

SUPPORTS FOR

PARENTS &
GUARDIANS

OF

English Learners

McDowell County Schools, WV



Supports for Parents & Guardians of English Learners

Introduction

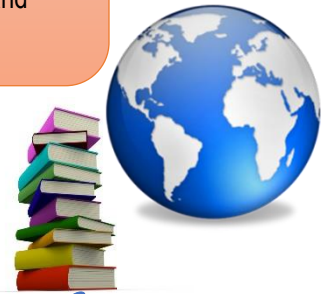
McDowell County Schools wishes to welcome diverse families to our community. We value families as important partners in the education of children and are happy to share this document with parent and guardians of **English Learner (EL)** students. Our hope is that it will serve as a valuable resource as you seek to support your child and better understand the English Learner supports available in our schools.

English Learners

Are students who are learning to speak, read, write, and understand academic English and whose ability to use and understand the English Language affects their ability to meaningfully participate and succeed in school. English learners are generally students who speak a language other than English at home.

Academic English

is the English that is used in schools, in textbooks, and on tests.



✓ How does the school district identify children as English Learners?

Every child enrolled in McDowell County Schools completes a Home Language Survey. This form is used to determine which students may need to be tested on their ability to use and understand the English language.

McDowell County Schools are required to identify students who are **English Learners** by using the following steps:

1. Having parents or guardians complete a **Home Language Survey (Appendix A)**. If you, as parents or guardians, do not read or understand English, the survey must be provided to you in a language that you understand.
2. Students who speak a language other than English are then tested to check their English language skills using the state's screener for English language proficiency.
3. If the test shows that your child is not yet English proficient, he or she will be classified as an **English Learner**.

✓ What supports is my child eligible for as an EL student?

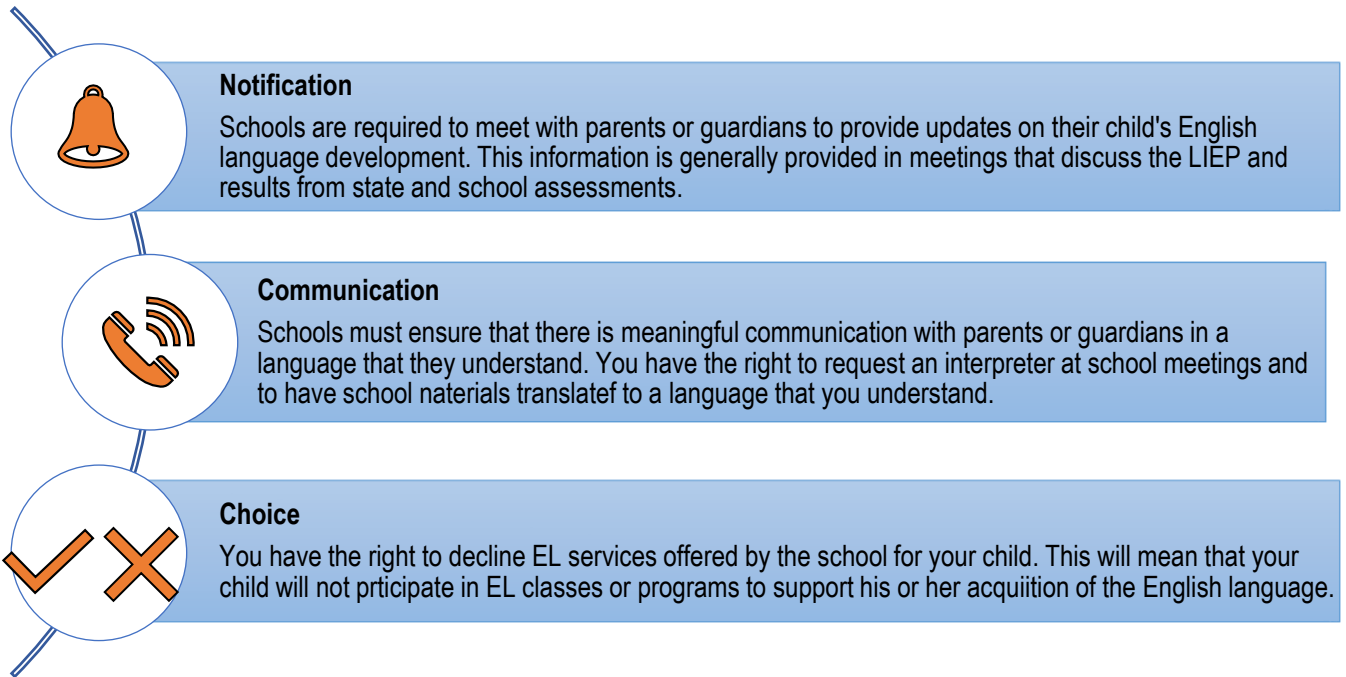
Your child is eligible for certain adaptations to help them master their grade-level content material. These adaptations are called **accommodations** and **modifications** on the Language Instruction Educational Plan (LIEP) and they support him or her both in the classroom and on the assessment. There are many types of accommodations and modifications that may be used to support your child as he or she learns English and core content material. For example, your child may be allowed to use a word-to-word glossary to help him or her translate information, or he or she might also be permitted extra time to complete assignments.



Modifications are changes made to the core content so that learning objectives are different and more accessible for the student.

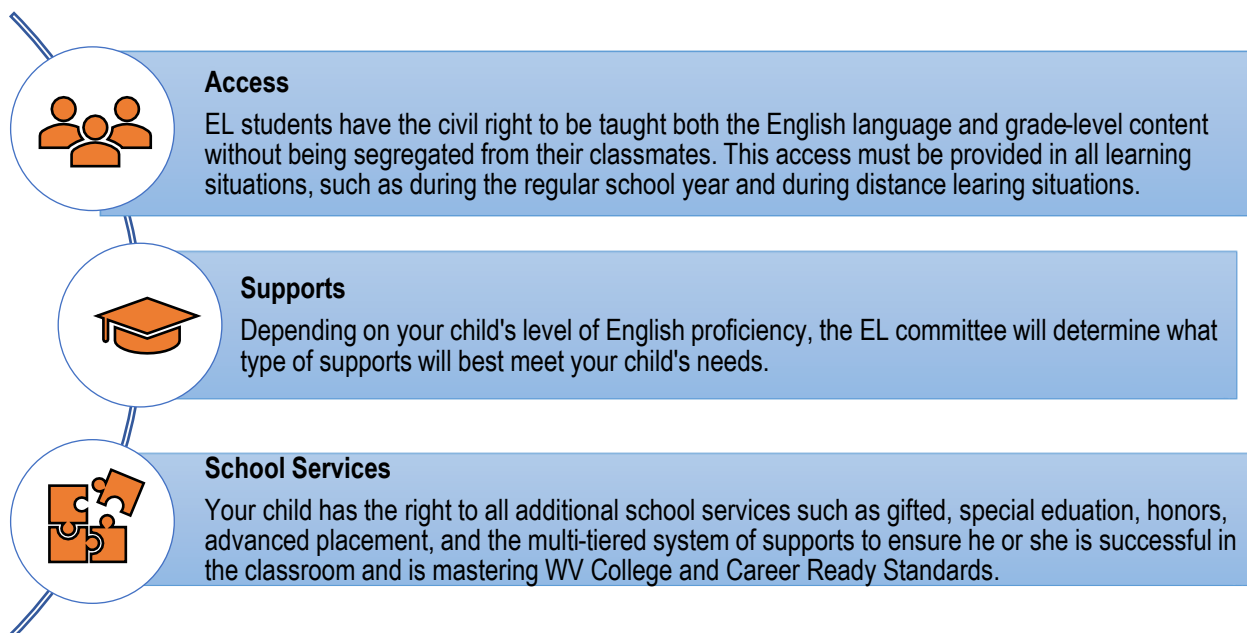
Accommodations are tools and strategies used to help students demonstrate their understanding of taught skills and/or alternate ways students are allowed to show what they know.

✓ What are my rights as the parent of an EL student?



Please note that even if you decline EL services, your child is still classified as an **English Learner** and will be required to take the **English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA 21)** each year until he or she meets the required levels to be considered English proficient.

✓ What are the rights of my child as an English Learner?



✓ What can I do at home to help my child learn the English language?

There are four areas of language (speaking, listening, reading, and writing). It is important to help your child to find ways to practice all of them at home.



SPEAKING



LISTENING



READING



WRITING

One of the most important ways you can support your child as they learn the English language is to encourage your child to read at home in English or in your home language. Reading in English or in your home language will help to

- Build vocabulary knowledge,
- Support decoding skills, and
- Increase reading fluency and comprehension

You can also work with your child to

- Practice vocabulary flash cards,
- Label items around the house, and
- Use free language apps such as Duolingo or other language-learning resources to help build word knowledge and correct usage

Visiting the local library and signing your child up for a library card is another good way to support your child's language skills. Library cards are free and enable your child to borrow books, audio books, and other materials at no cost. The library also offers many free programs in which families can participate.

Talk to your child's teacher about specific programs that are being used with your child and ways you can help your child at home.

It is important to talk daily with your child about school activities (in any language). Communication between parents and children can have many lasting positive effects on your child's education. You can learn a lot about school by simply having conversations with your child about the school day, assignment, and other related activities. This also builds both listening and speaking skills for your child that will help him or her to be more successful at school and in life.

Encouraging your child to join extra-curricular activities such as school clubs or teams is another way to support your child's English language skills. These activities provide your child with opportunities to interact with and talk to other students with the same interests.

✓ What tests will my child be required to take?

In addition to all the academic tests given to all other students (classroom, district, state, or national tests), your child will be tested using **WV English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA 21)** to determine both his or her growth and level of English language proficiency each school year. The test is given in February-March of each school year, and results are provided to you at the beginning of the following year. Your child will be tested in four domains of language development.



SPEAKING



LISTENING



READING



WRITING

✓ How long will my child be considered an English learner?

The amount of time a student is considered an EL student varies for each child. Talk to your child's teacher regularly to monitor his or her progress toward English proficiency.

✓ What is required for my child to exit the EL program?

Students identified as ELs will remain in the program until they test out with qualifying scores on ELPA 21 (WV English Language Proficiency Assessment).

✓ What happens once my child exits the EL program?

Once a student meets the required scores, he or she will no longer be considered an EL student and will be placed on **monitored status (Appendix C)**. This means that school staff will monitor your child's progress for at least two years after he or she exit EL status to ensure that your child is progressing in all academic areas. If your child is struggling, the team will indicate on the monitoring form what supports will be provided to help with academic growth.

If the student needs to re-enter the EL program, he or she will need to take the ELPA21 Screener Assessment and receive a score other than proficient.

✓ What supports will my child receive if schools are closed for an extended time?

If schools are closed for an extended period of time, your child is still eligible for all services provided to all other students. Schools are required to continue to provide support for your child to master both the WV College and Career Ready Standards and English Language Proficiency Standards. Depending on school resources and Internet accessibility, these supports may be provided virtually or through academic packets sent home for your child.

✓ *What else can I do to support my child's academic and English language growth?*

We encourage you to

Ask school personnel about providing translation or interpretation services if you need assistance.

Keep the school phone number in a convenient location at your house. Know your child's bus number, the teacher's name, and your child's grade level.

Keep the school updated on all your contact information such as current phone number and place of employment for the school to be able to contact you for meetings and events or in case of emergency

Work together with your child to ensure his or her success in school. This includes child being well rested, attending school every day, and completing homework assignments to the best of his or her ability

Support your child's academic progress by helping with special projects, asking your child to review prior assignments with you, or asking your child what supplies he or she needs for school.

Stay informed about your child's education and attend parent-teacher conferences, ask questions, and ensure your child has access to all resources and programs he or she needs or qualifies.

Keep up with your child's assignments when your child is absent from school. Ask the teacher to call or message about missed assignments.

Talk to your child about how his or her day went at school. This will help him or her to share interests and concerns and will help you understand school and classroom rules and procedures.

Encourage your child to make friends at school. This will support positive attitude toward school, interest in school activities, and language development.

Read daily with your child in English or in your home language. Ask your child to read aloud to you.

Participate in school activities, such as volunteering for school field trips, classroom activities, or other school programs where parent support is needed.

Believe in what your child can do and teach him or her to be confident as a student and believe in his or her ability to succeed!

Appendix A

Home Language Survey

Student Name: _____ Birth Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

School: _____ Grade: _____

Federal and state laws require the following information to be collected about the primary and home language of every student upon enrollment in the school district. Please, complete a survey for each child you are enrolling in the school district.

1. What language did your child learn when he/she first began to talk? _____
2. What language does your child most frequently speak at home? _____
3. What language is spoken by you and your family most of the time at home? _____

If a language other than English is listed in answering any of the above questions, the school district will test your child's English language proficiency to determine eligibility for initial and continuing placement in an English language development program. You will be notified about the results of this testing.

4. If available, in what language would you prefer to receive information from the school? _____

Parent or Guardian's Signature

Date

Home Language Survey

The form provided to all parents or guardians and is used to determine which students may need to be tested on their ability to use and understand the English Language. It is completed when the student is registered for school