

GUIDEBOOK
for the
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER
PROGRAM

GREENWOOD
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



This is a living document and subject to frequent updates.

Updated 7-26-22

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INTRODUCTION

The English Language Learner (ELL) Handbook is a resource for district staff providing program knowledge for meeting the needs of English Learners (ELs). This handbook will serve as a tool to ensure student success and school improvement. It contains the policies and procedures of our program, as well as copies of forms used in identifying, assessing, placing, serving, and monitoring ELLs in reaching proficiency.

MISSION

Greenwood School District will offer effective education to every English Learner (EL) and this is the responsibility of all educational personnel. All students have equal opportunities for participation in the education system through rigorous course offerings, extra-curricular activities, and appropriate communication with parents and/or guardians. Effective education requires that excellent English Language Development (ELD) and supplemental services are rendered to EL students. Effective programs for EL students respect and celebrate all students' native languages in the contexts of both school and community. A balanced language program that prepares ELs for both academic and social worlds will be provided, as well as a comfortable and safe setting for ELs to maintain their own culture while learning to live and participate in their community.

LEGAL BACKGROUND

The following are respective laws that provide an understanding regarding the education of language minority students who are English learners.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

Title VI is the focal point and center to all interpretations of any legal challenges regarding the provision of equal opportunity to all groups that are in a protected class. The triggering mechanism for Title VI is the receipt of financial assistance from the Federal Government. Consequently, nearly all public schools in the United States receive some federal funds. Therefore, the Act was the catalyst for the education of all children in a setting that was all-inclusive.

Some of the prohibited actions under Title VI include:

1. Providing services, financial aid, or other benefits that are different or provided in a different manner.
2. Restricting an individual's enjoyment of an advantage or privilege enjoyed by others.
3. Denying an individual the right to participate in federally assisted programs.
4. Defeating or substantially impairing the objective of federally assisted programs.

Additionally, Title VI has been interpreted to prohibit denial of equal access to education because of a language minority student's limited proficiency in English. This means that language minority students who are limited in their English language skills such that they are unable to participate in or benefit from regular or special education school instructional programs are protected under Title VI.

Lau v. Nichols

A class action suit brought by parents of non-English proficient Chinese students against the San Francisco Unified School District. In 1974, the Supreme Court ruled that identical education does not constitute equal education under the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The court ruled that the district must take affirmative steps to overcome educational barriers faced by the non-English speaking Chinese students in the district.

Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974

No state shall deny equal educational opportunity to an individual on account of his or her race, color, sex, or national origin by the failure of an educational agency to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by its students in its instructional programs...[schools must] rectify appropriately a limited English proficient student's English opportunities.

Castañeda v. Pickard

On June 23, 1981, the Fifth Circuit Court issued a decision concerning education of language minority students. The case established a three-part test to evaluate the adequacy of a district's program for ELs:

- 1) Is the program based on an educational theory recognized as sound by some experts in the field or is considered by experts as a legitimate experimental strategy;
- 2) Are the programs and practices, including resources and personnel, reasonably calculated to implement this theory effectively; and
- 3) Does the school district evaluate its programs and make adjustments where needed to ensure language barriers are actually being overcome.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001/ESEA

All children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and State academic assessments.

In the area of ELL, the Act requires that:

1. Core content knowledge is attained in addition to English proficiency; states must establish standards and benchmarks for Limited English Proficient (LEP) students aligned with State standards.

2. States must establish annual achievement objectives for demonstrating adequate yearly progress of LEP students.
3. School district plans will contain descriptions of the program, measurement of progress for LEPs in English and core content, and the promotion of parental involvement.
4. Teachers must be fluent in English (both written and oral communication skills).
5. Instructional methods are based on sound and scientific principles for the limited English students.
6. All students identified as LEP will be assessed in reading and English language arts after they have attended schools in the US for a period of three consecutive years.
7. Parents are notified that their child needs ELL instruction based on limited English proficiency.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Equity: The Every Student Succeeds Act maintains Title III as a separate title with a separate funding stream dedicated to the education of English learners. Funding increase: In an era of fiscal constraint and funding reductions, ESSA recognizes the large increase in the number and percentage of English learners in this country, and increases the Title III authorization levels.

Fair accountability: ESSA gives states two options for delaying English learners' inclusion in accountability systems while they are learning English: For one year, exclude the student from taking the reading/English language arts test and from counting results of either or both the math and English language arts tests; OR For the first year of the student's enrollment in a U.S. school, report on but exclude from accountability system the results on these tests; for the second year of enrollment, include a measure of student growth on both tests; and for the third year of enrollment, include proficiency on both tests in the accountability system. Additionally, English learners who have successfully left the English learner subgroup by attaining English proficiency can be included in that subgroup for accountability purposes for four years. This is something that educators have long argued is an appropriate and fair way to consider the unique needs of such students.

Greater integration into the law's core: For the first time, English language proficiency for English learners is integrated into the system by which all

schools and districts are held accountable. Furthermore, the academic achievement of English learners is more fully integrated into that accountability system. Movement of these two items out of the separate Title III system (while maintaining Title III as a dedicated funding stream) ensures that English learners' academic and language needs can be fully considered by education systems.

Supports for English learners: ESSA provides resources to states and school districts to establish, implement, and sustain high-quality language instruction educational programs designed to ensure that English learners, including immigrant children and youth, develop both English language proficiency and content proficiency in math and English, as measured against challenging academic standards. ESSA requires states to measure school districts' progress in these areas and to provide assistance and support to those school districts with ineffective language instruction educational programs.

Statewide entrance and exit procedures for English learners: ESSA requires the establishment of statewide entrance and exit procedures for English learners to ensure that English learners get the resources they need while still learning English. This also benefits these students by providing them with the stability they need if they move between schools or districts. Reporting requirements: ESSA requires reporting on English learners with disabilities, as well as reporting on the percentage of students who are long-term English learners, as measured by students who have maintained the classification for five or more years.

EDUCATIONAL APPROACH

The Arkansas Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Office for Civil Rights do not prescribe a specific program design/educational approach. It is the district's responsibility to ensure that the educational approach selected addresses:

- Whether the approach provides for English Language Development (ELD), and
- Whether the approach provides for meaningful participation of ELs in the district's educational program.

ELD Embedded is the approach chosen to provide ELD in the Greenwood School District. ELs receive their ELD instruction during a mainstream content class by teachers embedding instruction in English language development. Greenwood School District also provides Declined Services and not participating in an ELD program. This is used only for students whose parents have declined the ELD program services.

Access to Core Content Program Model: The Greenwood School District provides Content Classes with Integrated EL Support. This approach has content knowledge as the goal; teachers provide appropriate linguistic accommodations/supports so that English Learners may access the content. Greenwood School District also offers Declined services and not participating in an access to core content program. This is used only for students whose parents/guardians have declined the access to core content program services.

IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Home Language Usage Survey (HLUS)

When any student new to the district registers, the *Home Language Usage Survey* is included in the registration packet that the family completes in the enrollment process.

1. The registrar at Central Office is responsible for the completion of the HLUS and assuring that EVERY student enrolled has a copy of the HLUS in his/her permanent cumulative file. A copy will be sent to the school counselor and the district ELL coordinator.
2. A parent will complete the HLUS only one time per student, and that is at the time of enrollment into the Greenwood Public Schools.

Home Language Usage Survey (HLUS)

http://www.arkansased.gov/public/userfiles/Learning_Services/English%20Language%20Learners/Arkansas_Home_Language_Usage_Survey.pdf

Assessment

If any one of the questions on the HLUS indicates a language other than English is spoken in the student's home environment, the student must be administered the English language proficiency assessment required by the Arkansas Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) as a placement tool. If the student was considered EL in their previous Arkansas district, the district will accept the student as an EL and hold a meeting to review their current plan, if possible. This guidance applies to foreign exchange students. American Sign Language is not considered a language other than English for purposes of designating ELL status.

1. The language proficiency assessment is chosen and mandated by DESE. It includes all four language areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. If the student is considered EL in their previous district, but the DESE required assessment was not used, that student will receive the ELPA21 screener for placement purposes.

2. School counselors will administer the English proficiency assessment and placement will be determined by the Language Placement and Assessment Committee (LPAC) within 30 calendar days of enrollment at the beginning of the school year and 14 calendar days any other time of the school year.
3. Parents will be notified of the LPAC conference and all information related to the assessment and placement. If the parent requests that the student NOT receive ELL services, a waiver form will be signed. Parents will have knowing and voluntary decision to opt out. The parent can request that services be reinstated at any time. Students will retain EL status and will continue to take the state mandated English proficiency test until they meet exit criteria set by the state.
4. If a student from another Arkansas district enrolls, ELL documents will be requested from the previous district.. The LPAC will convene to determine placement based on previous records. This meeting will occur within 14 calendar days of enrollment during the school year.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

The state adopted ELPA21 will be administered annually to 100% of EL students regardless of the type of services provided and regardless if parents have denied services.

1. The assessment will be administered only by trained and licensed staff.
2. Student levels on the ELPA21 will be shared with parents.
3. Results will be used to measure the progress of EL students in program evaluation and to assist in determining exit status.

PROGRAM SERVICES

Placement of Students

Grade Level Placement:

1. When grade level placement is unclear, it is recommended that students be placed at a grade level which is age appropriate and/or based on credits earned toward graduation.
2. Prior to a decision to retain an EL student, the ELL Coordinator must be consulted.

ELL Program:

1. The LPAC must consist of at least three people. These must include an administrator, ELL Coordinator, and classroom teacher. Other members may include school counselor, interpreter, special educator and parent. Other members may be present as needed.
2. The district will provide language development to students whose parents have refused services by providing language support and monitoring of the student's academic progress. These students will continue to take the ELPA21 annually until they achieve exit criteria.
3. The ELL Coordinator will monitor placement and accommodation decisions.
4. No change may be made on an EL student's placement or accommodations without approval of the LPAC.
5. Student English language proficiency and academic progress will be reviewed annually by the LPAC. Instructional modifications and testing accommodations will be determined annually by the LPAC.
6. Students placed in the ELL program will remain in the program until they meet all exit criteria created by DESE. In order to exit the student must perform Proficient on the ELPA21 and have two pieces of data showing grade level performance. Parents will be notified of the program exit. Following exiting, the student's academic achievement will be monitored for four years. This monitoring will include two data points to show that the student is on grade level.. An LPAC team will meet annually to review this data and parents will receive information regarding this data.

7. A student who has been exited from the program can be readmitted if the student is not succeeding academically due to lack of appropriate English language development. Lack of academic success due to other factors will be addressed through standard district interventions.

Other District Assessments/Programs:

1. Prior to a decision to refer an EL student for special education testing, there should be evidence that the student has learning difficulties beyond the scope of learning another language and the acculturation process.
2. EL students who qualify for special education services may receive both special education and supplemental English development services according to the student's IEP (Individualized Education Program) unless the LPAC determines and documents that such ELL services are clearly inconsistent with the student's identified needs. When an EL student also has an IEP, a special education staff member should be part of the LPAC.
3. All assessments used for special education placement of an EL will be administered in a form or language that will produce valid results.
4. All EL students shall have equal access to Gifted and Talented, Advanced Placement, concurrent credit classes, WATC or any other academic programs and not be denied access to these programs due to a failure of the district to develop English language skills.
5. All EL students shall have equal opportunity to participate in extra-curricular and nonacademic activities.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The district will support initial and ongoing professional development to teachers, interventionists, instructional facilitators, and administrators in the affective needs of immigrant children, process of second language acquisition, and instructional strategies for English language development within the academic content through:

- Information on application to the ESL Academy
- Embedding ELL considerations into workshops on other district initiatives in the content areas (literacy, math, science, social studies, etc.)
- Classroom observations and/or meeting with staff with feedback on implementation of ELL program standards by ELL program staff
- Dissemination of information on resources and research texts
- Attendance at state conferences or trainings

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

The curriculum used by the Greenwood School District will be the Arkansas Department of Elementary and Secondary Education English Language Proficiency Framework aligned with the Common Core State Standards.

Instruction will be delivered in English.

Instruction will integrate language development with academic content. Instructional methods, which will include culturally responsive materials and content, will focus on:

- ❖ Language development objectives, especially academic language
- ❖ Comprehensible input
- ❖ Building background knowledge in content and US culture
- ❖ Interaction with adults and peers for language production (especially academic language)
- ❖ Thinking and study skills
- ❖ Connections with student's prior knowledge and skills

Differentiation of instruction will be based on the student's ELPA21 scores and demonstrated academic proficiency levels.

Assessment accommodations and recommended classroom modifications (as noted on the student's individual ELL plan) will be implemented throughout the school year with EL students.

Sufficient supplemental resources (comparable in quality, availability, and grade appropriateness to that of non-ELL instruction) will be provided by the district for EL students to participate meaningfully in the core content and develop the English language. Resource materials will align with the goals of the ELL program and be appropriate to the needs of EL students.

At all buildings, students will be taught in a regular classroom, unless they receive additional services (SPED, GT, Dyslexia, etc.). They may receive additional services through intensive academic learning support with an interventionist working in small groups.

The only time an EL student should be assigned a failing grade is when language acquisition is not the learning concern and the teacher has provided appropriate and sufficient scaffolding, but the student is not doing the work expected of him or her based on the state ELL curriculum standards. Additional supports, such as school counseling, home supports, etc. afforded to all students may be initiated at this time.

ARKANSAS ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY (ELP) STANDARDS

[ELP Standards](#)

The 10 English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards are organized according to a schema that represents each standard's importance to ELs' participation in the practices called for by college- and-career-ready ELA & Literacy, mathematics, and science standards. In the complete ELP Standards documents the ten standards are linked to K-12 Practices in math, science, and ELA, as well as to the CCSS ELA/Literacy Standards.

Standards 1 through 7 involve the language necessary for ELs to engage in the central content-specific practices associated with ELA & Literacy, mathematics, and science. They begin with a focus on extraction of meaning and then progress to engagement in these practices.

1. Construct meaning from oral presentations and literary and informational text through grade-appropriate listening, reading, and viewing.
2. Participate in grade-appropriate oral and written exchanges of information, ideas, and analyses, responding to peer, audience, or reader comments and questions.
3. Speak and write about grade-appropriate complex literary and informational texts and topics.
4. Construct grade-appropriate oral and written claims and support them with reasoning and evidence.
5. Conduct research, evaluate and communicate findings to answer questions or solve problems.
6. Analyze and critique the arguments of others orally and in writing.
7. Adapt language choices to purpose, task, and audience when speaking and writing.

Standards 8 through 10 hone in on some of the more micro level linguistic features that are undoubtedly important to focus on, but only in the service of the other seven standards.

8. Determine the meaning of words and phrases in oral presentations and literary and informational text.

9. Create clear and coherent grade-appropriate speech and text.
10. Make accurate use of standard English to communicate in grade-appropriate speech and writing.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT

To the extent possible, communications and forms sent to all parents should be translated (written) or interpreted (verbal) in a manner understandable to the parents.

- The district translators will be trained in effective translation/interpretation.
- The district translators and/or ELL paraprofessionals will be available to interpret for parent conferences.
- Parents have the right to request that an interpreter be provided for them. Parents may bring their own adult interpreter.

Parents will be informed of their child's progress in English language development as well as academic performance at least annually.

Additional information on the educational system, assisting their child to succeed in school, learning English themselves, and community resources will be provided through such venues as parent meetings, the District website, school counselors, and/or print materials.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

The ELL program will be evaluated annually and informally and ongoing throughout the year to determine effectiveness. The evaluation process by the ELL Program staff will include multiple considerations such as:

- ❖ CRT and NRT performance of EL students
- ❖ Graduation rate of EL students
- ❖ Discipline referrals on EL students
- ❖ Percentage of EL students qualifying for special education or gifted and talented education, or placement in AP/college courses
- ❖ Grades of EL students
- ❖ Number of exited students from the ELL program
- ❖ Arkansas On Track to Proficiency guidelines for each EL student

MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS

Records on language minority students will be maintained with ELL staff.

Records will be kept for five years after the student graduates from high school. After that time period, the documents will be destroyed.

