

# Identification, Assessment, and Progress through ESL Program

## Identification of ELs

The identification of an English Learners (EL) language and academic needs is very important, because it becomes the basis for the development of a proper program of instruction. When ELs' needs are not identified, their program may lack the instructional components necessary for their success in language proficiency and academic achievement.

Under federal law, all schools must identify all ELs and screen eligible students for language assistance. To help identify potential ELL students, each registration form has three language questions that the parent/guardian must answer in order to identify any language(s) that is 1) first learned or acquired by the student, 2) used by the student in the home, and 3) used by the student with friends outside the home. Every student in Jackson-Madison County Schools must also have a separate language survey completed by the parent/guardian.

Having a language other than English spoken in the home or routinely used in other settings is *not* an automatic identification of a student as an EL. If a language other than English is identified on the registration card or Home Language Survey, the student will be identified as a *potential* ESL student. An ESL teacher will then administer the WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) in order to determine language proficiency. The ESL teacher will then use the student's W-APT score to determine whether the student qualifies to receive ESL services, including ESL class and monitoring.

## Assessments

### Entrance/Placement -- WIDA ACCESS PLACEMENT TEST (W-APT)

All students who enroll with a language other than English on their Home Language Survey are required to take the WIDA ACCESS PLACEMENT TEST (W-APT). This placement test is designed to allow schools to place students, based on their acquisition of English language skills, into classrooms and services best suited for their current level. The W-APT has four operational forms designed for differing levels of academic and language development, one test form for each of the following grade clusters: K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. Students in Kindergarten that score below a 27 on the W-APT are eligible to receive ESL services through daily classes or regular monitoring, while students who score above a 27, test proficient in their English language acquisition and do not need ESL services. Students in 1st-12th grade must score a composite of 5.0 or above to test out ESL.

### Student Growth -- English Language Proficiency Assessment (ACCESS)

The annual state standardized assessment for English Learners (EL) is the English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA). The ELPA is designed to assess students on all four domains of English language skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. It has four operational forms designed for differing levels of academic and language development, one test form for each of

the following grade clusters: K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. No accommodations, other than those allowed by an IEP, are implemented because the purpose of this assessment is to test language proficiency. Students who score a composite of 0-2 will continue to receive a minimum of 60 minutes of ESL classes daily the following year. Students who score 3 will receive ESL services as a monitored student. Students who score a composite of 4-5 will begin their two-year transition out of the ESL program (see below). In addition to student placement and service eligibility, the ELPA also measures student progress year-to-year for the purpose of meeting our district's AMAOs. It does not affect AYP. Prior to the 2013-2014 school year, the test has been known as the English Language Development Assessment (ELDA). Beginning in the spring 2015, the exam taken by the ELL students is the ACCESS.

### **TCAP English Linguistically Simplified Assessment (ELSA)**

ELs must take the TCAP Achievement Test during the spring testing, though they may take an accommodated version called the English Linguistically Simplified Assessment (ELSA). This test version is available for grades 3-8. All students who receive ESL services (those pulled for class, monitored, or in transition) are eligible to take the ELSA, but do not have to. The classroom teacher/ESL teacher/administrators can decide which test will help the student be most successful. ELs can also take the SpEd assessment (i.e. TCAP MAAS) if eligible through an IEP. There is one exception to this: students who have been in US schools for less than a year (365 days) are exempt from the Reading/Language Arts section. The content areas tested on TCAP ELSA are Reading/Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Test questions are the same as TCAP test questions but feature simplified language to reduce linguistic barriers. Allowable EL accommodations can be given to students, including transition students, taking the ELSA.

<http://www.tn.gov/education/assessment/accommodations.shtml>

### **Retention Guidelines**

Retention of English Learners (EL) shall not be based solely upon level of English language proficiency (Section I, Part G, and Guidelines to Satisfy Legal Requirements of Lau v. Nichols). Prior to considering retention of an EL, the following points should be addressed in consultation with the ESL staff or designated district language minority contact person.

- 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 ½ the year in a “silent period.” A 2-4 month period may be inadequate for determining a learning disability.
- Are classroom modifications being made in the areas of:
  - the classroom
  - assignments
  - homework

- assessments
- Are all modifications documented? Has there been a discussion with the ESL teacher?
- Has the student been considered as an individual and received differentiated instruction? Have modifications and differentiation been documented?
- 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?
- Does the teacher modify grading through a rubric or contract?

Retention policies for ELs 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, nor does it facilitate English language acquisition. 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.

From ([www.state.tn.us/education/fedprog/doc/LEP\\_Retntion\\_Guidelns.doc](http://www.state.tn.us/education/fedprog/doc/LEP_Retntion_Guidelns.doc))

### Exiting the ESL Program

Students who scored a 5.0 in Literacy and a 5.0 Overall Composite on the ACCESS (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners); given in the spring) enter a two-year transition period before exiting the ESL program. The student is coded as a T1 (Transition, year 1) the first year and T2 (Transition, year 2) the second year. The purpose of this transition is for the ESL professional to monitor student progress to confirm English language acquisition. If a student in this transition period begins to fall behind due to language skills, after consultation with the ESL professional, student's parents, and the regular classroom teacher, the student may be re-entered into the ESL program and receive daily services.