

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS AT MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Frequently Asked Questions

Why does my child need EL (English Learner) services?

EL services support students as they learn academic English for math, science, social studies, and language arts. For the most part, an EL student will still attend regular classes and be taught by both a classroom teacher and an ESL teacher in their classes. Usually only students who are at the beginning levels of English language proficiency (levels 1 and 2) will be pulled out to receive special instruction by an ESL teacher.

How do I know if my child needs EL services?

Every child who enrolls for the first time in MPS is given a Language Survey. If the parent notes that the student first learned, speaks, or understands any language other than English, we will assess the child's English language proficiency with a screening test. If the results of this test show that the child would benefit from English Learner services, he/she will receive EL services at school. Parents always have the right to refuse, or waive, these services.

My child speaks English very well; he/she talks to friends all the time in English, and watches TV and movies in English, so why does he/she still need EL services?

Your child may speak English very well in certain types of social situations, but may need additional support in order to learn vocabulary needed for reading and writing in English at advanced levels. These are key skills that are needed in order to be successful in high school and beyond. Complex academic English takes much more time to acquire and master. For this reason, we strongly encourage parents to keep their children in EL programming until they no longer need services as determined by yearly WIDA ACCESS testing.

What is the WIDA ACCESS test?

This test is an English language proficiency assessment given to Kindergarten through 12th graders who have been identified as English Learners (ELs). It is given annually in February and March to monitor students' progress in acquiring academic English. Based on the results of this assessment your child will be assigned an English proficiency level. That level will be used to determine what EL support services, if any, your child needs. You will receive a letter with your child's assessment results stating what services your child is eligible to receive.

How long will it take to exit EL services?

It is difficult to predict the exact time it will take for a student to fully acquire English proficiency; it may take 5-10 years. Every student is different and may develop at different rates and in different ways. However, it is generally expected that students will advance one half of a proficiency level per school year.

Can my child receive Special Education and EL services at the same time?

Yes, all Special Education students who are also eligible for EL services receive both services as mandated by federal and state law.



The greatest strength of the Minneapolis Public Schools is the great cultural diversity of our students and their families. We believe that cultural diversity helps students acquire the skills and abilities necessary to integrate into the global community. Minneapolis Public Schools have a high quality program for English Language Learners (EL, for its acronym in English). It is our goal that students who receive services to learn English develop English language at their grade level. At the same time, we want to preserve the native language and culture of students and use it as a learning resource for all students. It is our commitment to your child that they are ready for college, a professional career, and life.

Research shows that the most effective way for a student to learn English as a second language is doing it with their peers in the classroom through lessons taught to the whole group.

This booklet explains how students are evaluated as candidates to receive English Learner services, what services are offered, how their progress is evaluated and how students are exited from services. Furthermore, it explains what type of support you can receive from the family outreach specialists at Minneapolis Public Schools and how you can help your child as they learn the English language at home and achieve their academic goals.

Your child may be an English Language Learner if:

- ✓ Their first language is not English,
- or*
- ✓ They grew up speaking both English and another language,
- or*
- ✓ They were born in US, but first learned another language

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How to Support your Child's Education

- Speak in your native language at home
- Set high expectations
- Visit your child's school regularly and communicate with teachers and school staff
- Spend time with your children and participate in their education
- Sit down with your child to do homework and talk to them about how they're doing in school
- Set goals for each school year and for the future
- Limit the use of electronic devices
- Make sure your child eats healthy food and sleeps at least 9 hours each night



ENGLISH LEARNERS (ELs) IN MPS



Identifying English Learners

1. Student enrolls in school
2. All parents complete a Language Survey to report whether a student first learned, speaks, or understands any language other than (or in addition to) English.
3. Those students are given a screening assessment to measure their English Language Proficiency.
4. The results of that assessment are used to determine if the student would benefit from EL services.

English Learner Services

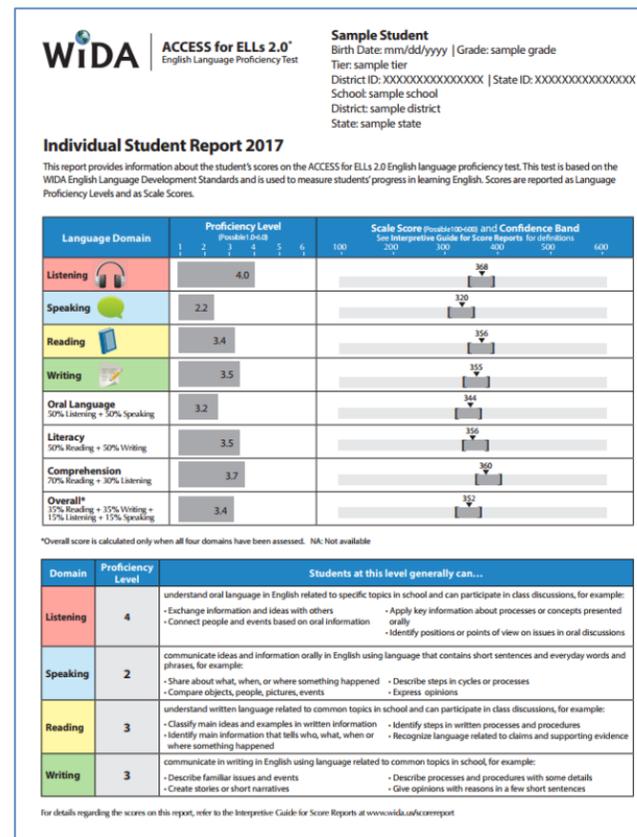
In most cases, EL services are provided to students as part of their regular classes at school. Students who are at lower proficiency levels may be pulled out to receive special instruction from an ESL teacher.

Family Outreach Specialists provides support to EL families during the school year while the student receives EL services.

ACCESS Test

Every spring, students receiving EL services take the WIDA ACCESS test. This test measures English language proficiency in Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.

The following fall, parents receive a score report (see example) showing their student's English proficiency level for each of those sections, and an Overall proficiency level calculated from the four other scores. Proficiency levels are measured on a scale of 1-6.



Exiting English Learner Services

A student's EL services will end when they reach an Overall proficiency level of 4.5 on the ACCESS test, and have a score of 3.5 or higher on at least 3 sections (Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing).

Proficiency Level	Description of Level
1 - Entering	Knows and uses minimal social language and minimal academic language with visual support
2 - Beginning	Knows and uses some social English and general academic language with visual support
3 - Developing	Knows and uses social English and some specific academic language with visual support
4 - Expanding	Knows and uses social English and some technical academic language
5 - Bridging	Knows and uses social and academic language working with grade level material

Outreach staff help children and families understand EL services, connect them to resources and present workshops on the following:

- How to create a learning environment at home
- How to communicate effectively with teachers and school staff
- How to find community resources
- How to be active in your child's education and help them succeed academically
- How to prepare your child for kindergarten
- How to prepare your child for college and professional careers