



**ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS
PROGRAM GUIDE
FRANKLIN COUNTY SCHOOLS
SCHOOL YEAR 2017-2018**

The increasing cultural and linguistic diversity of the student population in Franklin County Schools offers unique opportunities for all educators in our district. The growing population of non-native English speakers also provides a wealth of potential learning experiences and interactions for all of our students. We strive to collaborate with all stakeholders in order to maximize the schooling experiences of our English Language Learners so that they experience academic success.

The students who do not speak English as their first language represent a variety of backgrounds, home countries, native languages, and immigrant statuses. These families are an essential part of our community. Our fundamental challenge as educators is to leverage our resources and expertise to help maximize their success. It is through their schooling experiences that our English Language Learners acquire the cultural understanding and linguistic skills necessary to become productive citizens in our society. Whether born in the U.S. as citizens, resettled in Tennessee as refugees, adopted by loving families, or living here in other circumstances, all of the English Language Learners are our students and we have a commitment to care for and educate them.

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document provides information about various aspects of the Title III Department in Franklin County Schools. It is designed primarily for administrators, registration personnel, and teachers within the district. Although the manual addresses policies and procedures, it also offers valuable information about programming and delivery of services.

IDENTIFYING & TESTING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

The Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VI, Language Minority Compliance Procedure requires LEAs to identify Limited English Proficient [LEP] students. The State of Tennessee program policy states that ELLs must be identified by a two-step process. The first step is the administration of the Home Language Survey [HLS]. The second step, if applicable, is the administration of the state-mandated screener by a certified ESL teacher (formerly the TELPA, which was replaced by the W-APT).

Home Language Survey

Every new student packet should contain an enrollment form, which has three questions commonly referred to as the Home Language Survey. According to the Title III program service requirements, all students registering in a district must be given a Home Language Survey with the following questions:

1. What is the first language this child learned to speak?
2. What language does this child speak most often outside of school?
3. What language do people usually speak in this child's home?

These three questions appear in the middle of the KCS enrollment form and refer to languages that are spoken consistently. Non-examples are if a student is learning Spanish in after-school

care or if a student's Kirundi-speaking grandmother visits several times a year; parents sometimes will write another language to describe such circumstances but the intent of the questions is to determine which language(s) the child hears and speaks on a consistent basis. If anything other than English is written in response to one or more of these questions, even if the responses say "English/Spanish," districts are required to test the student to determine if he/she qualifies for ESL services. If the student is deaf or blind or has pervasive disabilities, the ELL teacher should contact the ESL Supervisor for further guidance.

Enrollment personnel should review the answers to the Home Language Survey on the initial enrollment form. If any of the answers is a language other than English, the secretary should immediately contact the ELL teacher responsible for that school.

If the student has previously been enrolled in Franklin County Schools, the ELL teacher will contact the check the student's ELL file and WiDA scores to determine best placement and related schedule for the student. If the child has been tested or has been receiving ESL services in a school in Tennessee, the ELL teacher will contact that school for testing and service information. If the student has never been enrolled in a school in Tennessee, he/she should be tested within 14 days of the ELL teacher receiving the Home Language Survey to determine qualification for ELL services (if no records from previous school are available). The ELL teacher responsible for the caseload at that school will administer the screener. If the student qualifies as an English Language Learner, the ELL teacher will work with the counselor or other school personnel to determine the best placement and schedule for the student with regards to both ELL services as well as content classes.

Waiving ESL Services

Parents cannot waive ELL services until the student officially qualifies as an English Language

Learner per the score on the W-APT. It is essential to understand that parents are waiving services for their minor children; they waive the right to the dedicated program and direct ESL services. Once a child is an official EL waiver, the regular classroom teacher has the legal obligation of meeting the students' ESL needs. School personnel should not advise parents to waive, especially in cases of behavior or other non-English related issues. Schools should make every effort to request and provide interpretation services in the language spoken by parents so that they truly understand the implications of waiving ESL services. The state has provided guidance that no more than two percent of the ESL population in a district should be waivers. Once a student turns 18, he/she can legally waive ESL services by signing the waiver document. This form should be signed in the presence of or in consultation with someone from the ELL Department. Copies of the waiver should be forwarded to the ELL Department, kept in the ELL file, and also placed in the student's Cumulative Record.

A waiver of ESL services is only a waiver of the delivery of ESL services by an ESL teacher; ELL waiver students still have the right to accommodations for standardized testing as well as modifications in the classroom. Parents/ guardians can un-waive ESL services and request that their English Language Learner receive direct services with an ESL teacher at any time. Waiver students must still take the ELPA each spring until they meet exit criteria and they still count in the official number of enrolled ELs in the district. To un-waive services, the parent(s) should contact the principal who will contact the ELL teacher at his/her child's school.

Identifying ELs for Special Education Services

One of the most difficult challenges for teachers of English Language Learners to address is the question of special education services for ELLs. To ensure that misidentification does not occur, it is important to consider both the academic development and cultural background of the English Learner. It is also important to note that even though it may take five to seven years for ELLs to develop academic language, there is no need to withhold any support services that a student might need during that time. On a superficial level, the way that academic and language difficulties manifest among ELLs can be very similar to the way such difficulties manifest among students with long-term disabilities or special needs. For this reason, it is important to get

a better sense of the specific needs and challenges that are present; it is also necessary to determine if those challenges exist in English only or also in the student's native language. If students have difficulty understanding content or communicating in English only, the determining factor could be a low proficiency in English. If the EL struggles in his/her native language, as well as in English, the issue might not be related solely to a low English proficiency.

If a student exhibits characteristics of a learning disability or other similar condition, he/she will likely not pass the screener, as it assesses writing and reading. Also, if a student has no language, a team of professionals with related expertise should meet to determine appropriate placement; the team should consider the most appropriate placement if a student does not have language at all. Similarly, if students have Individualized Education Plans [IEPs] with primary goals such as toileting, living skills, or social skills, ESL may not be the appropriate placement, as English proficiency is not the main focus.

The following questions should be considered before referring an EL for Special Education services:

- Has the W-APT or ACCESS for ELLs been administered? If so, what is the student's language proficiency level?
- Is there evidence that the student is currently receiving appropriate ESL services?
- Is there evidence that the general education curriculum is being appropriately accommodated for ELs?
- Are appropriate accommodations and modifications within the regular classroom being provided consistently that address the specific language needs of the ELL?
- Is there evidence of prior interrupted formal education? (Student with Interrupted Formal Education)
- Has the student had consistent access to formal education in the United States for more than one calendar year?

- Is it possible that the student is still in his/her silent phase (can last up to 18 months)?
- Is the student making adequate progress (as defined by the second language acquisition

process) through the interventions and accommodations that have been provided?

- Is there evidence that the student's behavior is significantly different from grade level peers? Is there evidence that this is not due to frustration over the target language?
- Has the student been observed in multiple settings (classroom, cafeteria, playground, bus, etc.) to compare his/her behavior to that of grade level ELL peers with similar exposure to language and instruction?
- Have parents been interviewed in their native language to determine behaviors at home? Is the home behavior appropriate in the student's culture? Is the behavior appropriate for a typical classroom in the country of origin?
- Have there been any traumatic events associated with departure from the home country or arrival in the United States? If so, is the student receiving counseling, or has the student been prescribed any medication as pertains to the trauma?
- Is the student a refugee or has the student lived in a refugee camp?
- Are the behaviors exhibited similar to peers of the same linguistic and/or cultural group?
- Is the student's development markedly different from that of siblings in regards to reading, expressive language, and receptive language?

The RTI Process

High quality, scaffolded Tier 1 instruction is crucial for the academic success of ELs. ELL teachers are an integral part of the RTI2 process and should be included in team decisions concerning ELs. Schools should not exclude ELs from Tier 2 or 3 Interventions simply because they are ELs; likewise, not every EL should automatically receive Tier 2 or 3 Interventions simply based on the fact that he/she is not a native English speaker.

The universal screener does not take into consideration that students might not have been in schools consistently and that their first language might not be English. For beginning ELs, the online assessment will likely "kick them out" of the program due to a high number of incorrect responses; in these instances, the EL should take the early literacy screener (to count as the universal screener) in order to have a more accurate picture of language and a solid baseline against which to chart future growth.

Tier II and Tier III Interventions for ELs

English Language Learners who have been in the country for less than one year will benefit most from additional services and support from the ESL teacher. Because these students do not have a large vocabulary in English, they need more time and support to acquire the language and would likely not benefit as much from a targeted intervention not designed specifically for ELs. For students who have a higher proficiency in English (such as a high 3, level 4 or 5), interventions geared toward a more general student population are appropriate. ESL is **not** an intervention; per state law, students with below intermediate proficiency must receive an hour of ESL services per day every day. This time cannot count towards intervention time, although time above the mandated hour can.

Notification to Parents

Throughout the RTI2 process, every effort should be made to communicate with parents of ELs in a language they understand. This is especially important if the RTI2 Team is considering moving an EL from one tier to another or if the process will result in classifying the EL as SPED. Several forms including the “Invitation to a Meeting” form are available in both English and Spanish on the State of Tennessee Department of Education website. Cultural considerations are also important when SPED is involved; many countries, especially in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, do not offer SPED services, so it is additionally challenging for EL families to understand the process and services involved with SPED.

Testing in a Student’s Native Language

Tennessee is an English only state, which means that instruction and assessment must be in English. However, if a test to determine potential disabilities is available in the student’s native language and the student can communicate fluently in that language, that assessment should be administered (if appropriate). This decision should be made by the SPED team.

Scheduling of Services for ELs identified as SPED

When an English Language Learner is also identified as SPED, careful consideration must be given to ensure that the student is given appropriate services. While ELL services are part of the regular education domain, both ELL and SPED services are federally mandated and care must be

taken to observe the intent of both sets of laws and guidelines. While the IEP must be followed in all instances, it should not be viewed as trumping ELL services; both services should work in concert to provide an appropriate education. Decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis and the ELL teacher, as the expert in second language acquisition, should be involved in all parts of the decision-making process. If a situation arises whereby the service requirements for ELL and/or SPED services cannot be met during the school day, both the SPED supervisor as well as the ELL supervisor should be contacted for input. In addition, it may become necessary to review the current delivery of services and determine if the student can be placed on consultative status for ESL services or un-enrolled as an EL (only in rare cases and in consultation with both the ELL Supervisor and the SPED Supervisor).

Classroom Accommodations and Modifications for ELs Identified as SPED

The IEP will outline specific and individualized accommodations and modifications that should be followed in the student's general education classes. The ELL teacher will also provide the general education teacher with a list of suggested language acquisition accommodations and modifications to utilize.

The SPED teacher, the ELL teacher, and the general education teacher can meet in order to determine the needs of the individual student. The SPED teacher can address the accommodations and modifications based on the specific SPED classification, and the ELL teacher can share expertise and suggestions specific to language acquisition accommodations and modifications. Both should offer guidance to and serve as resources for the general education teachers. See the Appendix for a list of accommodations and modifications.

OFFICIAL REPORTING CODES FOR ELS

See below for the official classifications of ELs and how they are reported at local and state levels.

Active EL: Active ELs receive direct ESL services; they are coded as "L".

Waiver: A waiver student is a student whose parents have signed the official ELL department waiver form. A student who is 18 years of age may sign for himself / herself. The waiver does not waive the ELL's right to accommodations or modifications in the regular classroom, only to the direct ESL services. The waiver does not waive the state and federal mandates that the ELL student be administered the state ACCESS each year until he/she has met the minimum exit

criteria. These students are coded as “W” in the student management system.

Consultative: A consultative student is an EL with level 4.0 proficiency who has been placed on consultative status. This usually occurs at the high school level when the student would be best served by accruing credit in other classes towards graduation. Consultative students are closely monitored by the ESL teacher. All requests for moving a student to consultative status must be approved by the ELL Supervisor. ELs in this status must take the ACCESS 2.0 until they meet exit criteria. These students are active ELs and should be coded as “L”.

Transition 1 [T1]: A Transition 1 student has met the requirements for exiting ESL based on the ELPA score and is in his/her first year of monitoring. Their academic progress is monitored a minimum of two times per year by the ELL teacher (per state guidelines). Regular classroom teachers document the modifications and accommodations in use, as well as progress of T1s and T2s on Transition Monitoring Reports. Copies are filed in the student’s ELL file and CR. These students are coded as “1”. They do NOT take the ACCESS. ALL Transition students have legal rights to modifications and accommodations in their classes and on state assessments.

Transition 2 [T2]: A Transition 2 student is a student who has met the requirements for exiting ESL and is in his/her second year of monitoring. The same guidelines for monitoring T1s apply. These students are coded as “2” in ASPEN. They do not take the ACCESS.

Former: Students who have exited ESL and been monitored academically for 2 years (as T1 and T2) are coded as “F” in ASPEN; they do not take the ACCESS.

T3 and T4: Transition 3 and 4 students are in their 3rd and 4th years of exit but are still monitored these additional years

NELB: Students who are not native English speakers but scored too high on the screener to qualify for ESL are coded as Non-English Language Background [NELB]; they are referred to as Do Not Qualify’s [DNQs] by ESL personnel, and the ELL Department is required to maintain a list of students who were tested but did not qualify as ELs. They are coded as “N”.

Age-Appropriate Placement of ELs New to FRANKLIN COUNTY

The same policies that apply to all new students regarding age-appropriate grade placement

should be followed for English Language Learners, although this can be challenging. It is common for students from certain countries to not have attended school consistently prior to enrolling KCS; these circumstances can further complicate the attempt to place ELs appropriately and have impacts on issues such as graduation.

To have disparate and indiscriminate placement policies and/or practices solely based on lack of English language proficiency can prove to be detrimental to the students, as well as determined to be a violation of his/her civil rights. To date, there is no study that has proven the practice of initially placing LEP students below grade level to be beneficial. There exists no consistent or research-backed evidence that such a practice promotes learning English any faster or any better than age-appropriate placement, although the understanding of content is a separate issue.

Research indicates that for every grade a student is retained, it brings him/her closer to dropping out of school, especially for Latinos. In light of this information, it is important for school administrators to consider the following when determining initial grade placement of ELLs:

- Refugee and SIFE students will usually be more than one grade level behind peers of the same age. Placing them in a lower grade than peers of the same age may impede their academic progress.

- Research indicates that it takes 5-7 years to develop academic language proficiency.

Placing students below age-appropriate grade level will not decrease the number of years necessary to become proficient in English.

- Placing a student who is 15 at the middle school level may potentially result in that student not graduating until he or she is 20 years old.

- Personnel in elementary schools should consider the future impact of placing a student below his/her age-appropriate grade level.

A team comprised of professional educators, including the school administrator and the ELL teacher, should consider the following questions when determining grade level placement of students from countries other than the United States:

How much consistent, formal schooling did the student receive in his/her home country?

What is the student's level of literacy in his/her native language?

What is the student's native language?

What is the student's level of English proficiency?

When is the student's birthday?

Are transcripts or formal records from the home country available?

Scheduling in the Elementary and Middle Schools For School Year 2016-2017

The State of Tennessee Title III Service Requirements state that ELs must have full access to content curriculum through necessary modifications and accommodations. ELs must also receive a minimum of one hour of ESL services per day (or for a full class period in the middle and high schools). ACCESS scores do not arrive until late spring, which makes scheduling classes for the next year extremely difficult. Because there is limited time during the school day, it is often challenging to schedule when ELs will receive dedicated ESL services in the elementary and middle schools. In order to receive ESL services, students must miss another class. ELs should never miss lunch or recess in order to receive services during those times. In addition, students should never be "pulled" from math to receive ESL services.

To the extent possible, ESL classes should be scheduled by proficiency levels (among grade bands), instead of by grade levels. For example, if one Spanish class were comprised of Spanish I, II, and III students, the learning experience would not be optimal for any of them; the same is true for ESL. An additional example is that all beginners in grades K-2 would be together at the same time for ESL instruction, instead of all 3rd graders who might include newcomers, beginners, and those with intermediate proficiency in English. In this scenario, students are scheduled by proficiency level with attention focused on avoiding major age gaps.

The recommendation is for schools to provide ESL services during the Reading Language Arts block or RTI time at the elementary and middle school levels. If serving students for ESL is not feasible due to scheduling constraints, the next choice is core extension time. However, this is just guidance and is not a mandate.

Scheduling at the High School Level

Only officially classified English Language Learners can be enrolled and earn credit in an ESL class. ESL class meets 5 days per week.

According to state guidelines, two ESL credits (ESL 1 and ESL 2) can count as two English credits for meeting graduation requirements. ELs can be enrolled in and earn

credits for more than two ESL courses during their time in high school. In fact, until a student exits ESL, he/she should be enrolled in one ESL class per semester to meet the daily requirement of one hour of service; an exception is if the student needs to take content courses in order to graduate.

Newcomers

In addition to unique academic considerations, newcomers need assistance learning everything about school procedures, both formal and informal ones. It is essential to try to explain and practice or demonstrate routines for newcomers. Teachers should be sure to show newcomers where the bathrooms and exits are located, and how to pay for lunch and line up in the hallway, as well as practice emergency drills.

Newcomers have extremely limited vocabularies and will not be able learn the necessary English as well as the academic content of social studies or science; they simply do not have the language skills or knowledge to comprehend the content in English because of the heavy academic load and specialized vocabulary; most will also not have the context for history courses.

When possible with scheduling, basic related arts courses such as PE and art are beneficial for ELs because they can be successful academically without knowing a lot of English. They also have additional opportunities for enjoying courses not in the academic core.

Some newcomers may not communicate when they arrive at school but they are aware of and observing what goes on; this **“silent period”** can last up to 18 months and is a non-native speaker’s response to being in an environment in which he or she is constantly bombarded by a language that he/she does not understand. This is simply exhausting and overwhelming for the brain to try to process all of the stimuli.

During the silent phase, ELs can learn but they might not produce the language. Except in exceptional cases, ELs who are experiencing the silent period should not be referred for SPED services.

Claiming ELs as Part of Teacher Evaluations

If ELs are served for ESL during the ELA block, the regular classroom teacher claims the student. The ESL teacher does NOT claim students.

SERVING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Proficiency Levels of English Acquisition

As with learning in all subject areas, acquiring language is a process with different stages along a continuum of mastery. There are different levels of understanding and each EL progresses at a different rate. In order to provide appropriate, high-quality instruction to ELs, educators must have an in-depth understanding of how to scaffold content and tasks, as well as what are realistic expectations of each stage of language development.

In the past, different scales of proficiency in English have been utilized. Beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, the following classification names will be used by the state of Tennessee to name the proficiency level of ELs. The levels and corresponding descriptions of English development are taken directly from the WIDA performance definitions.

Level 1: At this level, ELLs will process, understand, produce or use:

pictorial or graphic representation of the language of the content areas

- words, phrases or chunks of language when presented with one-step commands, directions, choice or yes/no questions, or statements with sensory, graphic or interactive support

Level 2: At this level, ELLs will process, understand, produce or use:

- general language related to the content areas
- phrases or short sentences
- oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede the meaning of the communication when presented with one to multiple step commands, directions, questions, or a series of statements with sensory, graphic or interactive support

Level 3: At this level, ELs will process, understand, produce or use:

- general and some specific language of the content areas
- expanded sentences in oral interaction or written paragraphs
- oral or written language with phonological, syntactic or semantic errors that may impede the communication, but retain much of its meaning, when presented with

oral or written, narrative or expository descriptions with sensory, graphic or interactive support.

Level 4: At this level, ELs will process, understand, produce or use:

- specific and some technical language of the content areas
- a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in oral discourse
- or multiple, related sentences or paragraphs
- oral or written language with minimal phonological, syntactic or semantic errors that do not impede the overall meaning of the communication when presented with oral or written connected discourse with sensory, graphic or interactive support

Level 5: At this level, ELs will process, understand, produce or use:

- specialized or technical language of the content areas
- a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse, including stories, essays or reports
- oral or written language approaching comparability to that of proficient English peers when presented with grade level material

Level 6: At this level, ELs will process, understand, produce or use:

- specialized or technical language reflective of the content areas at grade level
- a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse as required by the specified grade level
- oral or written communication in English comparable to proficient English peers

Models of ESL Services

A variety of delivery models is utilized in FCS for serving the ELL populations. Based on need, the enrollment of ELs, staffing, and other considerations, administrators should work in conjunction with the ELL Supervisor to implement service models that will be best for their schools. Pull-out, push-in, and co-teaching models are used.

Pull-out services: This model is used by most of the elementary schools in FCS. ESL teachers provide direct services during a block of time. This is a program model in which the ESL teacher pulls the student from his or her regular classroom to provide ELL services during a block of

time. It is strongly recommended that students be grouped for ESL class by proficiency level instead of by grade level. Just as teachers would struggle to provide effective instruction for students in French I, II, and III during the same time block, the same holds true for English Language Learners. The learning experience is not optimal if newcomers are grouped with ELs who have an intermediate proficiency. Research has shown that this model is most effective, especially for ELs with lower proficiency in English.

Push-in: This is a program model in which the ESL teacher “pushes-in” to the regular classroom and provides ELL support in the regular classroom. Research has proven this model is most effective for ELs with a high proficiency in English. However, this model often results in the ESL teacher being utilized as a tutor or an aide. Administrators and teachers should be mindful of the fact that ESL teachers are still required to teach ESL standards to students during this time.

ELL Standards

In October 2013, the State of Tennessee passed on second reading, the adoption of the WIDA standards for ELL instruction. The WIDA standards have 6 levels of language proficiency and are identified as follows: Level 1-Entering; Level 2-Beginning; Level 3-Developing; Level 4-Expanding; Level 5-Bridging; Level 6-Reaching. See chart for performance definitions of the proficiency levels. The WIDA standards correlate well to the Common Core Standards, and provide a framework for students to access the language of core-content subjects. All ELL teachers are expected to use the WIDA standards in their daily instruction. ELL teachers should use a WIDA standard and reference a content standard in their lessons. For SY 2014-2015, teachers should use the ELL curricular frameworks as a guide for planning lessons; they should also incorporate WIDA standards and reference Social Studies standards.

High-Quality ESL Instruction

ESL teachers are language acquisition experts who understand the unique needs and challenges of students who do not communicate in English as native speakers. ELL educators do not just teach English; they understand that students must learn about the sounds (phonology), words (lexicon), and sentence formation of the language (syntax and semantics) —this knowledge does not necessarily include content. Understanding and communicating in English can prevent a

student from being able to express his/her understanding and ability to demonstrate mastery. High-quality ELL lessons should incorporate the four domains of communication: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Visuals are also an essential component of instruction; visuals allow students to link pictures or images to a concept or word. Repetition is also key. Frontloading or pre-teaching of vocabulary and concepts is essential for students to know what to expect and how to related that information to previously learned material. Teachers should also incorporate real-world materials and teach vocabulary in context. In addition, teachers should use basic English and avoid idioms and complex language when possible (particularly with lower proficiency ELs).

Incorporation of Native Language

As students learn another language, their brains have to process the new words and do this by integrating the language and comparing the words and grammatical structures to what they know in their native languages. For this reason, they often confuse words from the two (or more) languages they speak. It is normal and okay for them to try to explain themselves in their first language. Teachers should not discourage this practice; not only is this part of a normal process, it is a link to their cultural and linguistic heritages. In order for ELs to learn and to feel comfortable, they must have a low **affective filter**.

Language Acquisition

As students interact with peers, watch television programs in English, and listen to music, their language proficiency increases. It is often misleading when an EL seems to express himself/herself well in everyday, informal social situations. This type of language development is conversational English and is referred to as Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills [BICS] and it is what students first demonstrate. For example, telling someone how you are doing or asking for an ice cream is infinitely easier than understanding and describing the process of photosynthesis. Many students who sound fluent because of a highly developed conversational ability in English do not necessarily have a comparable proficiency in formal language. Unlike BICS, which is surface level, Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency [CALP] is the language of formal academic learning. It takes much longer, from five to eight years, to acquire.

Several factors can impact a student's ability to acquire English. Factors such as amount of

consistent formal education, literacy in native language, parents' educational levels, and native language spoken play a role. For example, students who are native German or Spanish speakers will likely struggle less than Arabic speakers. Spanish uses the same characters and shares a common alphabet with English. Arabic and Chinese are logographic languages that do not have letters. Just learning a new alphabet, not to mention the accompanying sounds and usage, is challenging and takes time.

Accommodations, Modifications, and Strategies for Instruction and Assessment

The Franklin County Schools ELL Department suggests the following strategies, accommodations and modifications for use in instruction of English Language Learners.

- Linguistic Strategies and Accommodations (written/oral/aural)

___ linguistically simplified/abbreviated assignment

___ linguistically simplified/abbreviated reading selection

___ use of visuals

___ wait time

___ cues

___ incorporation of audio (ex. Record lessons, vocabulary words)

___ pre-teaching or front-loading of vocabulary and concepts

___ contextualizing vocabulary and concepts using a graphic organizer or word map

___ additional time to complete assignments

___ opportunities to re-try or re-do assignments and assessments

___ directions repeated or read aloud to student

___ use of dual language or word-to-word bilingual dictionary

___ grading work holistically and for comprehensibility, not deducting points for grammar

___ incorporate diverse cultures, languages; allow EL to contribute, share about her culture

- Logistical Strategies and Accommodations

___ seat student near area of instruction

___ use of peer tutor or buddy system

___ heterogeneous grouping

___ provide student copies of class notes or chapter summaries in simplified English

- ___ highlighting or marking important ideas/concepts in the text
- ___ use of manipulatives, flashcards or other tactile/hands-on activities
- ___ enhanced assignment format (word bank, visuals, graphic organizer, short answer, reduced multiple choice)
- ___ extra learning or extension opportunities
- Classroom Testing Accommodations
 - ___ linguistically simplified or abbreviated test or quiz (reduce unnecessary words, idiomatic expressions)
 - ___ additional time to complete assessments
 - ___ providing a word bank
 - ___ allowing students to provide visual representations as answers
 - ___ opportunity to re-do or correct missed items
 - ___ enhanced format (graphic organizer, matching, short answer, reduced multiple choice)
 - ___ alternative test formats (projects, presentations, portfolios, etc.)
 - ___ oral testing (allow students to explain answers)
 - ___ read test items aloud to student
 - ___ use of bilingual dictionary (if fluent in native language and used to using the dictionary)

ELL teachers are wonderful resources for regular classroom teachers; they can suggest ways for them to modify the assignment and to reduce the level of complexity of language. However, it is not the responsibility of the ELL teachers to modify the assignments and tests for ELs. ELs have a legal right to have access to the content; this means that regular classroom teachers have the responsibility of making these modifications as appropriate. In addition, strategies and instructional practices outlined by CALLA, Marzano, and other leading educational researchers are also essential to help scaffold instruction for ELs. In fact, it is often said that best practices for ELs are best practices for all students.

The purpose is not to “dumb it down” or to change the content of courses, just make the information accessible to students.

These modifications and testing accommodations should be documented so there is a record of the ways in which teachers are attempting to meet the ELs’ needs. For Transition students, these

can be documented on the monitoring form; for active ELs, the information can be included in the ELL file.

Retention of ELs and Failing Grades

The State of Tennessee Title III service requirements for ELLs state that English Learners may not be retained or failed based on language ability; this mandate is derived from Section I, Part G in the Guidelines to Satisfy Legal Requirements of *Lau v. Nichols*. It is extremely difficult to rule out English completely when attempting to determine the perceived lack of sufficient progress of ELs. This is especially true for ELs who have a very low proficiency in English and those who have not been in a U.S. school for an entire calendar year.

Research indicates that retention of ELs may result in a considerable decrease in the probability of graduation. Xia and Kirby (2009) published a meta-analysis of studies conducted since 1980 on the impact of retention; they found little support for lasting academic benefits of retention for students. In addition, a study published by the National Association of School Psychologists argued that significant previous research showed retention resulted in negative effects on academic achievement. Some researchers have stated that one retention decreases an EL's likelihood of graduating by half; for Latinos/as, one retention decreases the likelihood of graduation to only 25%.

Though the decision to promote or retain must be made on a case-by-case basis, any decision to retain an ELL must be accompanied by documentation demonstrating that appropriate accommodations and modifications were employed throughout the year to assure compliance with federal requirements (May 25, 1970 Memorandum). An official form for each EL retention must be submitted to the ELL Supervisor for reporting purposes; beginning in 2014-2015, all districts are required to input data relating specifically to the number of ELs retained in each grade level as well as a justification for each retention.

Prior to retaining an EL, the following questions/circumstances should be considered in consultation with the ELL teacher and other professionals.

Is the student a newcomer or classified as Entering as determined by the W-APT or the ACCESS for ELLs? Has the student been enrolled in a U.S. school or been in the U.S. for less than 365 days? If the answer to any of these is yes, then limited language proficiency can most likely not

be ruled out. A newcomer may still be in what is referred to as the *silent period* and may not yet be able to produce the language.

1. Is the student classified as an Entering or Emerging student as determined by the W-APT or ACCESS for ELs? If the answer is yes, then limited language proficiency cannot be ruled out.

2. Is the student identified as a refugee student (as noted on the Department of Homeland Security-U.S. Customs and Border Patrol Form I-94) or a SIFE? Refugee students and SIFEs, especially those who have been in a U.S. school for less than one year, may continue to have noticeable gaps in their target language acquisition. Because these students are already significantly behind their peers in terms of education, retention should be considered only as a last alternative.

3. Are accommodations and modifications being made consistently in the following areas in the regular classroom:

- instruction
- assignments
- homework
- assessments

Have these accommodations / modifications been documented?

4. If the student is receiving failing grades, has the ELL Failure Analysis and Documentation Report been completed? Has there been consistent communication with the parents throughout the year in a language they can understand? Is there documentation that the parents have been notified of each failing grade in a language they understand? Has there been a parent conference with an interpreter for the parents if needed? Has English language proficiency been ruled out as a reason for failure?

5. Is a WIDA Level 1 to Level 3 EL receiving at least one hour of ESL services daily? Is a high-intermediate to advanced level EL receiving enough ESL for instruction to be meaningful? Is there documentation of these services?

6. Has the classroom teacher received professional development on behavioral issues of ELs/refugee students/SIFEs? Has a behavior plan been implemented? Has a behavior

liaison been consulted?

7. Have there been documented professional conferences/collaborations throughout the year that include most, if not all, of the following: the classroom teacher, the ELL teacher, an administrator, a counselor, a social worker, a nurse, a psychologist (to address and/or rule out other issues)?

8. Is the student making progress according to benchmark assessments? Has she or he earned at least average grades? If yes to both, this suggests that English could be ruled out but might not support retention.

9. Has the student missed a significant amount of school since enrolling?

Elementary personnel should be mindful of the long-term impacts of retention for ELs, especially as they relate to graduating from high school. It is also essential for regular classroom and content teachers in all grade levels to modify the level of English and to provide and document modifications made throughout the semester or school year. In addition, because the impacts of retention or failure to earn credit in a high school course are serious, it is essential for appropriate and deliberate programming, academic support, and delivery of services to be in place as early as possible.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

Each district is required to assess annually the English proficiency of identified ELL students; in SY 2015-2016, the state-approved ACCESS 2.0 for this assessment. ACCESS 2.0 will be administered to ALL active ELs (including waivers as well as those students receiving direct services) by certified ESL teachers. The state provides a window of time (usually 3-4 weeks) when the assessment must be given.

ACCESS 2.0 assesses Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing; students receive scores of 0-5 based on these domains, as well as a composite score. Typically, score reports are sent to districts in late spring. There are no accommodations (such as reading aloud, prompting, etc.) for the ACCESS 2.0. ALL identified active ELL students are required to take the ACCESS 2.0 per state guidelines; scores of "1" are assigned to students who are not assessed. For this reason, it is essential to administer the ACCESS 2.0 to all of our students.

In FCS, once a student scores a minimum of "5" in Literacy and earns a 5 composite score,

he/she has demonstrated proficiency and becomes automatically a T1 (Transition 1st year) student. T1 students are not active ELs and do not receive direct services from ESL/ELL teachers. ESL teachers monitor the academic progress of T1s for two years; the second year of transition is the last one for ELL students to be monitored. T1 and T2 students have essentially “tested out” of ESL by passing the ACCESS; they do have the right to have specific testing accommodations, however, and classroom teachers are required to continue to make modifications so that students can access the content.

Testing Environment

The ACCESS 2.0 is a state test and should be treated just as the TNReady and state EOCs. The test must be administered in a secure testing environment with no disruptions. Teachers who do not have a separate classroom space cannot administer the test in “public areas” of the schools such as hallways or cafeterias. Also, the Speaking portion of the test must be administered in an area which will not record interference from other students while speaking. ESL teachers will need a computer and headphones with a microphone in order administer ACCESS 2.0 (except for alternative exams and Kindergarten).

Testing Accommodations on the ACCESS

Because the ACCESS tests the proficiency of English in the four domains of communication, accommodations are not allowed on this assessment per the state guidelines; however, test administrators should use their professional judgment and document cases where it could be detrimental for students to take the assessment. Teachers should not force students if they are emotionally fragile or physically unable to take the test. For specific questions about testing or related guidelines for accommodations, contact the FCS Supervisor of Testing in the Department of Accountability.

WIDA Assessments

The WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test [W-APT] is the assessment tool used by educators to measure the English language proficiency of potential ELLs. This screening tool is used to determine whether a child is eligible for English language instructional services. In order to administer the W-APT and ACCESS for ELs, ESL teachers must pass an online assessment. All scores will be sent to the Title III Coordinator for the state of Tennessee. Teachers who do not

pass the assessment cannot administer the W-APT or the ACCESS for ELs.

ACCESS for ELLs®

ACCESS for ELLs will be administered annually to all English Language Learners in Tennessee beginning in Spring. It is a standards-based, criterion referenced English language proficiency test designed to measure English Language Learners' social and academic proficiency and progress in English. It assesses social and instructional English as well as the language associated with language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies within the school context across the four language domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. ACCESS for ELLs meets the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 mandate requiring states to evaluate ELL students in grades K through 12 on their progress in learning to speak English. All students identified as ELLs must take the ACCESS for ELLs, including students whose parents have waived Language Instruction Educational Program; however, students who have formally exited language assistance services and are in monitored status (Transition) do not take the assessment.

The Six Levels of Proficiency in English on the ACCESS for ELs:

Level 1- Entering: Beginner/Preproduction

Level 2- Emerging: Beginning/Production/Early Intermediate

Level 3- Developing: Intermediate

Level 4- Expanding: Advanced Intermediate/Early Advanced

Level 5- Bridging: Advanced

Level 6- Reaching [Formerly LEP; moving to the transition phase]

Federal Guidelines for English Fluency of ESL Teachers

Federal guidelines require districts to ensure that all ELL teachers are fluent and competent in the four domains of communication: reading, writing, speaking, and listening (the same domains assessed by the ELPA).

Highly Qualified ESL Teachers

In order to meet the requirements for the NCLB Act of 2001 for ensuring that teachers who provide instruction are highly qualified, the following guidelines are used to determine that ESL teachers in Tennessee are Highly Qualified. In addition to being certified in ESL in the state of

Tennessee, a teacher who has the following certification/documentation in at least one area mentioned below will be highly qualified in teaching ESL:

1. A passing score on the Praxis specialty area exam for ESL. *OR*
2. A master's degree (MEd) in English, Education, Curriculum and Instruction, or Linguistics with an area of emphasis in teaching ESL or bilingual education.

OR

3. An academic major in ESL: 24 semester hours possibly including up to 6 hours of a foreign language. *OR*
4. National Board Certification in ESL. *OR*
5. Can qualify using the Professional Matrix under the House Option.

APPENDIX C: TN RETENTION GUIDELINES FOR ELS

Retention of LEP students 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 a LEP student, the following points should be addressed in consultation with the ESL staff or designated district language minority contact person.

1. Has the student been enrolled in the school district for more than one full academic year?

If not, the child may have spent more than 1/2 the year in a "silent period." Two to four months may be inadequate for educational goals.

2. Are classroom modifications being made in the following areas in the regular classroom:

- the classroom;
- assignments;
- homework; and
- assessments.

3. Are all modifications documented? Has there been a discussion with the ESL/Title III coordinator?

4. Has the student been considered as an individual & had differentiated instruction?

Have modifications and differentiation been documented?

5. Is a beginning to intermediate student receiving an hour of ESL daily? Is a more

advanced student receiving enough ESL for instruction to be meaningful?

6. Does the teacher modify grading through a rubric or contract?

Retention policies for LEP students should not be based on one specific piece of data alone or any sole criterion. In most cases, retention does not help the child with academic achievement. Every effort should be made to move the child to the next level of academic work and allow the child to remain in the grade that is age appropriate.

Retention of LEP students will not facilitate English language acquisition. The process of language acquisition should occur at all grade levels. The ESL Coordinator is available for technical assistance at jan.lanier@tn.gov or 615-532-6314.

This document is available at the TN Department of Education site for Title III-ESL Resources at <http://www.tennessee.gov/education/fedprog/fpeslresources.shtml>