

**LEA COMPREHENSIVE ENGLISH LEARNER
DISTRICT PLAN
Madison County Schools
2026-2027**

Section A: Theory and Goals

The LEA's educational theory and goals for its program of services – to improve the education of English learners by assisting the children to learn English and meet the challenging state academic standards. (Sec. 3102)

MISSION STATEMENT

Madison County School System ELs will have equitable access to high-quality, rigorous instruction designed within a systematic framework built on values and respect for students' cultures and languages and a socially and emotionally supportive learning environment, empowering ELs to excel socially, academically, and linguistically and lead productive lives.

The goals of the Madison County ESL Program are:

- To advance student English language acquisition
- For students to attain English language proficiency
- To successfully meet yearly AL state and Title III EL goals
- For students to achieve at high levels in core academic subjects
- To develop high-quality language instruction educational programs
- To use the coaching/partnership model to provide EL professional development
- To promote parental and community involvement
- To advocate for English learners
- To support English Learner students and families

Core ESL Program: Content-Based

Language minority students from different language backgrounds are in general education classes in which teachers use English as the medium for providing content area instruction and adapt language delivery to the proficiency level of the students. Teachers provide appropriate supports and accommodations to enable students to access the subject area content at grade level, while students are learning English. Such supports may include word banks and sentence frames, the support of a peer, visual support, and alternative forms of tests and assessments that allow ELs to show their mastery of the content given their current level of English proficiency. The acquisition of English is one of the goals of content-based programs; however, instruction focuses on content rather than language.

Supplemental English instruction is delivered using pull-out small group instruction, push-in classroom support, and/or EL Tutoring. The goals of each include English language acquisition, equitable access to the content, and social and emotional support.

Supplemental Pull-Out

Students leave their mainstream classroom to receive language acquisition instruction that focuses on grammar, vocabulary, communication skills, and cultural literacy. The emphasis is on language learning not academic content tutoring.

Supplemental Push-In

ESL specialists go into the classroom to assist students with academic instruction and/or team with the classroom teacher in delivering content lessons and accommodations to ensure content is accessible.

EL Tutoring

Contracted EL tutors provide supplemental support for EL students to assist with classroom assignments, projects, and related studies. The emphasis is on current academic standards in the general education

classroom and language acquisition activities. Academic vocabulary is taught explicitly to help front-load for classroom lessons.

The WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards are used to guide instruction and determine supplemental services provided.

Students are placed in the ESL Program based on their performance on an English language proficiency test of listening, speaking, writing, reading, and comprehension (WIDA Screener for Kindergarten, WIDA Screener Online, or ACCESS) as outlined by the ALSDE Resource Guide.

The ESL teacher along with the EL Committee determines services, support, and individualized learning plans for ELs who qualify. The team considers ACCESS scores, classroom achievement, test data, and teacher recommendations when making this decision.

All LEP students served by the system's ESL Program participate in every aspect of the total school program. They receive services from the library, counseling, art, music, physical education, advanced placement / gifted, special education programs, and the total school program on the same basis as English-speaking students.

Section B: Identification and Placement Procedures

1) Procedures for identifying the EL Advisory Committee

EL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Madison County Schools establishes an EL Advisory Committee annually for the purpose of program needs, assessment, evaluation, and for developing the Comprehensive EL Plan. The EL Advisory Committee makes recommendations to the district regarding the ESL program, as well as recommendations regarding:

- Developing elements of the Language Instruction Educational Program
- Providing high-quality professional development for staff
- Facilitating successful parental involvement programs to further student success
- Budgeting of state, local, and federal funds
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the Language Instruction Educational Program

The Madison County EL Advisory Committee is comprised of ESL Specialists, district administrators and specialists, teachers, EL parents, and community stakeholders. The committee is selected by reviewing the needs and goals of the ESL Program, along with identified advocates and stakeholders for the EL population. The committee is selected to ensure a wide range of community stakeholders are included in the development of the program. The Advisory Committee reviews the efficacy of the Madison County ESL Program and implements continuous improvement measures.

The Madison County Comprehensive District English Learner Plan and Resource Guide is reviewed and monitored throughout the school year. Implementation of the plan is reviewed periodically at district Advisory Committee meetings and ESL team meetings. Goals and progress are communicated to the faculty, parents, students, and stakeholders through staff meetings, professional development, district leadership meetings, emails, and newsletters for a shared commitment to a quality education for all students in the Madison County School System.

Copies of the Madison County Comprehensive District English Learner Plan and Resource Guide are located on the district website.

The EL Advisory Committee for 2026-2027 is comprised of the following members:

Central Office Administrators, Directors, and Resource Specialists

Linda Arredondo
Tanya Staples
Yolanda Wright
Jennifer Fanning
Ginger Henshaw

Administrators

Jeff Dunnavant
Latoya Patton
Amber Staggs

School counselors

Dr. William Heard
Allison MacKenzie
Stephanie Wheeler

Parents & Community representatives

Jonathan Anderson
Kate O'Neal

Support Staff

Somer McElyea
Mallory Mills
Carmen Dixon
Kristi Jones

Social Workers

Presley Cox

ESL Specialists

Tatiana Amis
Rachna Bansal
Amy Bergeson
Kim Darnell
Sara Elledge
Angelica Garcia
Kendra Harper
Adriana Henson
Marissa Lopez
Amy McConnell
Heather Ray
Amanda Bedingfield
Erin Stults
Sarah Threlkeld
Hope Watkins
Susan Young

The EL Advisory Council convenes yearly to review, revise, and update the EL Plan for the district. The Federal Programs Resource Specialist facilitates the work of the EL Advisory Council and monitors the program throughout the school year working collaboratively with the local school administrators, district administrators, general education teachers, ESL Specialists, community members, parents, students, and other appropriate stakeholders. The Federal Programs Resource Specialist is responsible for scheduling the annual committee review. The LEA's procedure for identifying the members of the EL Advisory Council involves working with school leadership teams and ESL Specialists to ensure representation from each school and from various departments involved in educating EL students. The committee members are responsible for attending the meetings, sharing ideas, and giving input. Members are also encouraged to communicate with the ELAC throughout the school year to provide input and suggestions related to program goals.

2) Methods for identification, placement, and assessment

Program Placement

ELs must be identified at the time of enrollment through a Home Language Survey (HLS) administered during the registration process in PowerSchool Enrollment. The HLS is a requirement for every student entering schools in Alabama. If the HLS indicates the use of a language other than English by the student or any individual in the home, the student is considered a potential EL, and a screener must be used to determine the student's English language proficiency level.

- For students enrolled by the beginning of the school year, the district must notify parents of their child's English learner identification and eligibility for participation in the language development program **within 30 calendar days** after the beginning of the district's school year.
- If a student enrolls during the school year and is a first-time enrollee in a U.S. school, then the LEA has **30 days to screen and notify parents**.
- For other students identified as English learners entering during the school year, parents must receive notification of language instruction program eligibility **within two weeks of enrollment**.

When **all responses** on the HLS indicate that English is the only language used by the student and the individuals in the home, then the student is considered an English-only speaker without the need for EL services.

Procedures and methods for identifying, placing, and assessing students to be included in the English language instruction educational program are followed according to the ALSDE Student Assessment Resource Guide for English Learners.

The systematic procedure for the identification of possible LEP students is outlined below:

1. During the enrollment process, *every* parent or student will complete the Home Language Survey (HLS) that is part of the MCBOE registration form either in hard copy or through PowerSchool online registration.
2. The MCBOE staff member who collects the enrollment information will immediately refer all students who indicate a language other than English on the Home Language Survey to the ESL teacher by emailing the ESL teacher. This includes students who appear to be fluent in English as well as foreign exchange students.
3. In addition to this procedure, Madison County Schools uses online enrollment through PowerSchools and the Federal Programs Department is flagged electronically for any student with a positive Home Language Survey. The Federal Programs Secretary alerts the appropriate ESL Teacher when a student is enrolled with a positive HLS as a double protective measure to ensure timely screening.
4. Completed HLS are filed in each student's cumulative folder.
5. The following methods of screening and results indicate placement in the ESL Program as outlined in the chart below. This was updated February 2024 from the Alabama State Department of Education.

The following guidelines determine eligibility for placement in the English language instruction educational program:

Qualifying Scores for Potential ELs

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 1st 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
2nd semester of Grade 1 through Grade 12	Reading, Listening, Writing, Speaking	Less than 5.0	5.0 or higher

Note: In cases where students score too high and do not qualify for services (NOMPHLOTE) but are experiencing difficulty with language in the classroom, it may be necessary to reassess the student. It is permissible to readminister the initial screener to the student, with the parent/guardian(s) permission, in order to determine if the student does qualify to receive services.

After the determination is made to place the student in the ESL Program, the ESL teacher will notify parents. Madison County ESL Program utilizes the Ellevation online platform to generate federally compliant parent notification letters. These state-compliant parent notification letters are auto-filled with student data and transadapted into 40+ languages.

According to ESEA section 1112(3)(A) Title III requirements, districts must, not later than 30 days after the beginning of the school year, or two weeks if later in the school year, provide notification to parent(s) of ELs identified for participation in an English language instruction educational program of:

1. The reasons for the identification.
2. The child's level of English proficiency.
 - a. How such level was assessed.
 - b. The status of the child's academic achievement.
3. The method of instruction used in the program.
4. How the program will meet the educational strengths and needs of the child.
5. How the program will specifically help their child learn English and meet age-appropriate academic achievement standards for grade promotion and graduation.
6. The specific exit requirements for such program, expected rate of transition from such program into the regular education classroom, and the expected rate of graduation from secondary school.
7. In the case of a child with a disability, how the program meets the objectives of the individualized education program of the child.
8. Information pertaining to parental rights that includes written guidance detailing:

- The right of the parents to have their child immediately removed from supplemental Title III programs upon request.
- The options that parents have to decline to enroll their child in such supplemental Title III programs or to choose another program or method of instruction if available.
- The various programs and methods of instruction if more than one program or method is offered by the eligible entity

In Madison County Schools, there are no barriers to enrollment for language minority students. The “No Barriers to Enrollment” policies are shared annually with district administrators and local school registrar personnel. Schools are made aware that students may be enrolled at any school within the district regardless of ability to produce any or all of the following items:

- A birth certificate
- Immunization records
- Proof of citizenship
- A social security number
- Legal custody documentation signed by a judge

Please refer to the Madison County School Board Policies at the website below regarding enrollment procedures:

<https://www.mcassk12.org/our-district/board-of-education/board-policies>

7. Instructional Program

Policy 7.12: Homeless, Migratory, Immigrant, Foster Care and ELL Enrollment/Education

Parents are provided interpreting services per parent request during registration to ensure parents understand the registration process and HLS questions.

EL Students are placed in age-appropriate grades using federal and state guidelines. Every school must identify, assess for English language proficiency, and place appropriately, all EL students who need language acquisition and modified instruction. When placing a student in an EL instructional educational program, Madison County Schools will ensure that parents are notified in writing regarding their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for participation in the program. Parents have the right to refuse supplemental services at any time and have their child immediately removed from the Title III Program Supplemental Services. If parents/guardians wish to waive ESL Program Supplemental Services, the child will continue receiving support only in the regular classroom through the Madison County Schools’ core instructional program. All communication happens with parents in a language they can understand, based on parent request.

The ALSDE Alternate Screening Checklist

The purpose of the Alternate Screening Checklist is to assist educators and families in the decision-making process for those potential English learner (EL) students who cannot meaningfully access the *WIDA Screener for Kindergarten* or *WIDA Screener Online*. (or if applicable WIDA Screener Paper). These screening assessments may not be appropriate for some students with disabilities. Potential EL students who may benefit from the Alternate Screening Checklist are:

- Students who have an IEP that indicates a significant cognitive disability
- Students who do not have an IEP, but will be evaluated by Special Education staff

If a potential EL student does not have an IEP that indicates a significant cognitive disability but is considered to be a student who will require extensive supports, the Special Education and English as a Second Language (ESL) staff, in order to meet the 30-day deadline for screening potential EL students, or 10-day deadline if enrollment is after the first day of school, must have meaningful consultation to determine the possible use of the Alternate Screening Checklist. This decision should be made, if there is agreement, that the student requires substantial supports and could not, even with accommodations, progress fully through any of the available screeners.

Provisional Identification for Potential English Learner Students

In an effort to assist school districts in Alabama in the identification of potential ELs during a time of extended school closures and/or during a time when remote learning is an option for the district, the ALSDE Provisional Identification Plan for Potential English Learner Students will be implemented. This plan is intended to guide school staff, who have been assigned the responsibility of identifying potential EL students, to gather enough information from the parents, guardians, and students to be able to make a provisional determination of placement so that EL students may receive language support services. This plan does not negate the administration of the state's screening assessments (i.e., *WIDA Screener for Kindergarten* or *WIDA Screener Online*). When school resumes, EL students who were either identified or not identified as EL via provisional process will be administered these formal screening assessments. For students who have selected the remote learning option and are attending school virtually, the district must determine a date, time, and location that is suitable for the student and allows for a safe process in which to administer the formal screening instrument. EL students who have been provisionally identified will be coded in the SIS until a formal screening assessment is administered. SIS code will be adjusted as necessary to reflect the results of the formal screening at that time. Documentation from this provisional plan must be submitted to the System Test Coordinator or the EL Coordinator and kept on file until the formal screening assessment is administered once the student returns to school.

During the time when Alabama schools are closed and continuity of services are being provided remotely, face-to-face screening of potential English learners (ELs) is not possible. In the event ELs enroll, and a language other than English has been indicated on the Home Language Survey (HLS), the following procedure will be used. This process does not replace the formal identification process when face-to-face screening is possible. It is simply to be used in order to meet the requirement of screening potential ELs upon enrollment. Once school resumes, and as soon as possible, formal screening with the *WIDA Screener for Kindergarten* or *WIDA Screener Online* must take place for any student who has been given provisional EL status.

1. Review the HLS:
 - a. Must be reviewed by an ESL Specialist/coordinator or other staff member assigned this responsibility.
 - b. If the HLS indicates a language other than English for any question, a family interview must be conducted to determine if the student is a potential EL.
 - c. The interview will be conducted by phone or (Webex).
2. Family Interview for Student Information:
 - a. Must be conducted by an ESL Specialist/coordinator or other staff member assigned this responsibility.
 - b. May require an interpreter. Interpreters may be used to ask the questions below.

Provisional Identification and Parent Notification

The system must inform the parent/guardian(s) of the provisional status of the student as an EL OR if the student was NOT IDENTIFIED as an EL. Additionally, the parent/guardian(s) must be provided with a description of the provisional placement and EL services made available to their child. Services will be provided in a manner that is safe for both the student and the educator and in accordance with the LEA's guidance on remote learning.

Once schools have reopened for normal operations, systems will communicate to parents the results of the administration of the *WIDA Screener for Kindergarten* or *WIDA Screener Online*.

Provisional Identification and Additional Considerations

- If a student is unable to complete the interview process (e.g. because of a disability, inability to understand English, or refusal), then the determination of EL status must be made based on the remaining available evidence gathered from the following:
 - HLS
 - Family Interview Questions for Parent/Guardian
 - Academic records review, if possible

- Test scores of any kind, if applicable
- If reasonable evidence of English proficiency cannot be established based on those sources, then the student should be provisionally identified as an EL and receive services until formal screening can be completed.
- Generally, a student who easily communicates at a “High Level” is not likely to qualify for EL status and should not be provisionally identified as an EL.
- The interviewer should consider:
 - Under-Identification: students who are most likely not English proficient but *seem* to be (false positives). In this case, expectations should be set higher and questions modified in order to capture all that you can about the student’s language skills, so as not to mis-identify.
- Regardless of whether a student is provisionally identified as an EL or not, the formal identification process must be completed once school resumes and face-to-face screening with the *WIDA Screener for Kindergarten* or *WIDA Screener Online* is possible. This also includes students who were not provisionally identified. All potential ELs, who were identified as a provisional EL or were not identified as a provisional EL, must be administered the *WIDA Screener for Kindergarten* or *WIDA Screener Online* as soon as possible.
- The student is not officially identified in the system’s student information system (SIS) until the identification process is completed by administering the *WIDA Screener for Kindergarten* or *WIDA Screener Online*.
- The Local Education Agency **MUST ensure** that students who are given a provisional status assignment (identified as provisional EL or provisional non-EL) be documented by some means (e.g. records kept at the Central Office by the System Test Coordinator or EL Coordinator) so that once school resumes, all students can be formally screened with the *WIDA Screener for Kindergarten* or *WIDA Screener Online*.

WIDA ACCESS

All EL students in MCSS in grades K-12, regardless of the number of years of enrollment in U.S. schools, **must** participate in *WIDA Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (WIDA ACCESS)*, the state-administered English language proficiency test, or *Alternate WIDA ACCESS*. Participation in one of these English language acquisition assessments, which is required, will satisfy the reading participation requirement for accountability purposes for these students.

3) Methods and procedures for exiting students from the LIEP and for monitoring progress

EXIT REQUIREMENTS

All ELs in Grades K-12 participate in the annual ELP assessment (WIDA ACCESS). Students who reach an overall composite of 4.8 or higher in the reading, writing, listening, and speaking domains on the WIDA ACCESS annual assessment exit from services and become former ELs on monitoring status for 4 academic years.

MONITORING EXITED STUDENTS

Students who make the required score to exit from ESL services are placed on monitoring status for four academic years. EL stakeholders and teachers communicate at least once each nine weeks during the first year and at least once each semester during consecutive years to ensure that the exited student is functioning successfully in the mainstream classroom. Students are classified as Former English Learners Monitoring Years 1-4 (FEL-1-4) during this monitoring period. Upon successful completion of four years of monitoring, ELs are classified Former English Learner (FEL).

During monitoring, students who perform poorly in their academic courses and standardized tests may be considered for re-entry into the ESL Program and receive ESL services. If the EL committee believes the student is struggling due to language, the student can be re-screened using the *WIDA Screener for Kindergarten* or *WIDA Screener Online*. If the student is not proficient, he or she will re-enter the ESL Program if the team agrees re-entry into the program is needed. Any students who have re-entered the program will be classified as “LEP2” and will go through the exiting procedures described above.

Students are re-evaluated on an annual basis. The I-ELP Committee reviews multiple methods for evaluating progress such as WIDA ACCESS results, state reading and math assessments results, portfolios, anecdotal records, teacher recommendations, iReady reading and math assessment results, and other appropriate data. EL students remain eligible for EL service until they meet all criteria for exit from the ESL Program.

EXIT AND TRANSITION CRITERIA

A student's exit from the EL instructional program should be considered tentative, and should be followed by periodic review of his or her progress. Title III of Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 mandates monitoring for four (4) years so that achievement data reported for those recently-exited students can be included in the reports required of Title III subgrantees.

Madison County School System will monitor and evaluate student progress to determine if a student requires re-entry into the program and will provide accommodations in the event that the student needs additional support in the all-English general education environment.

EL students who meet the exit criteria and are designated as Former English Learner students (FEL) are monitored for four (4) years. EL students who do not meet the exit criteria outlined will be recommended for continuing services. Changes in the EL instructional program will be documented in the student's school I-ELP Plan.

The ESL Specialists will inform the parents of any change in status. Parent letters are mailed home in parent native languages. These federally compliant letters are generated through the Ellevation state-wide platform. Each letter will be filed in the student's EL file at the district.

The data is reviewed by the local school's I-ELP Committee. The committee will determine if re-entry into the ESL Program is required. The monitoring forms will be distributed by ESL Specialists through Google Forms and maintained by the ESL Specialists.

Section C: Programs and Instruction

1) Programs and activities that will be developed, implemented, and administered to ensure ELs acquire academic language as part of the core LIEP

COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Every school year, MCSS completes an English Learner Program Plan and subsequent Needs Assessment Evaluation.

The EL Advisory Committee considers data from the English Learner Program Evaluation, ACCESS reports, and other testing data and informal feedback from schools to inform goals for the next year and assess progress in the previous year.

The Madison County school district covers a large geographic area with suburban and rural areas. The district has 30 schools with an area of 806 square miles. There are sixteen full-time certified ESL teachers and no EL instructional assistants. Due to a large influx of EL students and ESL teacher caseload numbers, contracted tutors have been budgeted as an expenditure. In Madison County Schools 2026-2027 school year, there are approximately 661 active English Learner students served in the program. The students are spread out throughout the district and are more concentrated on the West side of the district, particularly in the Sparkman Feeder Pattern, however significant growth has been seen in the Hazel Green Feeder Pattern as well.

The Madison County Schools ESL Program focuses on developing literacy in English using programs that are compatible with the large geographical area and small EL population. English Learners are provided content-based English instruction from ESL and content teachers with supplemental English Language Development (ELD) pull-out from ESL teachers. There is also an opportunity for additional ELD instruction with push-in from the ESL teachers.

The ESL teachers also serve as EL resource personnel. The AL CCRS and the WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards are used to guide instruction and evaluate student progress.

A case for a Content-Based ESL Program by the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) <http://carla.umn.edu/cobaltt/CBI.html>

“Natural language acquisition occurs in context; natural language is never learned divorced from meaning, and content-based instruction provides a context for meaningful communication to occur (Curtain, 1995; Met, 1991); second language acquisition increases with content-based language instruction, because students learn language best when there is an emphasis on relevant, meaningful content rather than on the language itself; ‘People do not learn languages and then use them, but learn languages by using them’ (GUGD website) [see Georgetown stats]; however, both form and meaning are important and are not readily separable in language learning (e.g., Lightbown & Spada, 1993; Met, 1991; Wells, 1994).”

“Cummins’ (1981) notion of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) as contrasted with Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) shows that students need to be learning content while they are developing CALP; there is not enough time to separate language and content learning; postponing content instruction while students develop more advanced (academic) language is not only impractical, but it also ignores students’ needs, interests, and cognitive levels (consider severe time constraints on language study prescribed by U.S. higher education, Byrnes, 2000).”

Our district conducts a comprehensive needs assessment that drives the process of selecting our ESL Program. When conducting a needs assessment, various points of data were collected and analyzed to help inform program selection (e.g. WIDA ACCESS test scores, student academic assessment scores, parent surveys, teacher surveys, district overall staffing and instructional trends, etc.). Individual school data and needs are analyzed by the ESL Resource Specialist and ESL Specialists to identify trends and assess district-wide needs for the district EL Needs Assessment.

Such comprehensive district needs assessment allows our district to set data-driven goals and strategies for meeting those goals. Madison County Schools English Learner Plan is developed each year based on results of data analysis from comprehensive needs assessment. The plan is updated annually based on these results. The ESL program staff develops the original draft of the EL plan and submits it to the EL Advisory Committee for review and recommendations. It is then presented to the district superintendent for approval. Any and all changes are referred back to the EL Advisory Council for review.

The ESL team reviews the needs assessment, current instructional evidence-based practices, and research, and selects the core program (Language Instruction Educational Program or LIEP) for the district, based on the results of the needs assessment. The core ESL Program is included in the district EL plan.

Based on the needs assessment, the district selected English as a Second Language Program as the core program (Language Instruction Educational Program or LIEP) for the district. This core ESL Program is designed to ensure different instructional pathways needed for various needs of diverse EL learners are effective and sufficient for ELs to be successful in the classroom settings where English is the language of instruction.

English as a Second Language (ESL) is a program of techniques, methodology, and special curriculum designed to teach ELs explicitly about the English language, including the academic vocabulary needed to access content instruction, and to develop their English language proficiency in all four language domains (i.e., speaking, listening, reading, and writing). ESL programs teach the following: conversational English, grammar, reading, listening comprehension, writing and vocabulary.

This involves teaching of grade-level subject matter in English in ways that are comprehensible and engage students academically, while also promoting English language development. In addition to the requirement of skills in both English development and subject-specific instruction, clearly defined language and content objectives, modified curriculum, supplementary materials, and alternative assessments must be present (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2000).

Below are the key components of the district core ESL Program:

- District EL Compliance Training
- Integration of Alabama College and Career Readiness Standards and the WIDA ELP Standards
- Digital Tools Supporting WIDA ELP Standards and Instruction
- Collaborative ESL Professional Development
- English as a Second Language Program - Pull-out English Language Development Model
- Support and academic guidance for English Learner parents and families (EL and Immigrant Parents)

2) How the LIEP will ensure that ELs develop English proficiency

-How data is used to improve the rate of language acquisition for ELs

-How the LEA supports each school with respect to continuous improvement practices and specific professional development

-How World-class Instructional Design and Assessment English language proficiency (WIDA ELP) standards are integrated into the curriculum

PRACTICE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND USE OF DATA

The Madison County EL Advisory Committee (ELAC) annually reviews district EL student data, and the district ESL team regularly reviews individual EL student data along with school-site student data for trends. Annually, MCSS completes the Main EL Data Report. Madison County Schools focus on Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to review individual EL student data. The district assessment team and local schools review data from the EL sub-group.

SUPPORT FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Every school in the district has an ESL teacher assigned to support the EL students, classroom teachers, and other school personnel. The ESL teachers work with administrators, classroom teachers, and other resource personnel to improve the English language learning of the LEP students. ESL teachers provide EL professional development for every teacher with an EL student, grade levels, departments, and whole schools. The ESL Department routinely seeks opportunities for department training, general education teacher training, and school-wide initiatives to ensure continuous improvement and best practices for EL instruction.

WIDA ELP STANDARDS

All teachers with EL students use the WIDA ELP standards to inform their instruction of English Learners. ESL teachers and content teachers collaborate to integrate the WIDA ELP standards into the curriculum.

Madison County Schools follows ALSDE and WIDA guidelines utilizing the WIDA English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards that are designed to assess the progress of children in attaining English proficiency, including a child's level of comprehension in the four recognized domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

All Madison County Schools EL students participate in WIDA ACCESS that is administered annually to all English language learners in Alabama. This standards-based, criterion referenced English language proficiency test measures English language learners' social and academic proficiency and progress in English providing valid language acquisition data that is used in all planning and instruction to improve the rate of language acquisition of ELs. WIDA ACCESS meets the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2016 mandate, requiring states to evaluate ELL students in grades K through 12 on their progress in learning English. All students identified as ELs take the WIDA ACCESS, including students whose parents have waived supplemental services. Students who have formally exited language assistance services and are in monitored status are not administered the assessment.

WIDA Screener for Kindergarten or WIDA Screener Online are assessment tools known as "screeners" and are used by the district to measure the English language proficiency of students who have recently arrived in the U.S. or are new to the district and indicated another language on the home language survey (without having a previous record of EL screener or test).

WIDA Screeners help determine whether or not a child is in need of English language instructional services, and if so, at what level. This data is utilized for instruction, family and parent support, as well as professional development based on the level and number of students with different levels of proficiency in English. When any

of the students are identified as immigrant students, they receive additional supplemental instruction, rigorous and evidence-based accommodations, rich family and parent engagement support.

Madison County Schools' ELs speak 39 languages and are a diverse group with personal, cultural, and educational backgrounds that often require instruction that meets their particular needs. It is the expectation in Madison County Schools that all ELs are provided with access to the Alabama CCRS through different instructional pathways to master those standards.

General education teachers and ESL Specialists are offered professional development opportunities and coaching to ensure that the instruction they provide makes content comprehensible, accelerating acquisition of academic language proficiency and literacy. Classroom teachers accommodate instruction and assessments to accommodate the needs of EL students. Appropriate instructional support with the purpose of increasing academic English and achievement includes front-loading content or vocabulary, adequate amount of pre-activities and modeling, access to reading material in their native language for classroom and homework assignments, culturally and linguistically diverse literature, meaningful hands-on activities that contextualize abstract concepts, and use of their native language in writing and speaking activities (even if the teacher does not know this language).

As noted in the ALSDE EL Guide based on Gottlieb (2006), "any modification of instruction that depends on supports to bolster the students' access to meaning" is considered a classroom accommodation. As the ELs attain fluency in English, fewer variations or accommodations in classroom activities are necessary. English Learners simultaneously learn English and content.

All Madison County teachers and administrators receive training on WIDA standards and ELD levels and are offered ongoing PD and support on implementing this knowledge in daily instruction of the ELs. Additional support is provided through Ellevation software offering data access and instructional strategies for all ELs, all online at the teacher's own pace. Professional development is provided by ESL Specialists at local schools as determined by need. By implementing the WIDA ELD standards in the classroom, teachers are able to provide ELs with meaningful access to local curriculum as they progress through the stages of language acquisition.

3) Grading and retention policy and procedures

EL GRADING GUIDELINES

MCSS uses Grading Guidelines from the ALSDE (Alabama State Department of Education) EL Guidebook:

Grading of ELs is on students' level of English proficiency. The teacher ensures this through the continual use of accommodations and assessments according to the students' I-ELP. This complies with the federal law, Every Student Succeeds Act of 2016 (ESSA). Appropriate instruction and differentiation are adjusted according to language proficiency level in order to appropriately accommodate the student. Documentation of these components (lesson plans, work samples, and ongoing assessments) is maintained by the classroom teacher.

Retention of ELs shall not be based solely upon level of English language proficiency (Section I, Part G, Guidelines to Satisfy Legal Requirements of Lau v. Nichols).

Prior to considering retention of an EL, the EL Committee should address the following points:

- What is the student's level of English language proficiency?
- Has an Individual English Language Plan (I-ELP) been implemented to document classroom modifications and student progress?
- To ensure meaningful participation, are classroom accommodations being made in the areas of:
 - Teacher lesson delivery?
 - Activities and assignments?
 - Homework?
 - Formal and informal assessments (e.g., quizzes and tests)?
- How much individual English language development instruction is the student receiving during the school day?
- Has an alternate grading strategy been implemented (e.g., a portfolio, checklist, teacher observation, or rubric assessment on content and language objectives)?

- Has the student's classroom teacher been adequately trained with instruction and assessment strategies specifically designed for students learning English?
- Do the report cards indicate that students were graded according to their I-ELPs? A grade of "F" cannot be assigned to an EL student without full documentation of accommodations having been made to assure the student's full access to the content.

Lack of ability to read and write in English is not the basis for an "F".

Alternate grading is considered for ELs individually as based on proficiency scores, and is noted by the student's individual I-ELP. The decision to use an alternative grading scale is made by the Individualized English Learner Program (I-ELP) development committee on an individual basis.

When content is appropriately accommodated, ELs should be able to demonstrate mastery of the content standards. ELs who fail to master appropriately-accommodated content standards may receive additional support through the RTI / PST process.

If a teacher believes she/he is justified in assigning an EL a failing grade, it must be clearly documented:

- what accommodations were provided,
- what steps were taken to support the student,
- that the ESL Specialist, parents, and/or the school counselor were involved in attempts to support the student, and
- that the lack of English language proficiency was NOT the sole reason for the low/failing grade.

If ELs are failing to make progress or are unable to make progress in content classes, general education teachers should consult with the ESL Specialist or district ESL program staff to ensure all needs of the EL student are met in the most appropriate and effective way.

MCSS utilizes the Retention Guidelines Chart as offered by ALSDE Guidebook as a guide for the I-ELP team to make the retention and promotion decisions for the EL students. All points on the chart, including English language proficiency, full implementation of I-ELP, full implementation of accommodations, significant and sufficient amount of ELD instruction, alternate grading, intense and effective classroom teacher PD, and grading according to I-ELP, have to be addressed with a positive answer for the team to consider retention. Otherwise, retention of the EL student is not recommended.

4) Specific staffing and other resources to be provided to ELs through the program

INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

Madison County Schools employs sixteen full-time certified teachers in the English Language Learner Program. Eleven of the teachers are itinerant and serve more than one school. All of the teachers have ESL certification or endorsements. ESL teachers are hired using the same procedures as all employees in the school system in accordance with MCSS Board Policy. All teachers in the English language instruction education program are fluent in English and are Highly Qualified.

EL staff, content teacher, and administrator Professional Development

One of the MCBOE Title III goals is to provide ongoing, high-quality professional development (PD) for administrators, teachers, and other instructional staff to focus on instructional practices that result in improved student performance. This is achieved through various types of professional development.

ESL teachers are part of a Professional Learning Community (PLC) in which they attend EL Professional Development (PD) and then share the knowledge with the team and other content teachers in the district.

ESL teachers also provide EL PD for each other in addition to using the coaching and partnership model to provide EL PD for content-area teachers and administrators. The MCBOE ESL department routinely collaborates with the Huntsville City Schools, Madison City Schools, and Decatur City Schools ESL teams to share ideas and resources.

During the 2026-2027 school year we will meet in-person seven times for Professional Learning Community collaboration for our ESL Department. Madison County Schools participates in the state EL trainings offered,

AMTESOL, Alabama State Department MEGA Conference, local school professional development and on-site trainings, and EL specific trainings in and out of state. Each year, funds are budgeted for sustained EL professional development.

Staff development opportunities are provided to all teachers, administrators, and other staff in the district through administrative conferences, in-service programs, and regional, state workshops and national conferences. All school staff that impact the education of ELs are encouraged to seek training in how to best support English Learners. There are several options available for training and professional development:

- EL training sessions are provided through local collaborative efforts;
- Graduate level classes in ESL are offered at UAH, UAB, and University of Alabama;
- Workshops are provided by ALSDE ESL Coaches;
- Nation-wide seminars and conferences (BER, WIDA, TESOL) in ESL are offered regularly; and
- On-demand training is offered through the district ESL Program office.

All certified district employees are offered district-level opportunities to engage in EL-focused professional development. Classroom teachers may elect to participate in a faculty-wide training session or participate in online professional development. ESL Specialists and district ESL staff work with school personnel to differentiate and customize EL training based on school and personnel needs. Samples of professional development sessions offered to all staff include:

- Understanding the WIDA Standards
- Accommodating for English Learners
- Culturally Relevant Teaching
- Introduction to the WIDA ELD Standards
- Understanding WIDA ACCESS
- Ellevation software data and Ellevation Strategies

Madison County School district ensures that the EL plan includes job embedded, collaborative professional development opportunities to schools through the district's professional learning communities, collaborative professional development days, district and school professional development sessions, newsletters, online trainings, and after school professional development sessions. MCSS offers opportunities for feedback and emphasizes the importance of this feedback to effectively tailor the ESL program for teachers and administrators to implement the ESL program effectively.

5) Method for collecting and submitting data

The ESL Department is responsible for collecting and submitting data in accordance with the Alabama State Department of Education EL requirements. The ESL Department is aided by secretaries, bookkeepers, registrars, attendance personnel, social workers, counselors, school EL Contacts, and PowerSchool system-level technicians.

The district utilizes PowerSchool student information system and PowerSchool registration as well as Ellevation for housing student information. The Madison County School System uses online registration forms which includes the Home Language Survey (HLS) and other information to procure and maintain applicable data in PowerSchool.

Ongoing training is held to ensure reliable and accurate information is entered in PowerSchool for future academic sessions. Madison County utilizes Ellevation, a software platform designed to help ELL educators manage student data including student I-ELP plans, EL caseload assignments, student progress monitoring, instructional plans, communication, and reports.

EL students are coded in PowerSchool Special Programs (PSSP) by ESL Specialists. The ESL Specialists research EL students and routinely run reports to ensure reliable and accurate data.

For state assessment and accountability purposes, the Alabama State Department of Education uses one coding system for ELs for data collection from PowerSchool. Upon identification and placement, EL students are given such appropriate EL or Immigrant code (per ALSDE guidance) in the PowerSchool program allowing the district and the state to track, monitor, and assess EL students based on the assigned EL codes.

The district ESL Specialists maintain an EL student database of all EL students in Madison County Schools. ESL Specialists collect EL data at each of their assigned schools and submit this data into PowerSchool Special Programs (PSSP). ESL Specialists update EL student information in PSSP as soon as student EL status is assigned or changed following ALSDE guidelines and timelines.

District staff and ESL Specialists have been trained on how to input the correct status for EL students into PowerSchool Special Programs. They are aware that the EL status can be found in the district Student Information System (SIS), as well as in the English Learners (EL) sub profile in PowerSchool Special Programs, and are continuously trained by the district and other appropriate staff on PowerSchool data updates and state guidelines for collecting and submitting data. Each of these individuals makes a concerted effort to check the status of students at the beginning of each school year and periodically throughout the year. The data is updated by the ESL Specialists who check PowerSchool routinely to ensure that new students have been entered with the correct status. Before each data pull by the ALSDE, the ESL Specialists are notified by the Federal Programs Resource Specialist to check the correctness of the status of all EL-coded students.

The initial record collection for new enrollments will be as follows:

For in-state transfers, the PowerSchool Special Programs Data Specialist will request and receive records from the sending school system directly in PSSP and reach out to the sending school to collect additional records from Ellevation that have not been previously stored in PSSP. Once records have been sent, the Data Specialist will pull in the student profile and upload additional records as file-based documents. The Data Specialist will then contact the Federal Programs Registrar and the ESL Specialist at the student's new school alerting them of the transfer and confirming that records and profile information are available for review in PSSP.

For out-of-state transfers, the PowerSchool Special Programs Data Specialist will reach out to the sending school to collect a comprehensive EL file. Once records have been received, the Data Specialist will import the student profile from PowerSchool SIS and upload all records as file-based documents. The Data Specialist will then contact the Federal Programs Registrar and the ESL Specialist at the student's new school alerting them of the transfer and confirming that records are available for review in PSSP and the profile is available for adding EL information. Teachers and Staff have been trained on how to access and review student records for students on their rosters with the ELL icon populating next to their name in PowerSchool Special Programs.

6) Method for evaluating the effectiveness of the program

Madison County Schools evaluates the effectiveness of the ESL Program by using:

WIDA ACCESS results

ACIPs

Standardized test results

Student progress/grade reports

EL Main Data Report

Immigrant Report (when applicable)

Additionally, MCBOE ESL Department reviews the following:

Student participation

Parental involvement

Parent feedback

Community involvement

Content-area teacher involvement

Non-public school EL data (if applicable) to gauge the effectiveness of the program.

The EL Advisory Committee, the Instructional Department, Federal Programs Department, and the ESL Team discuss the above items and evaluate the effectiveness of the Madison County ESL Program. Both English proficiency and progress with state standards are considered when discussing program effectiveness.

The purpose of program evaluation is to provide information for decision-making at several levels in the implementation of the program. The Madison County Schools will use formal and informal data to evaluate the English Learner program.

Each year, the Federal Programs Resource Specialist and EL Committee review student data and program implementation for program effectiveness. During the review, the EL Committee will consider the following:

- Proper identification
- Proper assessment

If appropriate, the following components will be reviewed in order to implement an improvement plan:

- Data collection process
- Instructional strategies and curriculum implementation
- Staff Development
- Reliability and validity of assessment tools
- Student placement

In order to provide the most effective learning environment and support to ELs, the ESL program is committed to a continuous cycle of school learning and improvement. To ensure the ESL Program is successfully attaining identified goals, the ESL Program staff:

- Partners with schools in the creation of continuous improvement plans (CIPs) or school action plans;
- Participates in data meetings, walkthroughs, and RTI meetings;
- Participates in district feeder pattern meetings;
- Conducts an annual program evaluation.

7) Method of identification and referral of ELs to the Special Services Program including Gifted Education

Special education programs and services (including Gifted) are provided in accordance with federal law. Madison County Schools has a relatively small population of ELs who speak 39 different languages. Assessments are given in native languages when available and appropriate. In addition, MCBOE uses non-verbal IQ tests to help determine eligibility. When possible, the Special Education department will use assessments in students' native languages.

Madison County Schools administers the CogAT® (Cognitive Abilities Test) screener to all 2nd grade students to screen for potential gifted identification. Form 8 of the CogAT incorporates the most substantial enhancements to CogAT since the test was first published in 1968. The primary goal of the revisions was to make the tests more accessible to ELL students. Each subtest at grades K to 2 is bilingual/ ELL-friendly. With one exception, all subtests use only pictures; language is used only in the directions.

All students with disabilities are guaranteed the right to a free, appropriate public education; an IEP with related services, if needed, that meet their specific needs; due process; education in the least restrictive environment; tests that are not culturally discriminatory; and a multidisciplinary assessment. Public Law 108-446 requires that state and local education agencies ensure that the students are assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability. The materials and procedures used to assess a limited-English proficient student must be selected and administered to ensure that they measure the extent to which the student has a disability and needs special education, rather than measuring the student's English language skills. The limited-English proficient student with disabilities has a right to the same individual special education services as other students with disabilities.

ELs are eligible to receive services on the same basis as all other students. Care is exercised to ensure that limited-English proficiency is not the basis of a referral. Madison County Schools follows all guidelines found in the Alabama Administrative Code for referral for Special Education.

<https://www.alsde.edu/sec/ses/Policy/AAC%20290-8-9%2011-4-2013.pdf>

In regards to identification of ELs for special services the following guidelines should be noted:

290-8-9.04(1)(e)

(e) Ensure that a child is not determined to be a child with a disability if the determinant factor is a lack of appropriate instruction in reading [including the essential components of reading instruction as defined in section

1208(3) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency including oral reading skills, and reading comprehension strategies)), a lack of appropriate instruction in math; the child has limited English proficiency; or the child does not otherwise meet the eligibility criteria for a specific area of disability. Children from various ethnic groups, including speakers of regional dialects, do not have a disability solely because their manner of communicating does not conform to the expectations of the standard English speaking community. In order for a limited English proficient student to be deemed eligible, the eligibility team must determine that the communication disorder exists in the child's native language and is not the result of learning English as a second language. The teaching of English as a second language or general American dialect is not the responsibility of special education.

For Special Education Services evaluation and placement, input from the Pupil Support Team and/or IEP Team is provided in order to gather pertinent information to help determine if a child needs additional support beyond the English Language program.

A child may not be determined to be eligible for special education if the determinant factor is the child's lack of instruction in reading, math, or limited-English proficiency. The IEP for an EL with a disability includes all of the components as listed in the Alabama Administrative Code. The IEP team considers the language needs of the student as those needs relate to the student's IEP. Parent participation is a required part of the special education process and to ensure active participation, accommodations are made at meetings and in written communications for the non-English speaking parent. Madison County uses Language Link and interpreters to interpret during IEP meetings and communicates with parents in their native language when needed to ensure parental understanding and involvement in these processes.

Madison County adheres to its Special Education Plan for Students with Disabilities. Care and attention are given to follow Procedural Safeguards for EL students and parents:

To ensure that parents understand the content of each notice, the public agency must provide written notice in language understandable to the general public, provide notice in the native language of the parent or other mode of communication used by the parent unless it is clearly not feasible to do so, and take the necessary steps to ensure, that when the native language or other mode of communication of the parent is not a written language, that the notice is translated orally or by other means to the parent in his or her native language or other mode of communication. Public agencies must ensure that parents understand the content of the notice and maintain written evidence that the notice requirements have been met.

Referral of an English Learner to Special Education is always treated with careful consideration. District and school staff receive continuous training and guidance to ensure language development is not mistaken for or confused with learning difficulties. No EL student may be referred for Special Education services without the knowledge and input of an ESL Specialist.

Guidelines for ELs and Special Education Services:

- English learners suspected of having a disability must be identified and evaluated in a timely manner.
- ELs may not be determined eligible for special education if the determinant factor is their limited-English proficiency.
- ELs may not be denied special education services because of their limited-English proficiency.
- ELs' levels of proficiency must be considered when determining appropriate assessments and evaluation materials.
- Special education evaluations must be provided and administered in the student's native language, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so, to ensure a student's language needs can be distinguished from a student's disability-related needs.
- ELs identified as having one or more disabilities are entitled by law to receive both EL and special education services (see students' I-ELP and IEP/504 Plan).

The following procedures will guide school personnel in this process.

- If an EL is suspected of having one or more disabilities, the ESL Specialist should be notified immediately.

- If a student enters the district and is identified as both an EL student and a Special Education student, both programs should be notified immediately. Both programs will work together to carry out the student's IEP and I-ELP.
- The I-ELP Committee will suggest appropriate accommodations and interventions to the school's RTI team. If interventions have not been educationally successful after a reasonable time, a Special Education referral may be considered.
- Before a referral may be made, information must be gathered from parents regarding the student's physical development, first language development and any situation that may affect the student's abilities or progress. This may necessitate the use of a translator.
- Assessments used to evaluate EL students for Special Education must be administered in the student's dominant language when available. Assessment of the student's linguistic ability should also be done in the student's dominant language. A qualified individual fluent in the language of the assessment must administer these assessments. In instances where there is any question as to which language to administer the evaluation, the ESL Specialist will coordinate the efforts with the and, with input from the student's parents/guardians, will make the final determination.
- Translating assessments invalidates them. Translated assessments can only be used as informal measures. Test manuals or testing companies should always be consulted for information about translation of the test before attempting to administer the test in this way.
- The and the Special Education department must work closely together throughout the referral, evaluation and placement process. Once an EL student has been placed in Special Education, the ESL Program should continue to work with the student and Special Education teacher. The Individual Education Plan (IEP) must include a description for communicating with non-English speaking students and/or parents. If a translator is needed to communicate with parents of the student, a program-approved translator should be used. Other parents in the community, siblings of the student or peers of the student are not appropriate choices to translate for IEP and other meetings concerning the student's needs.

For more information on Serving ELs in Special Education Programs, district will refer to the English Learner Tool Kit, Chapter 6: Addressing English Learners with Disabilities
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap6.pdf>

English Learners are eligible for Gifted Education under the same criteria as general education students. Gifted students are defined as those students who perform at high levels in academic or creative fields when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. Madison County Schools utilizes Gifted Education guidance for EL student eligibility for Gifted Services.

Section D: Assessment and Accountability

1) Method for holding schools accountable for annually measuring the English proficiency of ELs and for participating in the state-administered testing program

PARTICIPATION IN STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

Madison County Schools follows the state-administered assessment protocol.

All ELs, whether they receive or waive supplemental Title III services, are tested annually on the WIDA ACCESS state English proficiency test.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS FOR TEST ADMINISTRATION

EL students may require accommodations on state assessments because of their level of language proficiency. These accommodations occur in classroom instruction and on classroom tests on a regular basis. The accommodations are prescribed on the students' I-ELP.

COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION

The ESL Department coordinates with the District Testing Specialist to ensure EL student participation in state tests. The District Testing Specialist clearly communicates testing requirements for ELs. Additionally, the ESL team and the System Test Coordinator regularly communicate with administrators and Building Test Coordinators (BTCs) during district trainings and email communication to relay this information.

In order to provide the most effective learning environment and support to ELs, the ESL office is committed to a continuous cycle of school learning and improvement. To ensure the ESL Program is successfully attaining identified goals, the ESL Program staff:

- Supports the goals of continuous improvement plans (CIPs) or school action plans;
- Participates in data meetings, PLC meetings, classroom walkthroughs, and RTI/PST meetings;
- Participates in district feeder pattern observations;
- Conducts an annual program evaluation.

The Federal Programs Resource Specialist collects data pertinent to the ESL Program evaluation on an on-going basis throughout the school year. This data is analyzed in the months of June, July, and August (as state assessment data are received) to evaluate the effectiveness of the district's ESL Program. Qualitative and quantitative results from the annual program evaluation are presented to the EL Advisory Committee for review. These results, along with recommendations from the EL Advisory Committee, become the data that drive the needs assessment for the upcoming year. Program changes and improvements are made based on the annual evaluation.

In order to ensure all schools with English learners are kept up-to-date regarding EL assessment and accountability issues, the Assessment and Accountability Coordinator and The Federal Programs Resource Specialist collaborate on all issues involving EL assessments and accountability. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Planning for and scheduling the WIDA ACCESS English language proficiency testing
- Communicating expectations for WIDA ACCESS to schools
- Providing training to building test coordinators on WIDA ACCESS
- Providing training to test administrators for WIDA ACCESS
- Ensuring all test administrators for WIDA ACCESS have completed the training and have been WIDA-certified
- Distributing and collecting WIDA ACCESS testing materials
- Analyzing WIDA ACCESS results to project meeting interim proficiency growth targets for schools
- Communicating WIDA ACCESS results to schools and district-level administrators
- Providing training to schools and district-level administrators on assessment and accountability based on most recent guidelines

The Assessment and Accountability Coordinator and The Federal Programs Resource Specialist communicate the assessment and accountability requirements to schools through a variety of methods, such as:

- Training sessions for school and district-level administrators
- Training sessions for schools counselors and ESL Specialists
- Training sessions to school leadership teams
- Emails to principals
- Principals' and Assistant Principals' meetings
- District EL Plan

In addition, The Federal Programs Resource Specialist and ESL Specialists are available to work with all schools on developing schools' Continuous Improvement Plans (CIP). ESL Specialists help schools review accountability requirements and WIDA ACCESS results to develop effective strategies and action steps for meeting the needs of ELs. The Federal Programs Resource Specialist and Instruction Department staff participate in formal and informal walkthroughs at all schools to help monitor implementation of the CIP and school or district goals based on the needs.

Method for holding schools accountable for meeting proficiency in academic achievement

What does "interim progress" mean in terms of accountability regarding English Learners?

Making annual increases in the percent of children making progress in learning English

How is interim progress for ELs determined?

Proficiency level of the EL.

Targets for annual increases in English proficiency and attainment of English using a baseline.

Consistent methods and measurements to indicate progress in English proficiency (WIDA ACCESS).

Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency – Cumulative Growth

Title I of ESSA requires long-term goals for English learners for increases in the percentage of such students making progress in achieving English Language Proficiency (ELP) as measured by the statewide English language proficiency assessment. Alabama will use WIDA ACCESS to evaluate progress toward English language proficiency.

Cumulative Growth is used to calculate the expected progress ELs make toward English language proficiency. Cumulative Growth is when the previous year's growth is compared to the current year's growth target to determine the students expected level of proficiency. Student growth expectations will increase each year so students meet the proficiency cut score within seven years after their initial year. The proficiency cut score is a composite score of 4.8 on WIDA ACCESS.

The number of years to achieve proficiency varies based on the student's initial level of proficiency. Students at lower levels of English language proficiency will have more ambitious annual growth targets.

The overall goal of the EL student data in the annual accountability system is to identify actual growth of EL students, year-over-year, towards proficiency attainment. Therefore, the data loaded within the student assessment portal recognizes the annual growth of each student utilizing the student's ACCESS proficiency score from the previous year compared to the current year's score.

Growth is determined when the prior year's score on the WIDA ACCESS assessment is compared to the current year's score to determine if there is growth. For example, a student whose prior year score was 3.1 would need to score a 3.5 or higher in order to demonstrate acceptable growth. If the student makes a 3.5, that student met the growth target and will be counted as showing adequate growth in the accountability calculations. If the student made a 3.2, the student did not meet the growth target and will not be counted as making growth in the accountability calculations.

Since growth is determined based upon the prior year's score, students who do not have a score from the previous year will not receive a growth report. N/A will represent a non-score. Currently, there is no growth requirement for WIDA Alternate ACCESS. Students' growth can be calculated even if the student moves to another district, as long as the SSID numbers match.

See table below from the 2025 ALSDE Student Assessment Resource Guide for English Learners related to growth calculations and interim progress. As of the 2026-2027 School year, the WIDA ACCESS is undergoing a standard setting process to determine new scale scores and proficiency scores. As a result, the growth calculations in the chart below may change after state review of the new WIDA ACCESS score guidelines.

Growth Calculations (2025)

Prior Year	Current Year
1.0	1.6
1.1	1.7
1.2	1.8
1.3	1.9
1.4	2.0
1.5	2.1
1.6	2.1

	1.7	2.2	
	1.8	2.3	
	1.9	2.4	
	2.0	2.6	
	2.1	2.6	
	2.2	2.7	
	2.3	2.8	
	2.4	2.9	
	2.5	3.0	
	2.6	3.0	
	2.7	3.1	
	2.8	3.2	
	2.9	3.3	
	3.0	3.5	
	3.1	3.5	
	3.2	3.6	
	3.3	3.7	
	3.4	3.8	
	3.5	3.8	
	3.6	3.9	
	3.7	4.0	
	3.8	4.1	
	3.9	4.1	
	4.0	4.3	
	4.1	4.3	
	4.2	4.4	
	4.3	4.5	
	4.4	4.5	
	4.5	4.6	
	4.6	4.7	
	4.7	4.7	
	4.8	4.8	

Interim Progress

Targets were established based on two years of statewide district data. The table shows the percentage of ELs within a district and respective schools that must make the progress target in order to meet the ELP indicator. Each year, the proportion of students in a district expected to make progress in ELP increases.

The table below illustrates the target percentage for all LEAs. Each LEA will calculate numbers based on the 2016-2017 baseline data for the district. Interim Progress is reported as the percentage of students in a district who make progress in their overall score. The same percentages are used for each school in each district to calculate interim progress.

GROWTH TARGETS

The table below shows the percentage of EL students within a district that must make the progress target in order to meet the English Language Proficiency (ELP) indicator from 2022 - 2026. Currently, ALSDE is waiting on results from the WIDA ACCESS Standard Setting process in order to convene a committee to develop new growth targets. As of the writing of this plan, growth targets for the 2026-2027 year are unavailable.

TARGET PERCENTAGES

Progress Targets Based on Previous Year's Data	
YEAR	TARGETS
2022	52%
2023	54%
2024	56%
2025	58%
2026	60% -ALSDE changed to 58% in August 2026
2027	62% -Growth Goal TBD by ALSDE
2028	64% -Growth Goal TBD by ALSDE

Example: In 2026, **60%** 58% of EL students in a district who participate in the WIDA ACCESS assessment needed to meet/exceed their growth target in order to make the interim progress indicator.

Monitoring and evaluating school engagement with continuous improvement plan

Madison County Schools will hold schools accountable for meeting proficiency and long-term goals through monitoring and evaluating schools' progress and engagement with the continuous improvement process and plan. In order to ensure English Learners develop English language proficiency, the district Federal Programs and EL staff will collaborate with other district and school administrators to:

- Provide sustained professional learning of best practices to classroom teachers, ESL Specialists, and administrators through the district PLCs

- Train EL and classroom teachers on integrating the WIDA ELD standards and accommodations within daily instruction
- Continue hiring and growing the ESL Specialists to supplement EL instruction and assist classroom teachers with integration of the WIDA standards into their lesson plans
- Support schools in the practice of continuous improvement by collaborating in the development of the Continuous Improvement Plan
- Provide in-depth training to ESL Specialists, school administrators, central office staff, and school leadership teams on the use of data to improve the rate of language acquisition for ELs
- Ensure that I-ELPs for each EL focus on the individual learner's needs
- Monitor EL student academic and language acquisition data and progress
- Improve community and family connections by facilitating parent and family engagement for ELs
- Continuously evaluate the core ESL Program and supplemental EL services to adjust the course of action and address challenges
- Develop relationships with classroom teachers, ESL Specialists, school administrators, parents, students, community advocates and representatives from post-secondary education institutions to ensure the success of the English Language Instruction Educational Program.

Section E: Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

1) Methods for promoting parent involvement activities to help improve student achievement

When schools work together with families to support learning, children tend to succeed not just in school but also throughout life. The Madison County ESL Team is dedicated to improving parental involvement through activities and innovative ways to connect with parents of ELs, as well as connecting with the community.

The ESL Department routinely shares resources with families and promotes parent involvement. The resources shared with families include public services, Madison County Schools information, animal services, children's services, education opportunities, language classes, job training, financial assistance, food banks, legal issues, medical and dental services, multicultural organizations, translation services, transportation, and more.

To further community and family engagement, the ESL Department uses Class Dojo, Language Link, and Talking Points as a way for families to remain engaged with their students' educational process in a language most easily understood.

Our department has prioritized family engagement and communication. We have strengthened our communication through the use and promotion of Class Dojo, Talking Points, Google Translate, and Language Link telephonic interpretation. Additionally, our district has employed a full-time Spanish interpreter to enhance and improve parent involvement. Given their effectiveness and positive feedback, these supports are on-going and evaluated each year.

Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974, public schools must ensure English Learner (EL) students and parents can participate meaningfully and equally in educational programs. In addition, schools have a responsibility to communicate with EL parents in a language they understand.

Madison County Schools has made a concerted effort to provide resources to ensure compliance with these federal requirements and to communicate these requirements to all staff members. In addition, the ESL Department routinely shares the resources below with staff members to ensure use.

We promote the following district-provided resources to help promote parent involvement activities to help improve student achievement:

- Language Link Telephonic Interpretation
 - Available in over 240 languages, 24/7. It is recommended for making parent contact, parent conferences, discipline-related incidents, enrollment, and Special Education meetings.
- Spanish Interpreter

- Spanish is our largest language spoken besides English. Our district employs a full-time district Spanish interpreter who assists with in-person meetings, phone calls, home visits, and document translations. The interpreter regularly attends after school parent activities.
- Language Link VRI - Video Remote Interpreting
 - Provided by ALSDE, this service requires a simple how-to training. At this time, accounts are granted for ESL Specialists.
- Class Dojo
 - Class Dojo messages make it easy to communicate with families anytime, anywhere - and are automatically translated into more than 190+ languages.
- Google Translation Options
 - Our district is a Google district and utilizes the following resources for EL support: Google Docs and Google Translate app (written, audio, and camera translation). This support is used to translate parent communication and flyers.
- PockeTalk Devices
 - Every school registrar and social worker has a PockeTalk handheld translation device. In addition, our ESL team assigns devices to our newcomer students, when available. These devices are helpful in creating strong parent-teacher relationships and supportive school environments.
- ESL Newsletter
 - Monthly newsletter with resources for instructing EL students and supporting EL families. Access to the library of newsletters is shared routinely for ease of access. Community resources are routinely shared in these newsletters to support our EL families' social, emotional, and wellness needs.
- MCSS Translated Documents Folder
 - Our district routinely translates documents that are used across the system and files them in a shared Google Folder. These shared documents ensure easy access to required translated documents.

District Federal Programs Coordinator and ESL Specialists in Madison County Schools make a rigorous and conscious effort to build relationships with the EL parents and ensure that EL parents and families receive support and important information regarding their child's academic progress and English language development in a format and language they can understand. All parent notifications are sent to parents in English and, if available, a language that the parents can understand. Madison County Schools employs a full time Spanish Interpreter and also relies on other outside programs and agencies, such as *Pathwise* and Language Link, to assist with translations in other languages. The district contracts with outside agencies, such as Language Link for additional language interpreting and translations, as EL students and families in the district speak 39 different languages. The District has contracted with Class Dojo, an app that translates information into a language of parent choice and allows parents to send messages in their native language which are then translated back to the language of the teacher's choice.

2) Methods (in a language they can understand) for notification requirements for ELs students regarding EL identification, placement, exit, and monitoring

EL identification, placement, exit, and monitoring

According to NCLB Title III requirements, MCBOE will, not later than 30 days after the beginning of the school year, and ESSA requirements of 14 days during school, provide notification to parent(s) of ELs identified for participation in an English language instruction educational program of:

1. The reasons for the identification.
2. The child's level of English proficiency.
 - a. How such a level was assessed.
 - b. The status of the child's academic achievement.
3. The method of instruction used in the program.
4. How the program will meet the educational strengths and needs of the child.
5. How the program will specifically help their child learn English and meet age-appropriate academic achievement standards for grade promotion and graduation.

6. The specific exit requirements for such program, expected rate of transition from such program into the regular education classroom, and the expected rate of graduation from secondary school.

7. In the case of a child with a disability, how the program meets the objectives of the individualized education program of the child.

8. Information pertaining to parental rights that includes written guidance detailing:

- The right of the parents to have their child immediately removed from supplemental Title III programs upon request.
- The option to decline enrollment of their child in such supplemental Title III programs or to choose another program or method of instruction if available.
- The various programs and methods of instruction if more than one program or method is offered by the eligible entity.

Madison County uses Ellevation to inform parents in a language and/or manner that the parents can understand. The Ellevation online platform generates federally compliant parent notification letters. These parental notification documents serve as official notification letters and are available in over 40 different languages.

Based on federal guidelines, appropriate notification is made to parents regarding the following:

- Eligibility and placement in ESL Program
- Status change within the ESL Program

Appropriate notification is made to parents that their child is eligible for and will be placed in the district's ESL Program prior to the placement and within 30 days of the beginning of the school year. If enrollment occurs after the beginning of school, parent notification is made within ten (10) days. This notification is made in writing, in a language the parents understand, and includes the following information:

- The reason the child was identified for the ESL Program
- The need for the child's participation in the ESL Program
- The child's level of English language proficiency and how it was assessed
- The level of the student's academic achievement
- The method of instruction to be used in the ESL Program
- How the program will meet the strengths and needs of the student
- How the program will help the child learn English and meet age-appropriate academic achievement standards for grade promotion and graduation
- How the program will support the child's academic progress
- Program support for students with IEPs and how the program meets the objectives of the IEP of the child (if applicable)
- Specific exit requirements for the program, expected rate of transition from ESL Program into the regular classroom, and the expected rate of graduation from secondary school
- Rights related to the student's participation in the program (right to have the child removed from supplement ESL Program upon request - if applicable, the option to decline to enroll the child in supplemental ESL Program or choose another program of method of instruction - if available, and various programs and methods of instruction if more than one method is offered)

Appropriate notification is made to parents when their child changes status within the ESL Program, such as:

- Exiting the ESL Program
- Successful completion of each monitor year
- Reentry into ESL Program
- Annual eligibility of services for parents who have waived Title III supplemental services

This plan was reviewed, revised, and updated by the district EL Advisory Council. The district used a paper and digital process to give all stakeholders flexibility to provide feedback and collect signatures of all EL advisory council members who participated in the EL Advisory Council work to review the EL Plan.