

**OZARK CITY SCHOOLS
ENGLISH as a SECOND LANGUAGE
HANDBOOK
AND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

The number of Non-English Language Background (NELB) students entering American schools is growing rapidly. These students who are still learning English often require special instruction in order to be successful in school. It is our goal to ensure that Ozark City Schools meets the needs of this growing population.

In 1974, the Supreme Court declared, “Students who do not understand the language of instruction are effectively foreclosed from learning. Simply providing the same classrooms, teachers, textbooks and materials does not ensure success.” (Lau vs. Nichols) These students require a different approach to their education. The Ozark City Schools English as a Second Language Handbook/Plan is intended to describe the program to assist personnel who impact the education of NELB students in the district.

Assurances:

Ozark City Schools ESL program complies with all federal and state laws regarding Non-English Language Background (NELB) students. It is the policy of the Board that Ozark City Schools will provide, on a nondiscriminatory basis, equal educational opportunities for students. No student shall be denied the benefits of any educational program or activity on the basis of sex, race, color, creed, national origin, ethnic group, ability, immigrant status, English-speaking status or disability.

All programs offered by schools within Ozark City Schools shall be open to all students consistent with statutory and judicial requirements. Ozark City Schools provides the research-based Content-Based ESL Instruction to English Learner (EL) students who need support and instruction in English language development to increase their proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, comprehending, and writing. This service is designed to allow students full and complete access to the mainstream academic programs and all other programs of the schools.

ESL Program Goals

The goal of Ozark City Schools English as a Second Language Program (ESL) is to provide equal educational opportunities through English language development to students who have a Non-English Language Background (NELB) and who are Non- or Limited-English Proficient (LEP). In addition, Ozark City Schools strives to create a learning environment that provides the cognitive and affective support to help all students achieve academic success.

The ESL program is designed to help EL students develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English to a level of proficiency that allows them to compete with their English-speaking peers academically and to participate in the mainstream activities of the school.

OVERVIEW OF THE ESL PROGRAM PROCEDURES

The ESL Program is implemented district-wide in a uniform manner. The purpose of the program is to ensure that in each school:

1. Non-English Language Background (NELB) students are identified through the use of a Home Language Survey. Each student’s survey will be retained in his/her cumulative record.

2. NELB students are assessed to determine their levels of listening, oral, reading, and writing proficiency.
3. A committee reviews the results of the assessments and makes recommendations for placement in ESL services.
4. Notification of eligibility for services is sent to parents.
5. NELB students found to need ESL services are entered into the ESL program for English language development.
6. EL students' progress is monitored and assessed on a regular basis to ensure their needs are being met.
7. EL students, who achieve fluency in the language are exited from ESL services.
9. NELB students who have been exited from ESL services are monitored for four years to ensure they will continue to be successful in the mainstream.
10. Monitored students who experience language-related difficulties are considered by the ESL committee for other support programs or for readmission to the ESL program.

IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WHO NEED THE EL PROGRAM

Registration

A language-minority student is one whose home language is other than English. According to the Alabama State Department of Education's Federal Programs Local Education Agency Requirements for Serving Limited-English Proficient (LEP) Students, June 2002, "all language-minority children must be allowed to attend school, regardless of their ability to produce a birth certificate, social security number, or immigration documentation. Children may not be excluded from school because they do not have a social security number." In keeping with these requirements, the following guidelines are used in enrolling language-minority students (also known as Non-English Language Background (NELB) students):

- *No students are denied enrollment based on race, religion, ethnicity, or immigration status.
- *Proof of residency must be provided.
- * Current immunization records must be provided. If the parents do not have the immunization records available, parents will be assisted in obtaining a current immunization by calling the child's previous school or by providing them with directions to the health department. Ozark City Schools will emphasize the importance of acquiring the immunization form quickly so that the child can begin attending classes as soon as possible. If there are problems acquiring an immunization form within a reasonable amount of time, the school should contact Sheila McLeod, Student Services Officer, at (334)774-5197, ext. 2506.
- * A Social Security number is requested but is not required. If a student does not have a Social Security number, the school should contact Sheila McLeod, Student Services Officer, at (334)774-5197, ext. 2506 for assignment of a district-generated student number. Children may not be excluded from school because they do not have a Social Security number.
- * A birth certificate is requested. However, if the parent is unable to produce a birth certificate, contact Sheila McLeod, Student Services Officer, for assistance at (334)774-5197, ext. 2506 in order to determine the available options.

CLASS/GRADE PLACEMENT AND ASSIGNMENT

English Language Learners who enter Ozark City Schools are assigned to a regular classroom. This assignment is made on the basis of school records from previous schools. NELB students must be placed at the grade level appropriate for their age, regardless of the student's level of English proficiency or school attendance history. Placing a student at a lower grade level because they do not know English is illegal and is not necessarily beneficial or productive for the student.

At the high school level, credits should be awarded based on transcripts provided by the student/parents. If transcripts are in a language other than English, translators or translations should be sought so that credits can be awarded. Since beginning in ninth grade students must earn credits toward a diploma, EL students need a schedule that includes opportunities to earn needed academic credit.

Identification

When every new student enrolls in Ozark City Schools, the parent/guardian completes a Home Language Survey. The purpose of the Home Language Survey is to initially identify students who come from a background where a language other than English has played a significant role in their lives.

If the answer to any of the questions is a language other than English, the student is considered a language-minority student. The ESL teacher/coordinator should be informed within three days about this student, and a copy of the Home Language Survey for any language-minority student should be provided to the ESL teacher/coordinator. The original Home Language Survey for every new student, regardless of language background, should be filed in the student's cumulative folder.

Assessment

Unless records show that the student has already been successfully exited from ESL services or was recently tested, all language minority students entering school at the beginning of the school year must be tested within thirty (30) days of enrollment to determine the student's level of English-language proficiency. NELB students who enter into school after the beginning of the school year must be tested within 10 days to determine English-language proficiency.

For these NELB students, the WIDA Access Placement Test (W-APT) will be administered to kindergarteners and first-semester first grade students (The W-APT is a screener used to assess the speaking and listening proficiency level of students in kindergarten, 1st semester. The W-APT will also be used to assess proficiency in speaking, listening, reading and writing for students in kindergarten, 2nd semester through students in 1st grade, 1st semester). For students in 1st grade, 2nd semester and beyond, the WIDA Online Screener will be used to assess English proficiency in all four domains of English (reading, writing, listening, and speaking).

Eligibility for Services

Any language-minority student who scores non-proficient is identified as an English Learner (EL) student. Students are considered eligible for ESL services on the following basis:

- The student has a Non-English Language Background (NELB).
- The student lacks English proficiency as shown by the W-APT or WIDA Online Screener.
- The student was actively enrolled in an ESL program in another district.

CONTENT-BASED ESL INSTRUCTION PROGRAM MODEL

The Content-Based ESL model is an instructional program that assists students in learning English. It is a program of techniques, methodology, and curriculum designed to teach limited-English proficient students English-language skills, including comprehension, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Study skills, content vocabulary, and cultural orientation are also emphasized. English is the language of instruction.

The ESL program strives to provide equal educational opportunities through English language development to NELB students and who are Non- or Limited-English Proficient. The Content-Based ESL program teaches the students the language and skills needed to allow them to compete with their English-speaking peers academically and to participate in the mainstream activities of the school.

Research suggests that the average EL student who receives ESL support will gain Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) in one to three years. This includes what is termed as “survival language” or the language necessary to function in everyday life.

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) is the language necessary to understand academic content, understand classroom instruction and lectures, take notes, read and understand textbooks and take academic tests. *The average student will gain this type of language in five to seven years.* With adequate instruction and support, many students can advance one proficiency level (a minimum of a half point increase on the ACCESS composite) per school year.

Content-Based ESL Program Organization

Ozark City Schools uses the scientifically researched-based Content-Based ESL Instruction (Crandell, 1992) as the EL program. As recommended by the EL committee, additional support for English language learning may include tutoring or supplemental Title I services. For non-English speaking students, the EL committee may recommend a temporary emphasis of English acquisition over content subjects.

Content-Based ESL Instruction:

Academic subjects are taught in the regular classroom setting using English as the medium of instruction. Teachers use the *WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards for ELLs, K-12* to develop lessons that ensure English literacy acquisition while meeting the state’s core academic content standards. Highly qualified content-area teachers use techniques such as simplified language, physical activities, visual aids, the environment to teach vocabulary and concept development in academic subjects. The program of instruction is designed for the student to ensure:

- versatility and flexibility
- interactive lessons with hands-on learning and cooperative learning
- EL students succeed by providing appropriate accommodations for individual needs

- integration of language skills, thinking skills, and content knowledge

Supplemental Instructional Activities

In addition to Content-Based EL Instruction, English Learners may receive pull-out instruction, access to Lexia Core 5, a web-based reading program that provides targeted practice and instruction to develop students' reading skills, or RTI intervention.

The ESL staff works with classroom teachers to monitor student's progress. Students are assessed annually to determine the progress made in language acquisition related to academics. The progress of students on state-administered assessments may also be used in monitoring. Areas of deficit will be identified and used in determining skills that need to be emphasized.

Amount/Type of Services

An ESL Committee decides on the amount/type of services an individual student requires. The need for adequate yearly progress is taken into consideration when making this decision. It is suggested that the area of greatest need for language development be considered when determining the amount and type of service provided.

Entry into the ESL Program Upon completion of Screening

Parents must be notified of their child's eligibility within thirty (30) days after the beginning of the school year. The notification specifies information pertaining to parental rights. For NELB students who enter school after the beginning of the school year, Ozark City Schools must notify parents within 10 days of a student being placed in an ESL program.

Steps taken to enter a student into ESL

- * Assess and determine the need for ESL services.
- * Convene the ESL Committee to determine eligibility.
- * Notify parents of a student's eligibility.
- * Receive the notification document signed indicating parent's knowledge of student's participation (not required, but preferred to document parent's receipt of notice).
- * Place in the ESL program.

Parental Refusal of Service

Parents have the right to refuse ESL services for their child. Every effort should be made to explain to parents the need for ESL services for a student who is eligible. Information is given to parents in their own language when necessary. If a parent still determines they wish to refuse ESL services, a parental refusal form must be signed by the parents and placed in the student's cumulative record. At this point, the school should continue to be aware of any language-related problem that may occur for that student and inform the teacher responsible for ESL services in the school. Even though a parent refuses services, a student is eligible for classroom accommodations. However, it is important to inform parents that accommodations cannot occur on State mandated tests unless a student is a participant in an ESL program. The waived student will still take the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 until reaching the exit criteria of a 4.8 composite score.

Monitoring Student Progress

While in the ESL Program the ESL teacher and classroom teacher(s) closely monitor each student's progress. Each nine week period the classroom teachers report grades/concerns to

determine the progress and needs of the ESL student. Informal observations and formal and informal assessments, such as language samples, portfolios, teacher-made tests, etc. may also be used to assess the student's progress. If progress is not being made, adaptations to the ESL program for the student may be made and additional accommodations in the regular classroom may be recommended.

Reevaluation

English Language Learners must be tested annually on an English proficiency test, the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0, to determine the amount of progress students have made in English. Teachers may also use other methods of evaluating progress, such as portfolios, anecdotal records, etc.

Exit from the ESL Program

EL students remain eligible for ESL services until they meet the following criteria for exit from the ESL program:

- * An overall composite score for the proficiency level of 4.8 or higher on the ACCESS
- * Ability to do grade-level work with an average grade. (However, in some cases, the student may still need accommodations or some special instruction, such as supplemental reading. The ESL committee makes recommendations for these types of services.)

Monitoring Student Progress When Exited from the ESL Program

When an EL student is exited from the ESL program, the ESL and classroom teacher(s) will monitor the student's progress. Periodic monitoring in the form of a review of grades, and possibly other criteria such as review of student work samples, review of formal and informal assessments, and/or discussion between the ESL/instructional support teacher and the classroom teacher occurs for a minimum of four (4) academic years to determine if the student is performing adequately in the regular program without ESL support.

If the student's grades decline, the ESL teacher will work with the classroom teacher to determine if the student needs academic support from other supports such as RtI. The student may be referred back to the ESL committee for determination of placement back into the ESL program if lack of English proficiency is shown upon rescreening.

GRADING AND ACCOMMODATIONS FOR EL STUDENTS

It may not be appropriate to use standard grading procedures for EL students. The lack of a student's ability to read and write in English should not be the basis for an "F" in a class or retention in a grade. An EL student should not fail a subject or grade level without full documentation of accommodations that have been made to assure the student full access to the content.

Some suggestions for grading are:

- * An "O, S, I, NI" scale (for outstanding, satisfactory, improving, or needs improvement) might be used in place of the traditional grade for 1st year ESL students in grades K – 8. Teachers could use this option when the student is not yet able to produce work on accommodated content. An "N" should not be assigned on the basis of lack of English language proficiency. Instead, it would represent that the student is choosing not to participate.

- * Consider progress. For example, if the student masters 5 vocabulary words one week and 6 the next week, then progress toward the goal of total content can be considered in grading.
- * Identify specific key concepts and vocabulary for which students will be responsible.
- * Add comments or an EL designation on the report card that indicate the grade reflects accommodated curriculum.
- * In academic classes at the high school level, pass/fail is not appropriate. Students cannot receive a Carnegie credit for any required course unless there is a letter grade. The key to grading EL high school students is appropriate accommodation of content. The student should be given regular grades and be graded on the accommodated work. The concern at the high school level is the responsibility for the State Course of Study. Keep in mind that EL students work under a dual load: learning a new language and learning new content in a language they have not yet mastered.
- * Alternate assessment (i.e., portfolios, projects, oral reports, lists that express what students have learned, etc.) is often a preferred option for EL students.
- * Use accommodations wisely. If an EL student is earning a D or F on class work with few accommodations, accommodations should be reviewed and appropriately altered. An EL student must never receive a failing grade on the basis of lack of English proficiency. Conversely, if a student receives A's or B's in a modified program, it is time to scale back on accommodations allowing the student to move closer toward grade level.
- * If a teacher believes a failing grade is justified, accommodations provided must be clearly documented, what steps were taken to support the student, and that the student fully understands the reason for receiving the failing grade.

ADDITIONAL COMPONENTS AND REQUIREMENTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE ESL PROGRAM

English as a Second Language (ESL) Committee

The ESL committee that guides and monitors the placement, services, and assessment of EL students. The committee is led by the ESL teacher/coordinator. The committee may be composed of general education teachers, special education teacher(s), counselor(s), administrators, the parent, and/or district level personnel (such as social workers, attendance officer, nurse, etc.).

ESL Committee Responsibilities

- * Reviewing all information concerning the student's language background, English-proficiency level, and academic performance before considering a student for an ESL program
- * Determining placement in and exit from the ESL program.
- * Determining participation in and/or accommodations for the State Assessment Program.
- * Suggesting accommodations for use in regular content area classes.
- * Determining best grading procedures for student.

Ozark City personnel hired to teach EL students are fluent in English, both written and oral communication skills. ESL teachers are either certified or trained to teach EL students. Professional development opportunities are provided annually to regular classroom teachers and EL staff who work with EL students in the regular program. The professional development

focuses on effective instructional techniques, ideas about accommodating instruction in the classroom to better serve the EL population, and/or understanding multi-cultural issues that impact students. Training is provided by such agencies as the State Department Coach, WIDA training tutorials, and by local school personnel trained in ESL strategies. Our translators will be hired only after they have proven to be fluent in both English and the language being translated.

Parental Notification and Participation

Ozark City Schools seeks to involve parents of EL students in the education program. Since some parents of EL students are also Non-English Proficient or Limited-English Proficient themselves, they may have difficulty with written and verbal communications with school personnel.

If feasible and possible, important school information, forms, notices of meetings, etc. will be translated to a language that can be understood by non-English speaking parents. Many of these forms are available through TransACT. Google Translate is another tool that is helpful when communicating with parents of an ELL. An interpreter will be used to assist in the enrollment of a limited-English or non-English speaking student and in parent/teacher conferences, if possible

State Testing Participation

State Testing Participation Federal law indicates that all EL students must participate in all state assessments. The U. S. Department of Education has determined that students who are in their first academic year of enrollment in U.S. schools may be exempt for their first year only from content assessments in reading and language arts for accountability purposes. Participation is not required, but also is not prohibited. The EL Committee must be included when making decisions about participation in reading and language arts. An EL Participation Documentation form should be completed. In order for testing accommodations to be allowed, accommodations through an EL plan should be in place throughout the school year in the regular classroom setting for instruction and classroom tests.

Additional Programs Available to EL Students

- * EL students are eligible for services provided by Title I programs as for any other student.
- * EL students are eligible for Homeless Services just as any other student.
- * EL students have access to instructional programs and related services for special populations, such as instructional support, career/technical programs, special education programs, enrichment programs, and extracurricular activities. All student support programs and services and extracurricular activities are available to all EL students on the same basis that they are available to other students in the school.

EL Students and Special Education Services

Referral of an EL student to special education needs careful consideration. Research indicates that it takes a minimum of two years for a student to master basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and five to seven years to master cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) skills. Research also shows that the dual load of learning academics and language at the same time sometimes causes academic progress to slow. Therefore, it is critical not to confuse language development with learning difficulties.

The school works closely with the district's special education and ESL coordinator to ensure that pre-referral interventions are appropriately implemented. The RtI Team considers all avenues for pre-referral before referring the students to an IEP team for consideration for referral. If the IEP team, which includes the ESL teacher and/or ESL coordinator, agrees that a learning disability or language disability may be involved, the team may initiate a referral.

Special education programs and services must be provided in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA 97), which states that all students with disabilities are guaranteed the right to a free, appropriate public education, an individualized education program with related services that meet their specific needs, due process, education in the least restrictive environment, tests that are not culturally discriminatory, and multidisciplinary assessments.

The materials and procedures used to assess the EL student in all areas related to the disability must be selected and administered to ensure that they measure the extent to which the student has a disability and needs special education, rather than measuring the student's English language skills. Therefore, assessments used to evaluate EL students for special education services must be administered in the student's dominant language when such tests are available.

The EL student with disabilities has a right to the same individual special education services as other students with disabilities. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) for an EL student with a disability must include all of the components as listed in the Alabama Administrative Code. The IEP team also shall consider the language needs of the student as those needs relate to the student's IEP.

Foreign Exchange Students

Foreign exchange students are welcomed to Ozark City Schools. The EL Policy and Procedures Manual of Alabama states, "Foreign Exchange or F-1 Visa students who are limited-English proficient must receive ESL services, and if applicable, Title III Supplementary Services. Any student identified as a Foreign Exchange Student who is **not** working toward a diploma is not required to take tests currently required by the state. (p. 15)" The Alabama manual continues on p. 16 to state that Foreign exchange students are included in the immigrant count for Title III funding, if also a Language Learner s/he could be included in the count of LEP students, and they are not exempt from any Title I required assessment.

Submission of Data

Ozark City Schools will collect and submit data in accordance with the State Department of Education. This includes keeping updated information in I-NOW, completing annual Needs Assessments, ESL Program Evaluations, and keeping all ESL information current and updated.

Assurance – Plan Development

The Ozark City Schools ESL/Title III Plan was originally developed after consulting with teachers, researchers, school administrators, parents, and community members. These groups are represented yearly on the Ozark City Schools ESL/Title III Advisory Committee. The committee is responsible for reviewing, updating, and approving the ESL/Title III Plan on an annual basis.