, enrollment personnel interview the student and parent or guardian during registration. Information regarding interrupted or limited formal education, previous educational experiences, cultural background, emotional trauma, and other special circumstances is documented to assist the Individual English Learner Plan (I-ELP) Committee in making appropriate instructional decisions.

Translation and interpretation services are provided whenever needed to ensure families fully understand the enrollment process and the purpose of the Home Language Survey. Blount County Schools utilizes bilingual staff, interpreters, MasterWord, and translated enrollment documents to minimize the possibility of misidentifying students or unnecessarily administering English language proficiency assessments.

Enrollment procedures, including required registration documents, translation and interpretation services, proof of residency, immunization requirements, and other registration requirements, are described in Section IV, Administrative Registration Procedures. These procedures are followed for all students enrolling in Blount County Schools, including English Learners.

When all responses on the Home Language Survey indicate that English is the only language used by the student and individuals in the home, the student follows standard district enrollment procedures.

If any response on the Home Language Survey indicates the use of a language other than English, the registrar forwards the Home Language Survey and enrollment information to the EL teacher for review. The EL teacher determines whether English language proficiency screening is required in accordance with ALSDE guidelines. The presence of a language other than English on the Home Language Survey does not automatically identify a student as an English Learner.

C. WIDA SCREENER PROCEDURES

Blount County Schools utilizes the **WIDA Screener for Kindergarten** and **WIDA Screener Online** to determine eligibility for English Learner (EL) services in accordance with Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) requirements.

- **WIDA Screener for Kindergarten** is administered to students in Pre-K through the first semester of Grade 1.
- **WIDA Screener Online** is administered to students in the second semester of Grade 1 through Grade 12.

Students identified through the Home Language Survey who do not have current **WIDA ACCESS** scores or previous qualifying WIDA Screener results are administered the appropriate WIDA Screener to determine English language proficiency.

Blount County Schools follows ALSDE timelines for screening and placement:

- Students enrolling at the beginning of the school year are screened and, if eligible, placed within **30 calendar days** of enrollment.
- Students enrolling after the beginning of the school year who are enrolling in a U.S. school for the first time are screened and, if eligible, placed within **30 calendar days** of enrollment.
- Students enrolling after the beginning of the school year who previously attended a U.S. school are screened and, if eligible, placed within **10 school days** of enrollment.

Students transferring from another WIDA Consortium state with current **WIDA ACCESS** scores may use those scores to determine eligibility and placement in accordance with ALSDE guidance.

All Blount County EL teachers who administer WIDA assessments complete the required annual WIDA certification modules and receive annual test security training provided by the district Testing Coordinator.

Eligibility for English Learner services is determined using the current ALSDE placement criteria. Students meeting eligibility requirements are identified as English Learners and proceed through the Individual English Learner Plan (I-ELP) process. Students who meet or exceed the ALSDE-established proficiency threshold are identified as **NOMPHLOTE (Non-English Language Background, Fully English Proficient)** and are not eligible for Title III Supplemental EL services.

If concerns remain regarding a student's English language proficiency despite a NOMPHLOTE designation, the district may administer an additional WIDA Screener with parent or guardian permission and in accordance with ALSDE guidance.

QUALIFYING SCORES FOR POTENTIAL ELs

WIDA SCREENER FOR KINDERGARTEN or WIDA SCREENER ONLINE

WIDA SCREENER FOR KINDERGARTEN			
GRADE	REQUIRED DOMAINS	QUALIFIES STUDENT AS EL	DOES NOT QUALIFY STUDENT AS EL
Pre-K4 Pre-registration period for kindergarten entry through 1 st semester of Grade 1	Listening, Speaking	Less than 4.5 Oral Language Score	4.5 or higher Oral Language Score
WIDA SCREENER ONLINE			
GRADE	REQUIRED DOMAINS	QUALIFIES STUDENT AS EL	DOES NOT QUALIFY STUDENT AS EL
2 nd semester of Grade 1 through Grade 12	Reading, Listening, Writing, Speaking	Less than 5.0	5.0 or higher

D. INDIVIDUAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE PLAN AND PROCEDURES

Every student identified as an English Learner has an Individual English Learner Plan (I-ELP) developed and maintained in ELLevation.

The I-ELP documents:

- Student demographic information;
- English language proficiency assessment results;
- WIDA Can Do Descriptors;
- EL service delivery model;
- Language development goals;
- Instructional accommodations;
- State assessment accommodations; and
- Other instructional supports necessary for meaningful participation in grade-level instruction.

The I-ELP is reviewed and updated at least annually and revised whenever changes in student performance or instructional needs warrant additional supports or modifications.

Instructional accommodations are selected based on multiple data sources, including classroom performance, teacher recommendations, WIDA assessment results, WIDA ACCESS data, and other academic information. Accommodations are intended to provide meaningful access to grade-level instruction while promoting English language development.

E. INITIAL PLACEMENT and PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Following administration of the appropriate WIDA Screener or review of current **WIDA ACCESS** results, the Individual English Learner Plan (I-ELP) Committee reviews all available educational information to determine eligibility for English Learner services and appropriate instructional supports.

The committee considers multiple sources of information, including:

- Home Language Survey results;
- WIDA Screener or WIDA ACCESS scores;
- Previous educational records and transcripts;
- Prior schooling experiences;
- Classroom observations and teacher input;
- Academic performance and assessment data;
- Student strengths and educational needs; and
- Parent or guardian input.

Students who qualify as English Learners under ALSDE criteria receive:

- An Individual English Learner Plan (I-ELP);
- Appropriate English language development services;
- Instructional accommodations and supports;
- State assessment accommodations, when applicable;
- Language development goals aligned to the WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition; and
- Parent notification regarding identification, placement, and program options in accordance with ESSA and ALSDE requirements.

Students who do not qualify for EL services are identified as **NOMPHLOTE** and continue to participate in the district's instructional program without placement in the Title III Supplemental EL Program.

Students transferring from another school district or another WIDA Consortium state are placed using current WIDA ACCESS results or other approved assessment data in accordance with ALSDE guidance.

At the high school level, transcripts from schools outside the United States are reviewed and translated, when necessary, to determine appropriate grade placement and award applicable academic credit in accordance with Alabama graduation requirements and district policy.

English Learners are eligible to participate in all district educational programs, including Advanced Placement (AP), Career and Technical Education (CTE), gifted services (when eligible), extracurricular activities, and other enrichment opportunities. Classroom accommodations are provided as appropriate; however, Advanced Placement examinations are administered in accordance with College Board policies.

F. FOREIGN EXCHANGE STUDENTS

All foreign exchange students complete the Home Language Survey upon enrollment. When the survey indicates the use of a language other than English, the student is screened using the appropriate WIDA Screener.

Foreign exchange students who qualify as English Learners receive EL services and, when eligible, Title III supplemental services in accordance with ALSDE requirements.

Eligible foreign exchange students participate in WIDA ACCESS and all required state assessments and are included in state reporting for English Learners and, when applicable, immigrant student counts for Title III funding purposes.

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT

Blount County Schools administers **WIDA ACCESS** annually to all identified English Learners (ELs) in Kindergarten through Grade 12, including students whose parents or guardians have waived Title III supplemental services. Annual participation in the English language proficiency assessment is required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE).

WIDA ACCESS (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State) is a standards-based, criterion-referenced assessment developed by the WIDA Consortium. The assessment measures students' progress toward English language proficiency across the four language domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing and is aligned to the WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition.

Students who have exited EL status and are identified as **FEL-1, FEL-2, FEL-3, FEL-4, or FEL** do not participate in WIDA ACCESS.

Students who meet the ALSDE eligibility requirements for English Learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities participate in **WIDA Alternate ACCESS** rather than WIDA ACCESS. Eligibility is determined by the Individual English Learner Plan (I-ELP) Committee in collaboration with the district Testing Coordinator and in accordance with current ALSDE guidance.

Blount County Schools follows the current **ALSDE Student Assessment Resource Guide for English Learners** and all applicable WIDA guidance for administering WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS.

EXITING PROCEDURES and MONITORING of FORMER ENGLISH LEARNERS

A. EXIT CRITERIA

Blount County Schools follows the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) requirements for exiting students from the Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP).

English Learners who earn an **Overall Composite Score of 4.8 or higher on WIDA ACCESS** are considered English language proficient and are eligible to exit the district's English Learner Program.

Students participating in **WIDA Alternate ACCESS** may exit the Language Instruction Educational Program when they meet the English language proficiency criteria established by the Alabama State Department of Education.

Blount County Schools follows all current ALSDE guidance regarding eligibility, exit criteria, documentation, and reporting for students participating in WIDA Alternate ACCESS. As ALSDE updates requirements, the district will revise this plan accordingly.

Upon meeting the state-established exit criteria:

- The student is exited from the Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP);
- Title III supplemental English Learner services are discontinued;

- The student is reclassified as a **Former English Learner, Year 1 (FEL-1)**; and
- The student begins the required four-year monitoring period.

Parents or guardians are notified of the student's successful attainment of English language proficiency and the student's reclassification as a Former English Learner.

Former English Learners do not participate in future administrations of **WIDA ACCESS** unless they are re-entered into the English Learner Program in accordance with ALSDE guidance.

Former English Learners may continue to receive allowable English Learner accommodations on state assessments during the four-year monitoring period when those accommodations are routinely used during classroom instruction and are documented in the student's Individual English Learner Plan (I-ELP), in accordance with current ALSDE assessment guidance. At the conclusion of the four-year monitoring period, English Learner accommodations are discontinued unless otherwise permitted through another educational program.

B. MONITORING PROCEDURES FOR FORMER ENGLISH LEARNERS (FELs)

In accordance with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Blount County Schools monitors the academic progress of all Former English Learners for **four consecutive school years** following their exit from the English Learner Program.

Students are classified as:

- **FEL-1** – Former English Learner, Year 1
- **FEL-2** – Former English Learner, Year 2
- **FEL-3** – Former English Learner, Year 3
- **FEL-4** – Former English Learner, Year 4

Upon successful completion of the four-year monitoring period, students are designated as **Former English Learners (FEL)** and are no longer included in the English Learner accountability subgroup.

Monitoring Procedures

Blount County Schools monitors Former English Learners through a collaborative process involving EL teachers, classroom teachers, counselors, and school administrators. Monitoring activities include:

- Maintaining each Former English Learner in ELLevation throughout the four-year monitoring period;
- Providing the ALSDE Former English Learner Monitoring Form to classroom teachers at least four times each school year;
- Reviewing report cards, mid-term grades, and other academic performance data;
- Monitoring attendance, behavior, and overall classroom performance;
- Collaborating regularly with classroom teachers regarding student progress; and
- Maintaining documentation of monitoring activities and parent communication.

EL teachers maintain documentation for each monitored student, including exit documentation, monitoring forms, report cards, progress reports, parent communication, conference notes, and other pertinent records. These records provide evidence of the student's academic, linguistic, social, and cultural progress throughout the monitoring period.

Student Support and Possible Re-entry

If a Former English Learner experiences academic difficulty during the monitoring period, the classroom teacher notifies the EL teacher and appropriate school personnel. The student participates in the district's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)/Problem Solving Team (PST) process to determine appropriate interventions.

If the I-ELP Committee determines that the student's academic difficulties may be related to English language proficiency, the committee may recommend administration of the appropriate WIDA Screener in accordance with ALSDE guidance.

Based on the screening results:

- Students who again meet eligibility criteria for English Learner services may be re-entered into the Language Instruction Educational Program and receive a revised Individual English Learner Plan (I-ELP).
- Students who demonstrate English language proficiency may remain in Former English Learner status while the Problem Solving Team considers additional academic or specialized interventions.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

A. COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Blount County Schools conducts a comprehensive needs assessment annually to evaluate the effectiveness of its Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP) and to ensure that English Learners (ELs) have equitable access to rigorous, grade-level instruction while developing English language proficiency.

The district reviews multiple sources of data to identify strengths, needs, and priorities for continuous program improvement, including:

- WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS results;
- WIDA Screener data;
- State assessment data;
- District benchmark and classroom assessment data;
- Graduation, attendance, and course completion data;
- Longitudinal achievement data for current ELs, Former English Learners (FELs), and never-EL students;
- EL program participation and service delivery data;
- Classroom observations and instructional walkthroughs;
- Parent, teacher, and administrator feedback; and
- Federal and state accountability indicators.

Results of the comprehensive needs assessment are used to evaluate program effectiveness, identify professional learning needs, establish district and school improvement goals, allocate resources, and select evidence-based instructional practices that support English language development and academic achievement.

B. LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM (LIEP)

Blount County Schools implements a comprehensive Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP) designed to ensure that English Learners develop English language proficiency while participating meaningfully in the district's core instructional program.

The district provides English language development through a continuum of service delivery models based on individual student need, including:

- Push-in instructional support;
- Pull-out English language development instruction;
- Collaborative teaching and co-planning;
- Consultation between EL and classroom teachers; and
- Individualized instructional support documented through each student's Individual English Learner Plan (I-ELP).

English Learners receive grade-level instruction aligned to the Alabama College and Career Readiness Standards while developing academic English through the WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition.

General education teachers and EL teachers share responsibility for the education of English Learners through ongoing collaboration, instructional planning, progress monitoring, and implementation of classroom accommodations. Classroom teachers have access to ELlevation, where they can review each student's I-ELP, instructional and assessment accommodations, WIDA Can Do Descriptors, language proficiency data, and recommended instructional strategies.

To support effective implementation of the LIEP, Blount County Schools provides ongoing professional learning for teachers and administrators on evidence-based instructional practices for English Learners, including Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE), sheltered instruction strategies, language objectives, academic vocabulary development, scaffolding techniques, and culturally responsive instructional practices.

C. EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAM DESIGN

Blount County Schools selected its Language Instruction Educational Program based on research demonstrating that English Learners achieve the greatest academic success when English language development is integrated with rigorous grade-level instruction and supported through collaborative instructional practices.

The district's instructional framework is grounded in evidence-based practices, including:

- Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE);
- Sheltered instructional strategies;
- Explicit academic language instruction;
- Scaffolding and differentiated instruction;
- Strategic use of visual supports and comprehensible input;
- Collaborative learning structures;
- Frequent formative assessment and feedback; and
- Ongoing collaboration between EL teachers and classroom teachers.

These practices are reinforced through district professional learning initiatives, including LETRS, Orton-Gillingham, the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI), AMSTI, Strategic Teaching, and other instructional frameworks that promote language development alongside high-quality core instruction.

The district continuously evaluates the effectiveness of its Language Instruction Educational Program through annual program evaluation, student performance data, classroom observations, and stakeholder feedback to ensure that English Learners make progress toward English language proficiency while meeting the same challenging academic standards expected of all students.

EL CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION SUPPORT TO SCHOOLS

A. USING DATA TO IMPROVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Blount County Schools uses a continuous improvement process to monitor student progress, evaluate program effectiveness, and improve the rate of English language acquisition for English Learners (ELs). Multiple sources of data are reviewed throughout the school year to guide instructional decisions at the student, school, and district levels.

Data sources include:

- WIDA Screener results;
- WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS results;
- Individual English Learner Plans (I-ELPs);
- Classroom assessments and district benchmark data;
- State assessment results;
- Classroom observations and teacher input;
- ELLevation reports and student language proficiency data; and
- Academic performance, attendance, and course completion data.

EL teachers maintain documentation for each English Learner that includes language proficiency data, instructional accommodations, progress monitoring, and parent communication. Student data is reviewed regularly by EL teachers, classroom teachers, administrators, and the district EL Coordinator to determine instructional needs and monitor language development.

The district uses individual and aggregate data to:

- Monitor progress toward English language proficiency;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP);
- Adjust instructional service delivery models, including push-in, pull-out, collaborative teaching, and consultation;
- Identify students requiring additional instructional support;
- Determine professional learning priorities;
- Allocate instructional resources; and
- Establish district and school improvement goals that support English Learners.

B. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT and PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Blount County Schools provides ongoing support to schools to ensure the successful implementation of the Language Instruction Educational Program and continuous improvement of services for English Learners.

District support includes:

- Annual training for all employees on the district English Learner Plan and legal requirements for serving English Learners;
- Professional learning on evidence-based instructional practices, including Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE), sheltered instruction, scaffolding, academic language development, and differentiation;
- School-based coaching, technical assistance, and instructional support provided by the District EL Coordinator;
- Collaborative planning between EL teachers and classroom teachers to review student data, develop instructional strategies, and monitor student progress;

- Access to ELLevation professional learning resources, including Pathways, Modules, Activities, and Collections;
- Ongoing support for implementation of instructional accommodations documented in Individual English Learner Plans (I-ELPs); and
- Continuous review of district and school data to evaluate program effectiveness and identify opportunities for improvement.

These supports ensure that schools implement consistent, high-quality instructional practices that promote both English language development and academic achievement.

C. INTEGRATION of WIDA ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS FRAMEWORK

Blount County Schools integrates the WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition, throughout the district's instructional program to ensure that English language development occurs alongside grade-level academic instruction.

EL teachers and classroom teachers collaboratively plan instruction that incorporates language objectives with content objectives aligned to the Alabama College and Career Readiness Standards. Lessons are designed to provide English Learners with meaningful opportunities to develop academic language while participating fully in core instruction.

Teachers utilize WIDA instructional resources, including proficiency level descriptors, Can Do Descriptors, language expectations, and instructional supports, to:

- Differentiate instruction according to students' English language proficiency levels;
- Develop language objectives aligned to grade-level content;
- Scaffold academic language across all content areas;
- Design meaningful learning experiences that promote listening, speaking, reading, and writing;
- Select appropriate instructional accommodations; and
- Monitor student progress toward English language proficiency.

ELLevation further supports implementation of the WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework by providing teachers with student language proficiency data, instructional recommendations, professional learning modules, Pathways, Activities, and Collections that assist educators in meeting the academic and linguistic needs of English Learners.

The district continuously reviews curriculum resources, instructional practices, and student performance data to ensure alignment with the WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework and current evidence-based practices for English language acquisition.

D. CORE INSTRUCTIONAL and INTERVENTION RESOURCES

Blount County Schools utilizes state-approved, evidence-based instructional resources to support the academic achievement and English language development of English Learners. These resources are implemented in conjunction with the WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, the Alabama College and Career Readiness Standards, and evidence-based instructional practices to provide meaningful access to grade-level content.

Core instructional and intervention resources include:

- **Into Reading** – English Language Arts (K–6)
- **Orton-Gillingham-inspired instruction** – Foundational Literacy (K–3)

- **LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling)** – Science of Reading instructional framework (K–3)
- **Heggerty** – Phonemic Awareness (K–3)
- **SPIRE** – Structured Literacy intervention (K–8)
- **i-Ready** – Diagnostic assessment and personalized instruction that provides individualized learning pathways based on student performance and supports targeted intervention in reading and mathematics (K–8)
- **Edmentum** – Personalized intervention, credit recovery, and supplemental instruction (K–12)
- **enVision Mathematics** – Mathematics (K–5, 9–12)
- **Reveal Math (McGraw Hill)** – Mathematics (6–8)

These resources are supplemented with evidence-based instructional practices for English Learners, including explicit academic vocabulary instruction, language objectives, scaffolding, structured student interaction, visual supports, differentiated instruction, formative assessment, and collaborative learning. Together, these resources and practices ensure that English Learners develop English language proficiency while successfully engaging in rigorous grade-level instruction.

GRADING AND RETENTION OF ENGLISH LEARNERS

A. GRADING PROCEDURES

Blount County Schools maintains high academic expectations for all students, including English Learners (ELs). Grades awarded to English Learners reflect mastery of grade-level content while taking into consideration the instructional accommodations and supports documented in the student's Individual English Learner Plan (I-ELP).

Classroom teachers are responsible for implementing the accommodations identified in each student's I-ELP during instruction and assessment. Instruction is differentiated according to the student's English language proficiency level to provide meaningful access to grade-level content while promoting continued language development.

Teachers maintain documentation demonstrating implementation of instructional accommodations and student progress, including classroom assessments, work samples, and other evidence of learning.

English language proficiency alone shall not be the basis for assigning a failing grade. Students are evaluated on their demonstrated knowledge and skills after appropriate accommodations have been provided.

B. RETENTION PROCEDURES

Blount County Schools follows the requirements established by the Alabama State Department of Education and federal guidance regarding the retention of English Learners.

An English Learner shall not be retained solely because of limited English language proficiency. Lack of English proficiency may not be the basis for assigning a failing grade or recommending retention.

Before assigning a failing grade or considering retention of an English Learner, the Individual English Learner Plan (I-ELP) Committee shall review available evidence to ensure that:

- Appropriate instructional accommodations identified in the student's I-ELP have been consistently implemented;
- The student has received meaningful access to grade-level instruction;

- Instruction and assessments have been appropriately differentiated based on the student's English language proficiency;
- Classroom interventions and supports have been provided and documented;
- Student progress has been monitored using multiple sources of evidence; and
- The student's academic difficulties are not primarily the result of limited English language proficiency.

The committee may also consider:

- WIDA ACCESS results and language proficiency level;
- Classroom performance and assessment data;
- Attendance and participation;
- Teacher observations and documentation;
- Parent input; and
- Information from the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)/Problem Solving Team (PST), when applicable.

If the committee determines that factors other than English language proficiency are contributing to the student's academic difficulties, appropriate interventions shall be implemented before retention is considered.

High school English Learners have the same opportunity as all students to earn course credit toward graduation. Credit recovery and other district intervention programs are available to eligible students who require additional support in meeting graduation requirements.

The district's Retention Guideline Chart for English Learners serves as a companion resource to assist administrators and teachers in making retention decisions consistent with district procedures and applicable federal and state requirements.

Retention Guidelines Chart for English Learners

Consider Retention In consultation with ESL committee members, retention can be considered if all points have been addressed and the student still is not successful.	YES 	English Proficiency Level	NO 	Do Not Retain Student should not be retained if all points have not been addressed.
		Full Implementation of I-ELP	NO 	
		Full Implementation of Accommodations	NO 	
		Amount of English Language Development Instruction	NO 	
		Alternate Grading Strategy	NO 	
		Classroom Teacher PD	NO 	
		Graded according to I-ELPs	NO 	

STAFFING AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

A. QUALIFIED PERSONNEL

Blount County Schools provides qualified personnel and appropriate resources to implement the district's Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP) and ensure that English Learners receive equitable access to high-quality instruction.

The number and assignment of English Learner personnel are based on multiple factors, including:

- The number of English Learners enrolled;
- Students' English language proficiency levels;
- Academic achievement data;
- Grade-level distribution;
- Student and school needs; and
- Available federal and state funding.

The district strategically assigns state-funded English Learner teachers across all seven school communities and supplements staffing as needed to provide appropriate instructional services, including push-in support, pull-out instruction, collaborative teaching, and consultation. When appropriate and funding permits, bilingual instructional aides or paraprofessionals are utilized to support communication and instruction.

English Learner teachers hold valid Alabama educator certification and appropriate English as a Second Language (ESL) licensure or endorsement, consistent with Alabama State Department of Education requirements. Recruitment and retention of educators with ESL certification remain district priorities.

English Learner teachers are responsible for:

- Administering the Home Language Survey process and WIDA Screeners;
- Supporting the administration of WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS;
- Developing, maintaining, and annually reviewing Individual English Learner Plans (I-ELPs);
- Monitoring student language development and academic progress;
- Collaborating with classroom teachers to support instruction and accommodations;
- Providing supplemental English language development instruction;
- Assisting schools in implementing evidence-based instructional practices for English Learners;
- Supporting compliance with federal and state requirements; and
- Facilitating communication between schools and families through district translation and interpretation services.

All English Learners receive their core academic instruction from appropriately certified classroom teachers. English Learner teachers provide supplemental language instruction and instructional support designed to accelerate English language acquisition while ensuring meaningful access to grade-level content.

B. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Blount County Schools provides ongoing, job-embedded professional learning to English Learner teachers, classroom teachers, administrators, and support staff to ensure effective implementation of the district's Language Instruction Educational Program.

Professional Learning for English Learner Teachers

English Learner teachers participate in ongoing professional learning focused on:

- WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition;
- Administration of WIDA Screeners, WIDA ACCESS, and WIDA Alternate ACCESS;
- Federal and state English Learner requirements;
- Individual English Learner Plan (I-ELP) development and implementation;
- ELLevation data analysis and instructional planning;
- Evidence-based instructional practices for English Learners; and
- State, regional, and national professional learning opportunities, including conferences and workshops.

Professional Learning for Classroom Teachers and Administrators

All educators receive annual training on their responsibilities for serving English Learners. Professional learning includes:

- Overview of the district English Learner Plan and legal requirements;
- Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) and sheltered instructional strategies;
- Integration of the WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework into core instruction;
- Implementation of instructional and assessment accommodations documented in Individual English Learner Plans (I-ELPs);
- Effective use of ELLevation for instructional planning, accommodations, and progress monitoring; and
- Collaboration between English Learner teachers and classroom teachers to support student achievement.

Teachers are encouraged to complete ELLevation professional learning modules, Pathways, Activities, and Collections to strengthen instructional practices for English Learners. District professional learning also incorporates evidence-based instructional initiatives such as LETRS, Orton-Gillingham, the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI), AMSTI, and other district instructional frameworks that support language development and academic achievement.

The District EL Coordinator provides ongoing coaching, technical assistance, school support visits, and collaborative planning opportunities to ensure consistent implementation of the Language Instruction Educational Program across all schools.

Professional learning priorities are informed by annual school support visits, program evaluation findings, WIDA ACCESS results, classroom observations, stakeholder feedback, district needs assessments, and federal program requirements to ensure support remains responsive to school and student needs.

DATA COLLECTION

A. Data Collection and Reporting

Blount County Schools collects, maintains, and submits English Learner (EL) data in accordance with Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) requirements. Accurate student identification and coding ensure appropriate instructional services, state assessment participation, accountability reporting, and federal program compliance.

Following identification and placement through the Home Language Survey, WIDA Screener, and Individual English Learner Plan (I-ELP) process, student information is entered into PowerSchool using the appropriate ALSDE English Learner status codes.

The district maintains accurate records for:

- English Learner identification;
- WIDA Screener results;
- WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS participation and results;
- Individual English Learner Plans (I-ELPs);
- Parent notification and waiver documentation;
- Entry and exit dates;
- Former English Learner (FEL) monitoring status; and
- Required federal and state reporting elements.

When a student enrolls or an English Learner status changes, the EL teacher completes the district EL Enrollment Form and submits it to the District EL Coordinator for review. Student records are updated in PowerSchool and the district's EL database to ensure consistency and accuracy.

The district periodically compares PowerSchool records with district EL records to verify that student coding, program participation, and monitoring status are accurate before state reporting and assessment windows.

B. State Coding Procedures

English Learners are assigned the appropriate ALSDE program status code in PowerSchool based on identification, placement, parent decisions regarding supplemental services, exit status, and monitoring requirements.

Students whose parents decline Title III supplemental services remain identified and coded as English Learners in PowerSchool. Parent refusal of supplemental services does not change the student's English Learner status or exempt the student from annual participation in WIDA ACCESS until state exit criteria have been met. The district documents the parent waiver in the designated PowerSchool field and maintains supporting documentation in the student's EL record.

Former English Learners remain appropriately coded throughout the required four-year monitoring period before transitioning to Former English Learner (FEL) status in accordance with ALSDE requirements.

Current ALSDE English Learner coding definitions and PowerSchool code comparisons are maintained in Appendix C of this plan and are updated as state guidance changes.

C. Training and Data Quality Assurance

Blount County Schools provides ongoing training to school personnel responsible for maintaining English Learner data to ensure accurate coding and reporting.

Training is provided to:

- PowerSchool Managers;
- English Learner teachers;
- School administrators; and
- Other personnel responsible for student data entry or program oversight.

Training includes:

- ALSDE English Learner coding requirements;
- PowerSchool data entry procedures;
- WIDA assessment reporting requirements;

- Entry, exit, and monitoring procedures;
- Parent waiver documentation; and
- Data verification and quality assurance processes.

The District PowerSchool Manager and District EL Coordinator collaborate to provide technical assistance, communicate updates to state reporting requirements, and conduct periodic reviews of district data to ensure the accuracy and reliability of English Learner records used for state and federal reporting.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

The instructional goals of the Blount County Schools Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP) are to:

- Increase English language proficiency so that English Learners develop the language skills necessary for successful participation in grade-level instruction.
- Ensure that English Learners meet challenging academic standards aligned to the Alabama College and Career Readiness Standards while progressing toward English language proficiency.
- Prepare English Learners for college, career, and postsecondary success.

A. PROGRAM EVALUATION PROCESS

Blount County Schools evaluates the effectiveness of its Language Instruction Educational Program through an annual continuous improvement process that includes data collection, program review, stakeholder feedback, and action planning. The district uses evaluation results to improve instructional practices, professional learning, resource allocation, and student outcomes.

Data Collection and Analysis

The district reviews multiple sources of data to evaluate student progress and program effectiveness, including:

- WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS results;
- WIDA Screener data;
- Alabama state assessment results;
- District benchmark and classroom assessment data;
- ELLevation reports and Individual English Learner Plan (I-ELP) documentation;
- Graduation, attendance, and course completion data;
- Former English Learner (FEL) monitoring data; and
- Longitudinal performance data for current ELs, Former English Learners, and never-EL students.

Data are disaggregated by school, grade level, proficiency level, language domain, and student subgroup to evaluate language acquisition, academic achievement, and program effectiveness.

Program Review

Annual program evaluation includes:

- Review of district and school English Learner achievement data;
- Evaluation of WIDA ACCESS growth and English language proficiency outcomes;
- Analysis of implementation fidelity for Individual English Learner Plans (I-ELPs), accommodations, and instructional services;
- Review of parent engagement activities and communication practices;
- Evaluation of professional learning effectiveness; and

- Review of federal and state accountability indicators and required ALSDE reports.

In addition to reviewing student performance data, the District EL Coordinator conducts annual school support visits to evaluate implementation of the Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP). During these visits, the coordinator collaborates with school administrators, English Learner teachers, and classroom teachers to review implementation of Individual English Learner Plans (I-ELPs), instructional and assessment accommodations, service delivery models, instructional practices, and compliance with federal and state requirements. Classroom observations, document reviews, and collaborative discussions are used to identify strengths, address areas of need, and provide technical assistance to schools.

Stakeholder Engagement

Blount County Schools actively engages stakeholders in evaluating and improving the English Learner Program.

Stakeholder input is gathered through:

- English Learner Advisory Committee meetings;
- Teacher and administrator feedback;
- Parent and family surveys;
- Title I and family engagement activities;
- School leadership discussions; and
- District continuous improvement meetings.

Feedback is used to identify program strengths, determine areas for improvement, and guide future planning.

B. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The English Learner Program is integrated into the district's continuous improvement framework and follows the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle.

Plan

- Analyze student performance and program evaluation data.
- Establish goals for English language proficiency and academic achievement.
- Identify professional learning and resource needs.

Do

- Implement evidence-based instructional practices.
- Provide supplemental English language instruction and instructional coaching.
- Deliver targeted professional learning and support to schools.

Study

- Review WIDA ACCESS results, academic achievement data, classroom observations, and stakeholder feedback.
- Evaluate progress toward district goals and program effectiveness.

Act

- Revise instructional practices, professional learning, staffing, and resource allocation based on evaluation results.
- Update district guidance and school support plans to strengthen implementation of the Language Instruction Educational Program.
- Use findings from annual school support visits, classroom observations, and program reviews to refine instructional practices, determine professional learning priorities, strengthen district guidance, and allocate resources to better support English Learners.

C. ALIGNMENT TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AND ACADEMIC STANDARDS

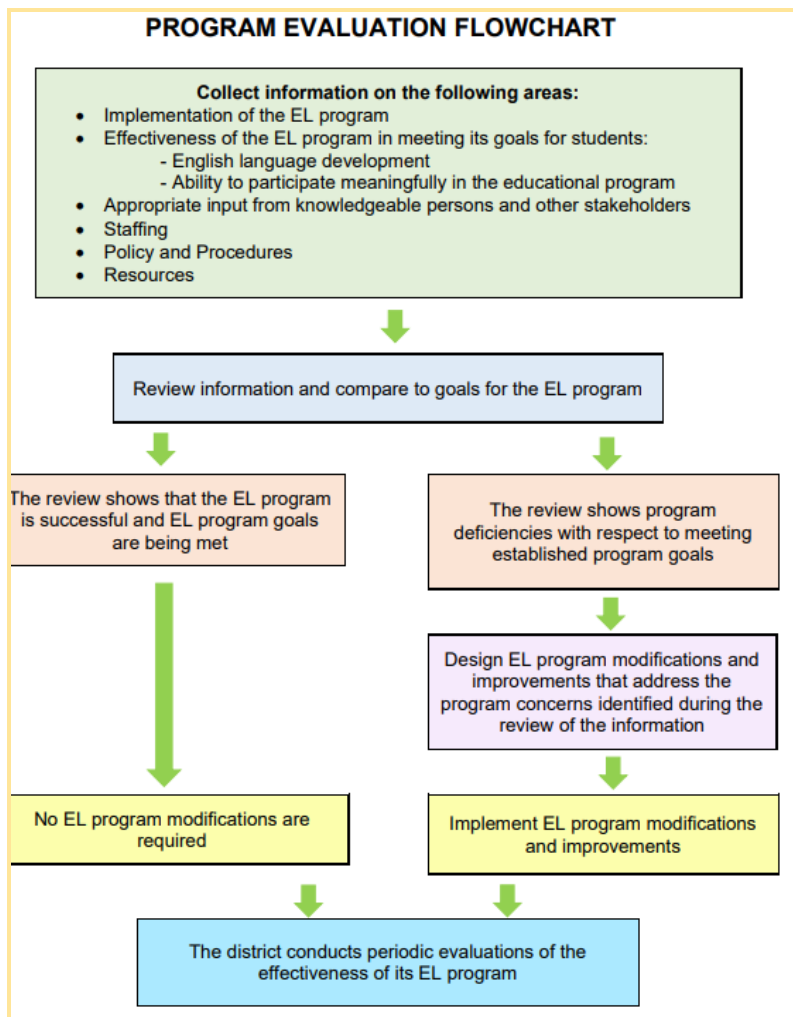
Blount County Schools evaluates the success of its Language Instruction Educational Program by examining student progress toward both English language proficiency and mastery of challenging academic standards.

Instruction, assessment, and program evaluation are aligned to:

- The **WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition**;
- The **Alabama College and Career Readiness Standards**; and
- Current Alabama State Department of Education accountability requirements.

Teachers utilize WIDA language proficiency information, including Proficiency Level Descriptors, Can Do Descriptors, and Language Expectations, to differentiate instruction, monitor language growth, and support students' successful participation in rigorous grade-level coursework.

Figure 1. PROGRAM EVALUATION FLOWCHART



IDENTIFICATION AND REFERRAL FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION AND SERVICES

Blount County Schools ensures that English Learners (ELs) have equitable access to all district programs and services, including intervention services, special education, gifted education, career and technical education, advanced coursework, and extracurricular opportunities. English Learners are referred using the same established procedures as all students while ensuring that language differences are not mistaken for disabilities or barriers to participation.

A. MULTI-TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORTS (MTSS)/ PROBLEM SOLVING TEAM (PST)

English Learners who experience academic, behavioral, or social-emotional difficulties may be referred to the school's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)/Problem Solving Team (PST) after evidence-based instructional interventions and accommodations identified through the Individual English Learner Plan (I-ELP) have been implemented and documented.

An English Learner shall not be referred to the PST solely because of limited English language proficiency. Before referral, the team reviews documentation to ensure that:

- Appropriate instructional and assessment accommodations have been consistently implemented;
- Evidence-based language supports have been provided;
- Student progress has been monitored through multiple sources of data; and

- Limited English proficiency is not the primary factor affecting academic performance.

Whenever possible, an English Learner teacher participates in the PST process to provide expertise regarding second language acquisition and appropriate instructional supports.

B. REFERRAL FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

English Learners are referred for special education evaluation using the same procedures established for all students, in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), while considering the student's linguistic and cultural background.

Language acquisition, cultural differences, interrupted formal education, or limited English proficiency shall not be the basis for a referral or eligibility determination for special education.

When a referral is considered, the evaluation team reviews multiple sources of information, including:

- WIDA Screener and WIDA ACCESS results;
- Classroom performance and progress-monitoring data;
- Documentation of instructional interventions and accommodations;
- Educational history, including previous schooling;
- Parent input and developmental history; and
- Information from the Individual English Learner Plan (I-ELP) and MTSS/PST process.

Evaluations are conducted using valid and reliable assessment procedures that minimize the impact of language and cultural differences. Qualified interpreters and translated materials are provided when appropriate to ensure meaningful participation by students and families.

If an English Learner is determined eligible for special education services, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team and the English Learner teacher collaborate to determine appropriate English language acquisition services, accommodations, and supports. Eligible students may receive both special education services and English language development services concurrently.

C. REFERRAL FOR GIFTED EDUCATION

English Learners have equitable access to gifted education services and may be referred using the district's established gifted referral procedures.

Referral decisions are based upon multiple criteria and shall not rely solely on English language proficiency. When evaluating English Learners for gifted services, the district considers factors such as:

- Academic performance and classroom observations;
- Demonstrated problem-solving and critical thinking skills;
- Creativity, leadership, and advanced learning potential;
- Performance data from multiple assessments; and
- Information provided by parents and teachers.

When appropriate, assessment procedures and evaluation practices are adapted to reduce the effects of language proficiency and cultural differences, consistent with Alabama State Department of Education guidance.

D. PARENT COMMUNICATION

- Meaningful communication with families is an essential component of the referral and evaluation process.
- The Individual English Learner Plan (I-ELP) identifies the family's preferred language for communication and documents how the school will provide meaningful communication with the student and parent or guardian. Blount County Schools provides translated documents and qualified interpretation services, when appropriate, to ensure families understand referral procedures, evaluation results, educational decisions, and available services.
- Parents are informed of their rights throughout the referral, evaluation, eligibility, and service delivery process and are provided opportunities to participate fully in educational decision-making.

E. ONGOING COLLABORATION

The District EL Coordinator, English Learner teachers, school administrators, classroom teachers, special education personnel, gifted specialists, counselors, and other appropriate staff collaborate to ensure that English Learners receive equitable access to district programs and services. Student progress is reviewed regularly, and instructional supports are adjusted based on academic performance, English language development, and individual student needs.

ASSESSMENT

A. PARTICIPATION IN STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

All ELs must participate in the statewide Student Assessment Program for accountability purposes with these exceptions:

- EL students, during their **first 12 months of enrollment in the U.S. schools, will not be required** to participate in the Reading/Language Arts test of the Alabama Comprehensive Assessment Program (ACAP) Summative or the Reading/Language Arts test of the ACAP *Alternate*. Flexibility is not given to EL students in their first 12 months of enrollment in U.S. schools for any of the ACT assessments.
- EL students in their first 12 months of enrollment in U.S. schools **must participate** in the Mathematics and Science tests of ACAP Summative and ACAP Alternate. These students **must participate** in all parts of the PreACT, ACT with Writing and the ACT WorkKeys assessments.

EL students, for which this is not their first 12 months of enrollment in U.S. schools, must participate in all subjects and all tests in the statewide Student Assessment Program. EL students in Grades K-12, regardless of the number of years of enrollment in U.S. schools must participate in Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (WIDA ACCESS), the state-administered English language proficiency test, or the WIDA Alternate ACCESS, the state-administered English language proficiency test for students in Grades 1-12 who have a significant cognitive disability.

All ELs, whether they receive or waive supplemental Title III services, must be tested annually on WIDA ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS. Students in their first 12 months of enrollment in U.S. schools who take WIDA ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS will be counted as participants toward meeting the 95% participation requirement for Reading/Language Arts.

EL students who score a 4.0 or below on the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten, will be exempt from AlaKids and marked as “Not Observed.” See AlaKiDS – Early Childhood Education (alabama.gov)

Participation of EL students in any of the assessments that allow flexibility during the first 12 months of enrollment in U.S. schools, will not result in their scores being used for accountability determination. However,

these students will be counted as participants toward meeting the 95% participation requirement for accountability purposes.

The BCS Test Coordinator will use the Alabama Student Assessment Resource Guide for English Learners to ensure that all educators are adequately informed of the policies and procedures set forth by the ALSDE in order to provide meaningful experiences that will enhance the education of BCS's ELs. All educators who participate in the administration of the WIDA ACCESS, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, and WIDA Screeners are trained on their specific role, including participation in Test Security Training as outlined in The Alabama Comprehensive Assessment Program Integrity Handbook for Test Administrators.

B. MEASURING ENGLISH PROFICIENCY FOR ELS

- The Federal Programs Director and staff will evaluate ESL Compilation Data, monitor state assessment results for each school in the system and the data of disaggregated populations (including ELs and former ELs), and communicate results with other stakeholders.
- The progress of individual students is monitored by the regular classroom teacher, the EL teacher, and/or intervention personnel at least twice every nine weeks.
- The information obtained from EL program reviews and student monitoring is used to make data-driven decisions regarding instructional plans and practices (at the classroom, school, and district levels), professional development, and changes to the EL District Plan. The objective of every decision and change is to ensure that students make yearly interim progress on standardized evaluations and reach the highest possible levels of English language and academic proficiency in the shortest time possible.

C. ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ELS ON STATEWIDE ASSESSMENTS

- Decisions regarding appropriate accommodations for EL students must be made on an individual basis by the I-ELP Committee.
- The I-ELP Committee considers the content and nature of the specific assessment, the level of the student's language proficiency, and the student's documented history of accommodations (twelve-month history) in the regular instructional program when making decisions about appropriate accommodations for state assessments.
- BCS uses the approved Accommodations Checklist found at www.alabamaachieves.org under the Student Assessment tab. (Alabama Student Assessment Program Policies and Procedures for Students of Special Populations).

ACCOUNTABILITY

Blount County Schools holds each school accountable for meeting proficiency and long-term goals for English Learners through a structured system of data monitoring, school-level support, and continuous improvement processes.

A. DATA MONITORING and GOAL SETTING

The LEA uses multiple data sources to track progress toward annual proficiency and long-term growth goals:

- WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS data are reviewed for each EL student, school, and district-wide.
- Cumulative Growth Targets are used to evaluate whether students are on track to reach the proficiency benchmark (4.8 composite) within the state's seven-year expectation.

- BCS Interim Progress Target Reports, ALSDE Compilation Reports, and State ACAP Summative Data for ELs are disaggregated and reviewed to inform instructional planning and support.

Each school uses these data points to set language development and academic achievement goals for EL students in their Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP).

B. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT CYCLE and ACCOUNTABILITY

The LEA ensures school-level engagement with English learner goals through a continuous improvement cycle that includes:

- **District Instructional Team (DIT) Meetings:** During these quarterly meetings, members evaluate the implementation of high-impact instructional practices, analyze student performance data, and monitor progress on Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) goals for all students, with a focused lens on special populations—including English learners. The team identifies trends, discusses barriers, and recommends targeted supports to ensure equity and academic growth across all schools.
- **School-Level Data Meetings:** Schools meet to review individual EL student growth, update instructional plans, and monitor I-ELP implementation.
- **Walkthroughs and Observations:** District and school leaders conduct regular walkthroughs to monitor classroom instruction. Look-fors for teachers of EL students include implementation of SDAIE strategies, use of WIDA ELP standards, and differentiation for language proficiency levels. Feedback is provided to teachers and school leaders to support continuous improvement.
- **CIP Monitoring and Feedback:** The Federal Programs team reviews each school's CIP to ensure that EL goals are specific, measurable, and based on disaggregated student data. Schools receive feedback and are required to revise goals or actions if they do not demonstrate sufficient attention to EL needs.

C. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT and SUPPORT

To support accountability and improvement, Blount County Schools provides:

- Annual professional development on SDAIE strategies, WIDA integration, and data use for EL student growth.
- Ongoing ELlevation training to ensure teachers know how to use Can-Do Descriptors, I-ELPs, and language level data to guide instruction.
- Targeted coaching for schools with persistent achievement gaps among ELs.

D. FORMAL PROGRAM EVALUATION

In addition to ongoing monitoring, the LEA compiles an annual ESL Program Evaluation Report (aligned to the ALSDE Compilation Report) summarizing ACCESS growth, proficiency rates, reclassification data, and EL performance on state assessments. This report is reviewed with the BCS Federal Programs Advisory Committee and informs adjustments to district-wide EL strategies.

PARENT, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In accordance with federal requirements Blount County Schools (BCS) ensures that parents of English Learners (ELs) receive timely, accurate information in a language they can understand, both orally and in writing.

BCS uses the Home Language Survey to identify students who may be English Learners. Within 30 days of the start of the school year—or within 10 days of enrollment during the school year—parents of identified EL students receive a Parent Notification Letter that includes:

- The reason for their child's identification as an English Learner.

- The child's current English proficiency level and how it was determined (WIDA Screener or ACCESS).
- The academic achievement level of the child.
- A description of the English Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP) and how it will support English acquisition and academic growth.
- The methods of instruction used, including any supplemental Title III services the student is eligible for (e.g., push-in, pull-out instruction).
- The expected timeline and exit criteria for English language proficiency (ACCESS score of 4.8 composite).
- How the program supports students with disabilities, if applicable.
- Information about parent rights, including the right to decline participation in supplemental Title III services.

BCS distinguishes core language instruction (a civil rights obligation) from supplemental Title III services, which are federally funded, add-on supports. Parents have the right to opt out of supplemental Title III services, but they cannot waive the district's legal obligation to provide equitable access to content and language instruction under civil rights law. It is important that parents understand this distinction and that the LEA document their choices annually.

All parent communications are translated using tools such as the ELLevation platform and TransAct, which provide documents in over 35 languages. For languages not readily available, BCS arranges for oral interpretation or individualized translation through community partners or interpreters. No student is delayed in services due to language barriers in communication with the family.

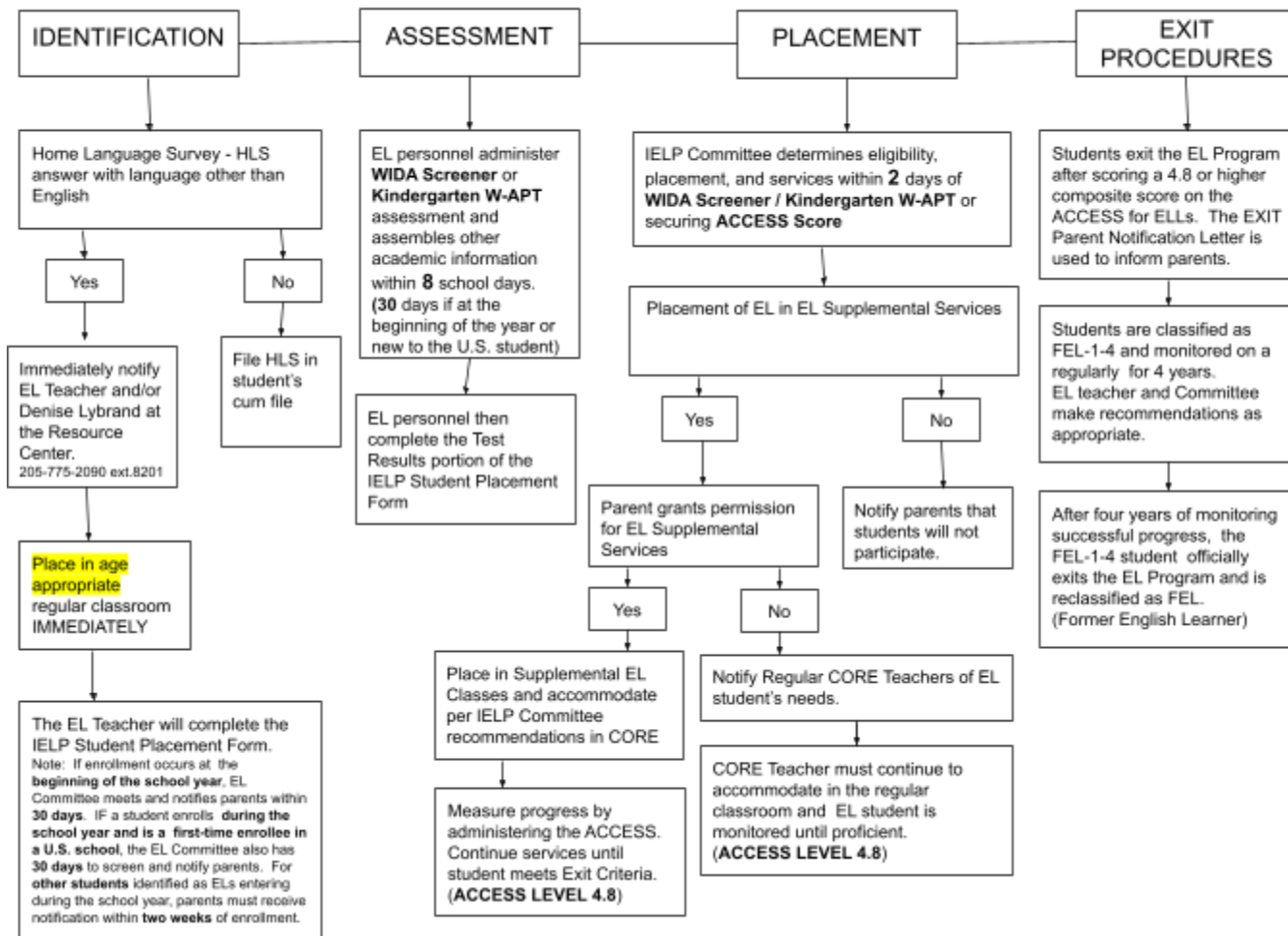
APPENDIX

A. KEY TERMS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

- **WIDA ACCESS:** Standards-based, criterion referenced English language proficiency test. It assesses social and instructional English as well as the language associated with language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies within the school context across the four language domains.
- **BICS:** Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills. The language ability required for verbal face-to-face communication. Students are generally proficient in BICS in 1-2 years.
- **CALP:** Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency. The language ability required for academic achievement. Students are generally proficient in CALP in 5-7 years.
- **EL:** English learner. Student who is not yet proficient in English.
- **ELD:** English Language Development. Program of instruction for English learners
- **ESL:** English as a Second Language. Program of instruction for English learners
- **ELP:** English proficiency level
- **FEL:** Former English learner; monitored for four years.
- **HQIA:** High-Quality Instruction and Assessment
- **Language Dominance:** The measurement of the degree of bilingualism, which implies a comparison of the proficiencies in two or more languages.
- **Language Proficiency:** The degree to which the student exhibits control over the use of language, including the measurement of expressive and receptive language skills in the areas of phonology, syntax, vocabulary, and semantics and including the areas of pragmatics or language use within various domains or social circumstances. Proficiency in a language is judged independently and does not imply a lack of proficiency in another language.
- **LEP:** Limited-English-proficient. No longer used. (See EL)
- **LIEP:** Language Instruction Educational Program
- **L1:** Student's native language
- **L2:** Student's second language (possibly more than two languages).
- **ML:** Multilingual learner
- **NOMPHLOTE:** National Origin Minority whose Primary Home Language is Other Than English: A student whose native language is other than English and who does NOT qualify for EL services. ❖ **SEI:** Structured English Immersion. Program of instruction for English learners
- **WIDA™ ELD Standards:** Rigorous academic language standards provided by WIDA™ for the purposes of guiding social and academic content instruction through the four domains of language: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, at the ELs' English language proficiency levels.
- **I-ELP:** An individualized EL language plan for an EL student.
- **WIDA MODEL:** An EL benchmark assessment
- **WIDA Screener Online:** English language proficiency assessment given to students in grades 1-12 to help identify and designate English learners
- **WIDA:** Alabama is a part of the WIDA™ consortium and adopted the WIDA™ Consortium's ELD Standards for Pre-Kindergarten–Grade 12 encompass:
 - Social and Instructional language
 - Language for Language Arts
 - Language for Mathematics
 - Language for Science
 - Language for Social Studies

B. ESL FLOWCHART

ESL FLOW CHART



C. CODING DEFINITIONS

Codes for State Assessments	PowerSchool Codes	Definitions of Codes
Non-ELs	0	Students whose home language surveys do <i>not</i> indicate a language other than English spoken in the home. These are <i>not</i> students classified as NOMPLOTE
EL-1 EL Year 1	1	Limited English Proficient students who are in their first year in a U.S. school.
EL-2 EL Year 2 or more	2	Limited English Proficient students who are in their second year or more in a U.S. school.
FEL-1 1st Year Monitoring	3	Students who have exited the ESL program and are in their first year of systematic monitoring. These students no longer take ACCESS for ELLs® English Language Proficiency test.
FEL-2 2nd Year Monitoring	4	Students who have exited the ESL program and are in their second year of systematic monitoring. These students no longer take ACCESS for ELLs®.
FEL-3 3rd Year Monitoring	8	Students who have exited the ESL program and are in their third year of systematic monitoring. These students no longer take ACCESS for ELLs®.
FEL-4 4th Year Monitoring	9	Students who have exited the ESL program and are in their fourth year of systematic monitoring. These students no longer take ACCESS for ELLs®.
FEL	5	Former Limited English Proficient students who have successfully completed two years of monitoring and are no longer LEP.
EL Waived Services	6	Students who are LEP yet parents have refused supplemental Title III / Title I services.
NOM PHLOTE	7	National Origin Minority Student Whose Primary Home Language is Other Than English. These students have a non-English language background but are fluent in English and do not require ESL services. Parents, however, may need information in their home language.

NOTE: English learners whose parents have waived supplemental Title III services will still be coded in PowerSchool as English learners. These students should have an additional entry into the “EL Waived Title III Services” field in PowerSchool indicating their waiver option. These students must be assessed on the ACCESS for ELLs English proficiency test until they are proficient in English with a composite score of 4.8 or above.