



English Language (EL) Services in Austin Public Schools

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The goal of the Austin EL Program is to equitably identify English Learners (EL) and meet their learning needs. This is accomplished by determining language proficiency using research-based assessments in order to provide appropriate English language development support. A differentiated service model based on English language proficiency levels is used to help students achieve school success with social and instructional language.

Mission Statement

To empower English learners by helping them to build academic, cultural, and social competence in the English language.

Vision Statement

The Austin Public School District provides a welcoming, rigorous academic environment in which English learners are able to reach their potential and prepare for successful, productive lives.

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EL Acronyms

ACCESS – Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State for English Learners, the statewide annual assessment used by Minnesota public schools to measure progress and proficiency for English Learners (EL).

Alternate ACCESS - Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State for English Learners: a language assessment for severely developmentally disabled EL students. This assessment is used for students who are unable to respond to the ACCESS test due to the barriers imposed by their disabling conditions.

BICS – Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills: English skills that have developed to a social language level. This usually takes one to two years to develop for ELs.

CALP - Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency: the ability to use the acquired language for academic purposes at a proficiency level like that of a native speaker of the language. This level of language development takes between five and ten years, depending on the academic background of the language learner.

ELD – English Language Development: the process of acquiring English for social and academic purposes. Standards used for instruction and assessment are referred to as the ELD standards.

ELL – English Language Learner: this identification term was used prior to 2010 when discussing people who were learning the English language.

EL – English Learner: The current accepted term for people learning the English language. Minnesota has officially adopted this as the term to use when referring to those learning English.

ESL – English as a Second Language: A term previously used to identify English learners or the classes they participated in to learn English.

ESSA – Every Student Succeeds Act: The current education law for the United States which was enacted in December 2015 and reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA).

L 1 – First Language: the first language spoken by the EL.

L 2 – Second Language: the second language being acquired, usually English as used for this purpose.

LEA – Local Education Agency

LEP – Limited English Proficient: the term used in the No Child Left Behind Act to designate students who are in the process of acquiring English skills and require support to access the language of instruction. This term has now been replaced by English learner in the ESSA.

LIEP – Language Instruction Educational Programs: Title III requires that each grant recipient provide effective services that “meet the needs of English Language Learners and demonstrate success in increasing (A) English language proficiency; and (B) student academic achievement” (ESEA Section 315(c)(1)).

MARSS – Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System: the computer-based system used by public schools throughout Minnesota to collect and report student data.

MNLS – Minnesota Language Survey: The home language questionnaire is part of the mandatory identification process for EL students. All students enrolling in public schools are to respond to questions concerning the language first spoken by the child and the language that is most frequently spoken in the home by family members and the student being enrolled. (MN statute, section 124D.58 to 124D.65 and PL 107-110, The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Section 3301).

NCLB – No Child Left Behind: refers to the federal education law passed in 2001 that includes accountability measures for ELs. This act has now been replaced by the ESSA in 2015.

SIOP- Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol: the research-based instructional framework that intentionally builds in language development and support for ELs in the classroom.

SLIFE – Students with limited or interrupted formal education: Minnesota defines SLIFE as students who were: 1) comes from a home where the language usually spoken is other than English; 2) enters school in the U.S. after grade 6; 3) has at least two years less schooling than the English learner’s peers; 4) functions at least two years below expected grade level in reading and mathematics; 5) may be preliterate in the English learner’s native language. Minn. Stat. 124D.59, Subd. 2a

W-APT – WIDA ACCESS Placement Test: used for initial screening of students who have a home or primary language other than English. This assessment has been replaced by the Kindergarten Screener beginning on July 1, 2021.

WIDA – World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment: the consortia of states that work together to develop best practices for instruction and assessment for ELs. This organization crafted the English Language Development (ELD) standards that are used for EL instruction and assessment.

EL Definitions

Academic Vocabulary – the vocabulary used in academic instruction including content-specific terminology as well as process vocabulary that is needed to comprehend and accomplish academic tasks.

Affective Filter – emotional issues and self-esteem influence a student’s ability to acquire information. When a student’s affective filter is up, meaning they are highly stressed, they will have difficulty acquiring content.

Background Knowledge – the experiences and knowledge that an individual acquires.

Comprehensible Input – information, concepts and skills presented to students in a way that promotes understanding.

Fluency – the degree to which one speaks freely and effortlessly.

General Vocabulary – basic, non-specific words. *Flower* is a general word while *daisy*, *tulip* and *morning glory* are specific words.

Home Language – The language most often spoken by an individual or family in the home.

Indirect Services – services provided to EL students when they are no longer receiving services from the EL teachers. This service generally involves tracking student assessment and grade data to ensure that the student can access grade level curriculum.

Monitoring – The term used by the Minnesota Department of Education for the two-year period following a student’s reclassification from LEP/EL to non-LEP/EL. Testing data for that student is included with active EL students when evaluating the rate of proficiency for reading and mathematics proficiency attainment.

Primary Language – (L1) The language an individual first learned to speak.

Prior Knowledge – the learning that has taken place for the student from previous lessons or schooling.

RAELS: Recently Arrived English Learners is a K-12 student who has been identified as an English learner in Minnesota and who has been enrolled in a school in one of the 50 states in the United States or the District of Columbia for less than 12 months at the time of testing. A student can only be identified as a RAEL one time. When a student is identified as a RAEL they must take the appropriate Mathematics, Reading, and Science MCA or MTAS and all domains of the ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs.

Scaffolding – the provision of extensive instructional supports when concepts and skills are being first introduced and the gradual removal of supports when the students begin to develop proficiency, skills or knowledge.

Sheltered Instruction – an approach for teaching content to English learners in strategic ways that make the subject matter comprehensible while promoting the development of English proficiency.

Specific vocabulary – precise rather than general words. *Amusing, entertaining* or *enjoyable* are specific alternatives for *fun*, a general adjective.

Survival English – the most basic English words and the phrases a learner needs to understand and produce to navigate in an English environment.

Target Language – the language the learner is working to acquire.

Target Vocabulary – words pertaining to the academic content areas that a learner needs to know to access the curriculum.

Technical Language –vocabulary that is associated with a content area. *Petal, stigma* and *sepal* are technical terms for parts of a flower.

Title III – Federal funding provided by the federal government to supplement, but not supplant, services provided to English learners under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Opportunities Act of 1974, and other requirements, including those under State or local laws. State education departments distribute Title III funds through an annual grant application process.

Overview of EL Services in APS

Overview

To ensure that each non-native speaker of English is correctly screened for his or her potential status as EL, Austin Public Schools has established a process for initial student intake. This process includes the completion of the Minnesota Language Survey (MNLS). This MNLS must be completed at enrollment for all students K-12. Students who understand one or more languages other than English (as reported on the MNLS) then complete an approved English language Proficiency (ELP) screener. If a language other than English is recorded on the enrollment form, the student is assessed for English proficiency unless there is current data in the student file to indicate the student's English proficiency level. A student is considered Limited English Proficient (LEP) or an English learner (EL) if the assessment data indicates that the student is not proficient in English.

Once a student is identified as LEP/EL and placed in EL services to support learning, state and federal law require that parents be notified of the student's entry into the program. Parents are notified that they have the right to refuse EL services for their child. Once documentation of the refusal of EL services is received by the district, the district must remove the child from the EL program. However, the student remains identified as LEP/EL in the student data system and participates in the annual English language proficiency assessments. All students identified as LEP/EL are recorded in the Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS). In addition to a student's status as LEP/EL, data regarding the start date of EL services and the student's native language are required.

EL students who reach a level of English proficiency that no longer prevents them from fully accessing the curriculum of the school may be exited from the EL program. The decision to exit a student is based on The ACCESS proficiency scores and is defined by the state of Minnesota as a composite score of at least 4.5 on the ACCESS with three of four domain scores of at least 3.5.

Initial Identification as EL

When a student initially enrolls in Austin Public Schools, it is important to identify the primary language of the student. It should be noted that the student's physical appearance and/or how the student sounds in English should not determine whether he or she is screened for primary language. Rather, all students who enroll in Austin Public Schools address the same questions about the language first learned and used at home on the Minnesota Language Survey. This helps ensure equity of identification. The revised Minnesota Language Survey (2017) will be the survey completed for all students enrolling in Austin Public Schools after July 1, 2017.

Students who have a language other than English are not automatically EL. They are, however, the group of students who are screened to determine if EL services are appropriate. Austin Public Schools uses developmentally appropriate methods to screen for EL identification including the Kindergarten Screener assessment, the WIDA screener and ACCESS scores from the previous year. The identification

process is detailed in the document, *EL Intake Procedures for Enrolling for Austin Public Schools*. This document is available for all stakeholders, including parents and teachers, on the school website. The approved K-12 Minnesota ELP Screener Assessments are listed below.

Timing	WIDA Screener for Kindergarten	WIDA Screener Grades 1-12 Online	WIDA Screener Grades 1-12 Paper
Pre-K and 1 st Semester Kindergarten	Composite Score of 4.5 or higher (if taking only the listening and speaking tests)	Do not use	Do not use
2 nd Semester Kindergarten	Composite score of 4.5 or higher (all four domain tests)	Do not use	Do not use
Grades 1-12	Do not use	Composite score of 4.5 with no domain below a 4.0	Composite score of 4.5 with no domain below a 4.0

Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS)

Once a student is determined to be an EL, the individual record for that student in MARSS is updated to reflect the student's status as LEP (Limited English Proficient). The MARSS record for each student asks whether the student is LEP. An EL student is LEP and the MARSS record should reflect the student's status with a "Y" for Yes. For reporting purposes in MARSS, it does not matter if the parents of an EL refused EL services. It does not matter if the student has or has not taken the state language test. If a student has met the EL identification criteria for Minnesota, the student's record in MARSS will show that status.

EL Services

When a student is identified as an EL student, the student qualifies for EL services. The elementary and secondary service model plans articulate the amount of services received for the various levels of English proficiency of students. These plans are available on the school website under the English Learners Program page (District Offices, Educational Services). In addition to direct EL services provided by an EL specialist, Austin Public teachers are trained in sheltered instruction techniques and are expected to differentiate instruction for EL students in their classes.

Parent Notification

Once a student is identified as EL, state law requires that the parents of newly identified EL students be notified of the student's entry into the program. This notice must take place within 10 days of identification. Since Austin Public Schools receives federal funds to supplement the education of EL students, the parental notice must include information about why the student is receiving EL services, the child's current English proficiency level and how the proficiency level was assessed, the method of instruction used in the EL program, how the program will meet the needs of the student, the exit criteria set for the program, the rate of transition from the program into the regular curriculum, and, for secondary students, the expected graduation rate for EL students. If the student is also in special education services, information about meeting the objectives of the Individualized Education Plan should be included. Parents are also notified of their right to refuse EL programming for their child and who to contact about that request.

Parents of previously identified EL students will also receive a letter from the school district within 30 calendar days of the beginning of the school year providing current information about the student's English proficiency and updating all the information outlined above for the current year.

Assessment for ELs

Austin Public Schools follows the direction of the State of Minnesota regarding testing and assessment for ELs. As part of the requirements of Every Student Succeeds Act, states must assess the language proficiency of EL students on an annual basis using a valid and reliable assessment to measure progress toward English proficiency of all EL students. The State of Minnesota has joined the WIDA consortium of states and utilizes the ACCESS for this purpose. Students who have severe disabilities may qualify to take the Alternate ACCESS. EL and special education staff will review student needs annually to determine who should be tested with the Alternate ACCESS.

In addition to assessments measuring language proficiency in English, ELs participate in the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) for reading, math and science.

Testing accommodations are available for EL students including having test directions interpreted. The test administrator manual for the ACCESS and MCA tests should be referred to on an annual basis to

determine the appropriate accommodations for ELs. EL staff and special education case managers should review EL students with IEPs to ensure that the appropriate accommodations are planned for their ACCESS testing sessions.

Exiting from EL Service or Reclassification as a Non-EL Student

The decision to exit a student from EL services is based on the Minnesota definition of English proficiency as stated below. The document, *EL Identification and Reclassification Criteria*, outlines the process used by Austin Public Schools to determine that a student can access the district's curriculum and no longer requires the support of EL services.

Minnesota Standardized English Learner Procedures: Exiting	
Required Action	Student's ACCESS result
1. Exit and reclassification are required	Student score on ACCESS 2.0 satisfies both of the following criteria: a. Overall composite score of 4.5 or higher AND b. A score of 3.5 or higher in each of the four domains (L, S, R & W)
2. Additional criteria must be applied to determine continuing EL eligibility	Student score on ACCESS 2.0 satisfies both of the following criteria: a. Overall composite score of 4.5 or higher AND b. Only one domain score is below 3.5 *For more information about applying additional criteria to determine ongoing EL eligibility, see the MDE English Learner Education Page
3. Student is not yet proficient and maintains EL status and continues to receive both a. ELD instruction b. ELP - based support throughout the school day	Student score on ACCESS 2.0 includes: a. An overall composite score that is less than 4.5 OR b. Two or more domain scores are below 3.5

EL Service Model for APS

English Language (EL) Development Plan of Service

Grades K – 4

Level	EL Students in a Setting 3 or 4 SPED Placement	1-2 Entering - Emerging	3 Developing	4-5 Expanding –Bridging
Service Minutes	15 minutes 1-3 times per week	30 - 90 minutes per day depending on individual student need and L1 literacy skills	30 - 60 minutes per day	30 minutes/3-5times per week
Delivery Model	Small group or individual work on language development that aligns with the student's IEP	Pull out or Push In small group instruction for EL beginning language development	- Pull-out small or Push In small group instruction - Push-in or co-teaching	Pull out instruction or Push in instruction

Entering (Newcomer) and Emerging, Levels 1 & 2 students receive one-on-one or small group instruction with an EL teacher each day. The instruction is based on the needs of the student and the literacy and academic skills in the home language. It may be early literacy skills like learning letter sounds or it might involve building background knowledge in academic areas. A beginning student usually receives this level of small group instruction for the first year or two in APS.

Developing- Level 3 students benefit from language development time in the EL classroom with specialized support in academic vocabulary and background knowledge. The academic language of science and social studies is the basis of the instruction and is aligned with classroom instruction.

Expanding and Bridging - levels 4 & 5 EL teachers will work directly with classroom teacher to push into the classroom or pull out for EL instruction. The academic language of science and social studies will be the basis of the instruction and will be aligned with classroom instruction. Writing for academic purposes will be the primary focus for most students.

Grades 5-6

Level	EL Students in a Level 3 or 4 SPED Placement	1 – 2 Entering – Emerging	3 Developing	4-5 Expanding –Bridging
Service Minutes	15- 30 minutes 1-3 times per week	3-4 hours per day depending on individual student need and L1 literacy skills	2-3 hours per day 60-minute class periods	1 hour per day 3-5 days per week 60-minute class periods
Delivery Model	• Small group or individual work on language development that aligns with the student's IEP	• Pull out instruction for EL beginning language development	• EL Language Arts • EL Math support • EL Social Studies	• EL Language Arts • EL Math support • EL Social Studies

Each spring EL students are assessed to determine their need for English language support. Students are placed in the classes that meet their level of need for the following year.

Entering (newcomer) and emerging – Levels 1 & 2 students receive small class instruction for three or four periods each day. There are usually 3-12 students in the newcomer class. This setting allows the teacher to spend individual time with students. These classes help newcomers gain basic school skills, reading strategies, and English vocabulary. Students advance out of the newcomer class when they gain enough English language ability to understand instruction in English.

Developing- Expanding – Bridging – Levels 3, 4 & 5 students are assigned to reading classes according to their reading assessment data. EL classes help strengthen literacy skills and build strategies for comprehension. EL classes are designed to meet grade-level academic standards in order to prepare students for classes outside of EL.

Grades 7-8

Level	EL Students in a Level 3 or 4 SPED Placement	Levels 1 – 2 Entering - Emerging	Level 3 Developing	Levels 4-5 Expanding –Bridging
Service Minutes	15-20 minutes 1-3 times per week	90-180 minutes per day depending on individual student need and L1 literacy skills	90-180 minutes per day 2-4 periods/day	90 minutes per day 1 period per day Block Schedule
Delivery Model	• Small group or individual work on language development that aligns with the student's IEP	• EL beginning language development • Beginning math • Co – Taught content class	• EL Language Arts • Co-taught content class	• EL Language Arts • Co-taught content class

Each spring EL students are assessed to determine their need for English language support. Students are placed in the classes that meet their level of need for the following year.

Entering (newcomer) and emerging students receive small class instruction for three periods each day. There are usually 3-12 students in the newcomer class. This setting allows the teacher to spend individual time with students. These classes help newcomers gain basic school skills, reading strategies, and English vocabulary. Students advance out of the newcomer class when they gain enough English language ability to understand instruction in English.

Developing (intermediate) - Expanding and Bridging (advanced) Holton and Ellis students are assigned to reading classes according to their reading assessment data. Classes help strengthen literacy skills and build strategies for comprehension. Classes are designed to meet grade-level academic standards in order to prepare students for classes outside of EL.

Grades 9-12

Level	EL Students in a Level 3 or 4 SPED Placement	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Emerging	Level 3 Developing	Levels 4 & 5 Expanding - Bridging
Service Minutes	15 minutes 1-3 times per week	3-6 periods per day depending on individual student need and L1 literacy skills	3-6 periods per day	3-4 periods per day	1 – 2 periods per day
Delivery Model	• Small group or individual work on language development that aligns with the student's IEP • Consultative services	• EL Beginning Language Arts (2 periods) • EL math • EL science • 1 period vocational, cultural, school orientation • 1 period college and career readiness	• EL Language Arts 9 – 12 (2 periods) • EL math • EL social studies • EL science	• EL Language Arts 9-10 or co-taught Language Arts • EL math • EL science	• Co-taught or sheltered content classes • EL study hall

High school EL students are assessed for language proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening each spring. Students are then placed in the classes that will provide the right amount of support for them for the following year. Every effort is made to assign students to classes that receive credits toward graduation requirements.

Entering and emerging (beginning) students are in small group classes that help them learn basic academic English skills. As these skills are developed and used, students are able to begin working toward grade-level content. Students are carefully monitored to assess when they may be ready to move to a more challenging class. Students also attend co-taught or sheltered science, social studies and math classes.

Developing (intermediate) students are in academic classes with EL support. An EL teacher teams up with a content teacher or provides a sheltered content class to help students understand the academic content and perform the assignments for the class. Students generally continue to participate in the EL classes until they have developed skills that will support their success in non-EL high school classes. Students may participate in an afterschool homework help session.

Expanding and Bridging (advanced) students are in mainstream classes with an EL study hall. Students may be in reading and math intervention if assessment data show this is needed. Students may participate in an afterschool homework help session and/or in summer school.

Family Engagement

Austin Public Schools seeks to work with parents in the education of their children. Parents are an important component to the English Learner program. Parents are involved in the English Learner program in several ways including monthly parent meetings for parents to meet with the district success coach program. Each fall, parents are notified of the language proficiency levels of their children if they are ELs. At the monthly parent meetings, success coaches, EL teachers or the EL coordinator answer questions about these reports. Parents are also asked about their ideas for the EL program at these meetings. Parents are encouraged to attend parent-teacher conferences, volunteer at their child's school, and serve as role models for community involvement. The school success coaches, who are bilingual, provide a high level of parent support and outreach as APS seeks to empower parents to be part of their student's school success.

APS seeks to communicate with parents in a language that can be understood. All school sites employ bilingual staff who assist with parental communication. A district Spanish translator is employed by the district. The district utilizes community resources, on-call interpreters and the Language Line in order to provide information to parents in a language that can be understood.

English Language Development Standards

The state of Minnesota has adopted the WIDA standards for English language development.

The Five Standards

The WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards represent the social, instructional, and academic language that students need to engage with peers, educators, and the curriculum in schools.

Figure A: The English Language Development Standards

Standard		Abbreviation
English Language Development Standard 1	English language learners communicate for Social and Instructional purposes within the school setting	Social and Instructional language
English Language Development Standard 2	English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Language Arts	The language of Language Arts
English Language Development Standard 3	English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Mathematics	The language of Mathematics
English Language Development Standard 4	English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Science	The language of Science
English Language Development Standard 5	English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Social Studies	The language of Social Studies

English Language Proficiency Levels: WIDA Performance Definitions

Reading and Listening

At each grade, toward the end of a given level of English language proficiency, and with instructional support, the English learner will process. . .

	Discourse Level	Sentence Level	Word/Phrase Level
	Linguistic Complexity	Language Forms and Conventions	Vocabulary Usage
Level 6 – Reaching Language that meets all criteria through Level 5, Bridging			
Level 5 Bridging	- Rich descriptive discourse with complex sentences - Cohesive and organized related ideas	- Compound, complex grammatical constructions (e.g., multiple phrases and clauses) - A broad range of sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas	- Technical and abstract content-area language, including content-specific collocations - Words and expressions with shades of meaning across content areas
Level 4 Expanding	- Connected discourse with a variety of sentences - Expanded related ideas	- A variety of complex grammatical constructions - Sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas	- Specific and some technical content-area language - Words or expressions with multiple meanings across content areas
Level 3 Developing	- Discourse with a series of extended sentences - Related ideas	- Compound and some complex (e.g., noun phrase, verb phrase, prepositional phrase) grammatical constructions - Sentence patterns across content areas	- Specific content language, including expressions - Words and expressions with common collocations and idioms across content areas
Level 2 Emerging	- Multiple related simple sentences - An idea with details	- Compound grammatical constructions - Repetitive phrasal and sentence patterns across content areas	- General content words and expressions, including cognates - Social and instructional words and expressions across content areas
Level 1 Entering	- Single statements or questions - An idea within words, phrases, or chunks of language	- Simple grammatical constructions (e.g., commands, Wh- questions, declaratives) - Common social and instructional forms and patterns	- General content-related words - Everyday social and instructional words and expressions

Speaking and Writing

At each grade, toward the end of a given level of English language proficiency, and with instructional support, the English learner will produce . . .

	Discourse Level	Sentence Level	Word/Phrase Level
	Linguistic Complexity	Language Forms and Conventions	Vocabulary Usage
Level 6 – Reaching Language that meets all criteria through Level 5, Bridging			
Level 5 Bridging	- Multiple complex sentences - Organized, cohesive and coherent expression of ideas	- A variety of grammatical structures matched to purpose - A broad range of sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas	- Technical and abstract content-area language, including content-specific collocations - Words and expressions with shades of meaning across content areas
Level 4 Expanding	- Short, expanded and some complex sentences - Organized expression of ideas with emerging cohesion	- A variety of grammatical structures - Sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas	- Specific and some technical content-area language - Words or expressions with expressive meaning through use of collocations and idioms across content areas
Level 3 Developing	- Short and expanded sentences with emerging complexity - Expanded expression of one idea or emerging expression of multiple related ideas	- Repetitive grammatical structures - Sentence patterns across content areas	- Specific content language, including cognates and expressions - Words and expressions with multiple meanings used across content areas
Level 2 Emerging	- Phrases or short sentences - Emerging expression of ideas	- Formulaic grammatical structures - Repetitive phrasal and sentence patterns across content areas	- General content words and expressions - Social and instructional words and expressions across content areas
Level 1 Entering	- Words, phrases, chunks of language - Single words used to express ideas	- Phrase-level grammatical structures - Phrasal patterns associated with common social and instructional situations	- General content-related words - Everyday social and instructional words and expressions

