

Water Valley School District ELL (English Language Learner) Policy

Water Valley Schools surveys all students enrolling into the district with HLS.

LAS Links is used to evaluate language proficiency.

The Water Valley School District will provide effective instruction to identified ELL (English Language Learner) students. Curriculum and learning strategy will be guided by *Mississippi Guidelines for English Language Learners*.

**Water Valley School District
Home Language Survey**

Because the Water Valley School District is unaware of all English Language Learners, the Mississippi Department of Education recommends that schools conduct a survey of language used in the home. Please complete this survey and return it to the school.

Childs Name _____ Parent's Name _____

- 1. Does your child speak any language other than English? _____yes _____no
If yes, please answer the following question:**
- 2. What was the first language your child learned to speak? _____**
- 3. What language does your child speak most often? _____**
- 4. What language is most often spoken in your home? _____**

Water Valley School District

ELL(English Language Learner) Procedure

What to Do – Five Steps for Districts Enrolling English Language Learners

There is a five-step process for identifying and placing ELL students in an appropriate language program that assures them of an equitable, quality education. Because consideration of the students' first (L1) and second language (L2) proficiency is crucial for decision making, special attention is given to the processes for conducting language proficiency assessments. The five steps include:

1. administering a home language survey;
2. assessing the ELL student's language proficiency level;
3. notifying the ELL student's parents;
4. placing the ELL student in an appropriate grade and language instruction educational program; and
5. evaluating program effectiveness.

Step 1 – Home Language Survey (HLS)

Because district personnel are often unaware ELL students are in their schools, the MDE strongly recommends that home language information be obtained at the time of school registration. This information should be obtained from all students, so the school does not give the appearance of discriminating against ELL students. The MDE suggests that the home language survey contain, at a minimum, the following questions:

Step 2 – Assessment of Language Proficiency

If any response on the Home Language Survey indicates the use of a language other than English, by the student or an individual in the home, further assessment must be conducted to determine the student's English language proficiency level. However, the presence of a language other than English does not automatically signify that the student is not a competent and proficient speaker of English.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires that all ELL students be tested annually for English language proficiency. The MDE's State Board of Education adopted the Stanford English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) to be administered annually. School districts that enroll ELL students generally test their English language proficiency within the first few weeks of the school year. The results of the test are used to help place the students in the appropriate language instruction education program. Parental consent is not required for assessing the child's English language proficiency; however, parents may remove their child from a program upon their request or choose another program or method of instruction, if available.

Step 3 – Parental Notification

Under Title I and Title III Parental Notification requirements, a school, no later than thirty (30) days after the beginning of the school year, must inform the parent or parents of a limited English proficient (LEP) student that their child has been identified for participation in a language instruction educational program. If a child has not been identified as LEP prior to the beginning of the school year, then the parents must be notified within two weeks of the child's placement in a language instruction educational program. [Statutory Authority: No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Title I, Part A, Sec. 1112 (g)(1)(A), Title III, Part C, Sec. 3302, and Title IX, Part A, Sec. 9101].

The notification must include the following information:

- Why the child was identified as LEP and why the child needs to be placed in a language instructional education program that will assist the child to develop and attain English proficiency and meet state standards.
- The child's level of English proficiency, how such level was assessed, and the child's academic level.
- The method of instruction that will be used to serve the child including a description of other methods of instruction available and how those methods differ in content, instructional goals and the use of English and a native language, if applicable.
- How the program will meet the specific needs of the child in attaining English and meeting state standards.
- The program's exit requirements, the expected rate of transition into a classroom not tailored for LEP students, and in the case of high school students, the expected rate of graduation.
- How the instructional program will meet the objectives of an individualized education program for a child with a disability.
- Written guidance on the rights that parents have to immediately remove their child from a program upon their request, the options that the parents have to refuse to enroll their child in a particular program or to choose another program or method of instruction, if available, and how parents will be provided assistance in selecting the best program to serve their child.

According to Title I and Title III, if a school fails to make progress in meeting the state's annual measurable achievement objects (AMAOs), then the school must separately inform the parents of an LEP child of the school's failure no later than thirty (30) days after the failure occurs.

A school receiving federal funds, including Title I and Title III, must implement an effective means of outreach to parents of LEP children. Outreach to parents must include information on how parents can become involved in the education of their children and how they can actively participate in helping their children learn English, achieve high levels in the core academic students and meet state standards. Outreach also must include regular meetings for parents and notices of such meetings to parents so that parents have the opportunity to provide suggestions and recommendations.

All information must be provided to the parents of an LEP child in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, in a language that the parent can understand. A child cannot be admitted or excluded from participating in a federally assisted education program on the basis of a surname or language-minority status.

Useful resources regarding parental notification and involvement may be located via the Web at:

- <http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/pa0cont.htm>

This site is for the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory – Critical Issues on Family and Community.

- <http://www.ncpie.org/>

This site is for the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education.

- http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/declarationofrights/main_content.html

This is the U.S. Department of Education's site for the parents' Declaration of Rights, provided in English and Spanish.

Step 4 – Program Placement

Students identified as English language learners from language proficiency assessments must be placed in a sound language instruction educational program. Few teachers in Mississippi are prepared to provide bilingual instruction, and many schools have students from several language backgrounds. English language learners must learn the same academic content that their peers in regular classrooms are learning, except that ELL students must do so at the same time as they are acquiring a new language. During classroom instruction, teachers are beginning to focus on the cognitive and academic development of students, as well as English acquisition.

Educators must always remember that the first rule for placing ELL students in a language instruction educational program is that they should be placed at the age-appropriate grade level. The most important reason for age-appropriate placement is socio-cultural. Students progress faster and work harder when they are with their peers. Also, classroom teachers are organized to teach students of a certain age and will have educational expectations for students of that age group. Initial placement of ELL students in appropriate classes may be crucial to their success in the educational program. Some guidelines for placement vary by grade level, but one overriding rule always holds true: ELL students must be placed in age-appropriate classes, regardless of their English language skills.

There are some situations that allow for exceptions to the general rule. If a student is not much older than six and has not been in a school before, it is often best to place the student in kindergarten. If an ELL student is developmentally delayed or has suffered serious deprivation, then the ELL student may need to be placed at a lower grade level. In any event, ELL students should never be more than a year behind their age-appropriate grade.

Prior to placing a student in a language program, the school district or school must notify the student's parents or guardians. Parents are not required to respond to the notification in order for the student to participate in the school district's language instruction educational program; however, parents do have the right to immediately remove their child from a program, upon their request. The parents may refuse to enroll their child in a particular program or to choose another program or method of instruction, if available. Nevertheless, under Civil Rights policy, the district is still obligated to provide appropriate means to ensure that the student's English language and academic needs are met.

Parents who refuse to enroll their child in the program being offered must be informed about the implications of this in a language the parent can understand. The district should have on file a written proof of the parents' refusal.

Step 5 – Program Evaluation

Annually or at the least bi-annually, the school district should evaluate the effectiveness of its language program. The school district should consider the progress of its ELL students in acquiring English and maintaining academic progress. Districts should also evaluate longitudinal data that compares the academic progress of the former ELL student who is now fully English proficient with that of other non-ELL students in categories that include grade point averages; national and state test score averages; and rates of retention, dropping out, graduation, and receipt of honors and awards. A district whose program is not demonstrably effective in meeting the needs of ELL students must modify its program in a timely manner.

For additional information regarding policies and procedures for English language learners, please contact Vicki Davidson, ELL Coordinator, Office of Reading, Early Childhood and Language Arts, (601) 359-3778.

For additional information regarding the assessment of ELL students, please contact Rogina Thomas, Assessment Special Populations Coordinator, Office of Student Assessment at (601) 359-3052. Also, additional information regarding the guidelines for assessing English language learners may be found in the [Mississippi Statewide Assessment System Guidelines for Special Populations: Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners](#).