

Section II Checklist
EACH LOCAL DISTRICT THAT DOESN'T RECEIVE TITLE III MUST USE THIS PLAN TEMPLATE
A. Required Theory and Goals
The LEA's educational theory and goals for its program of services – to improve the education of English learners by assisting the children to learn English and meet the challenging state academic standards. (Sec. 3102)
B. IDENTIFICATION AND PLACEMENT PROCEDURES
1) Include the LEA's procedures for identifying members for the EL Advisory Committee.
2) Include the LEA's methods for identifying, placing, and assessing the students to be included in the English language instruction educational program. The following components must be explained in the plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Language Survey • WIDA Online Screener • WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) for Kindergarten • ACCESS for ELLs
3) Include the method and procedures for exiting students from the English Language Instruction Educational program (LIEP) and for monitoring their progress for a period of at least four years (<i>new in ESSA</i>), and at a minimum, follow SDE exiting requirements for ELs. All school personnel should be aware of the State established exit criteria of a composite score of 4.8 on the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0® English language proficiency test.
C. PROGRAMS AND INSTRUCTION
1) Describe the programs and activities that will be developed, implemented, and administered to ensure that ELs acquire academic language as part of the core LIEP. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process the system uses to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment • Rationale for selecting the particular EL program/s and how they are evidence-based
2) Describe how language instruction educational programs will ensure that ELs develop English proficiency: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How data is used to improve the rate of language acquisition for ELs • How the LEA supports each school with respect to continuous improvement practices and specific professional development • How World-class Instructional Design and Assessment English language proficiency (WIDA ELP) standards are integrated into the curriculum
3) Describe the grading and retention policy and procedures. NOTE: ELs cannot fail or be retained if language is the barrier.
4) Include details on the specific staffing and other resources to be provided to English learners under the LIEP in the district. ESL staff should be qualified with academic preparation in English-as-a-second-language, e.g. as documented in the 1991 Office of Civil Rights (OCR) Memorandum.

- Qualified personnel (state certification and/or ESL licensure)
- ESL staff development
- Content teacher and administrator staff development

5) Describe how the LEA will **collect and submit data** in accordance with SDE requirements.

- How schools are trained to use the state system/database to code ELs and enter reliable and accurate data

6) Include the LEA's method for **evaluating the effectiveness of its program** for English learners

- LEA engagement in the continuous improvement cycle
- In relation to English proficiency and challenging state academic standards

7) Include LEA's **method of identification and referral of ELs for special services (including Gifted Ed)**

Note that the Individual English Language Plan must describe how the school will communicate with the child and parent in their native language.

D. ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

1) Describe how the LEA will encourage and hold schools accountable for **annually measuring the English proficiency** of ELs and for participating in the state-administered testing program.

- Including coordination with the LEA Test Coordinator/Director
- Including communication of assessment and accountability requirements to schools

2) Describe how the LEA will **hold schools accountable** for meeting proficiency and long term goals.

- Monitoring and evaluating school engagement with continuous improvement plan

E. PARENT, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1) Describe how the LEA will inform EL **parents using information and notification** in the following format:

According to current federal requirements, LEAs must, not later than 30 days after the beginning of the school year, provide notification to parents related to....

1. The reasons for the identification.
2. The child's level of English proficiency.
 - a. How such level was assessed.
 - b. The status of the child's academic achievement.
3. The method of instruction used in the program.
4. How the program will meet the educational strengths and needs of the child.
5. How the program will specifically help their child learn English and meet age-appropriate academic achievement standards for grade promotion and graduation.
6. The specific exit requirements for such program, expected rate of transition from such program into the regular education classroom, and the expected rate of graduation from secondary school.
7. In the case of a child with a disability, how the program meets the objectives of the individualized education program of the child.
8. Information pertaining to parental rights that includes written guidance detailing:
 - a. The right of the parents to have their child immediately removed from supplemental Title III programs upon request. (IF APPLICABLE)

- b. The options that parents have to decline to enroll their child in such supplemental Title III programs or to choose another program or method of instruction if available. (IF APPLICABLE)
- c. The various programs and methods of instruction if more than one program or method is offered by the eligible entity.



Houston County Schools

LEA COMPREHENSIVE ENGLISH LEARNER

DISTRICT PLAN 2019-2020

Section A: Theory and Goals

The LEA's educational **theory and goals** for its program of services – **to improve the education of English learners by assisting the children to learn English and meet the challenging state academic standards. (Sec. 3102)**

EQUAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Alabama State Department of Education and the Houston County School System that no student will be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination in any program or activity on the basis of sex, race, color, creed, religion, belief, national origin, ethnic group, or disability.

A student shall not be admitted to, or excluded from, any federally assisted education program on the ground of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance”- 42 U.S.C. 2000d.

INTRODUCTION

The Houston County School System is committed to providing all students equal opportunity to benefit from educational programs and services. The System is committed to supporting evidence-based research (EBR) and effective appropriate programs, practices, training and accountability so that all students can become proficient in English and can achieve the state's academic content and student academic achievement standards.

The Houston County School System has the responsibility for implementing Title III, Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students, of the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2016 (ESSA). The System is responsible for enforcing Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. The Houston County School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national origin.

EDUCATIONAL THEORY AND GOALS

Language is a means of conveying knowledge. Language may be written, spoken, or acted out. Whatever way it is communicated, it is usually acquired with ease and naturalness. Language is necessary for human interaction and is a fundamental part of academic success.

It is the intent of the Houston County School System to provide every student identified as English Learners (EL) or whose primary home language is something other than English appropriate services to enhance his/her ability to learn English as a second language. All EL students will be given the same fair and appropriate education as all other students.

The goal of alternative instruction shall not be to replace or to negate the students' primary home language. Rather, the program shall strive to enable the EL students to become competent in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in the English language. This instruction shall emphasize the acquisition and mastery of English to enable EL students to participate fully in the benefits of public education. It is the goal of the Houston County School System to ensure that all identified EL students meet or exceed state standards.

Definition

The state definition of limited-English proficient (LEP) is taken from the Title III, Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students, of the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2016 (ESSA).

Under ESSA, an English Learner, means an individual---

- (A) who is aged three through 21
- (B) who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school;
- (C) (i) who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English;
 - (ii)(I) who is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas; and
 - (II) who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; or
- (iii) who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and
- (D) whose difficulty is speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual –
 - (i) the ability to meet the challenging State academic standards;
 - (ii) the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or
 - (iii) the opportunity to participate fully in society.”

Limited English Proficient students will be included in the LEP subgroup for the purpose of accountability until they have scored at the “proficient level” (4.8-6.0 Composite Score) on the ACCESS state English language proficiency test.

When students have achieved proficiency on the standards and have tested proficient on the English language proficiency test they will be classified as “Former LEP”.

Students who re-enter the program based on poor academic performance are required to receive EL services. Any student who has re-entered will not be classified as “Former LEP” until they have again scored proficient (4.8) on the state English language proficiency test.

The LEP/EL definition includes students with a range of educational needs with respect to learning English as a second language (ESL). Examples include the following types of students:

- Children of recent immigrants who speak no English and who have had no formal training in written language.
- Children of highly educated immigrants who have had formal training in English during formal schooling.
- United States-born children whose primary language is not English and who have had limited formal education through English language.

Section B: Identification and Placement Procedures

1.) Procedures for implementing the EL Advisory Committee

The Houston County School District has established an EL Advisory Committee for the purpose of identifying program needs, assessment, evaluation, and for developing the Comprehensive EL Plan. This committee includes central office administrators, assessment specialists, school administrators, school counselors, and EL staff. The committee may also include parents and community representatives who work with these students and their families in other settings. The Houston County School District welcomes the valuable input from those whose support and efforts are important to the success of the English language instruction educational program.

The LEA EL Advisory Committee shall make recommendations to the LEA regarding its EL program. Some examples of committee responsibilities would be to make recommendations regarding:

- The English language development program.
- High-quality professional development for staff.
- Parental involvement programs to further student success.
- Budgeting of state, local, and federal funds.
- The English language program evaluation.

2.) Methods for identification, placement, and assessment

Home Language Survey

English Learners (ELs) must be identified at the point of enrollment. A consistent enrollment procedure (**Appendix A, E, F, K**) for language-minority students, which includes the use of a Home Language Survey (HLS), facilitates their entry into the new school environment. A language-minority student is one whose home language is other than English. It is vital to have trained school personnel who are dedicated to meeting the needs of students from different cultures with different levels of English proficiency.

A Home Language Survey (**Appendix A**) must be completed for each student registering for enrollment in an Alabama public school. It may be helpful to conduct an interview with the student and/or parents during the enrollment process. Information from the interview may be helpful to the EL committee when considering appropriate placement for the student. TransACT documents and/or the assistance of a translator may be required to complete the survey. The completed survey becomes part of the student's permanent record and should be available for future reference.

The Home Language Survey must contain, at a minimum, the following questions:

1. Is a language other than English spoken at home?
2. Is your child's first language a language other than English?

When all responses on the HLS indicate that English is the only language used by the student and by individuals in the home, the student is considered an English-only speaker. Procedures established by the school system for placement in the general student population should be followed.

Any student whose registration or HLS indicates a language other than English on any of the survey questions is a language-minority student. If any response on the HLS indicates the use of a language other than English by the student or an individual in the home, then 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.

Enrollment Policy

All language-minority students 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 (*Plyler v. Doe*). Application forms to obtain social security numbers may be distributed, but the option of completing the forms must be left to the parents or guardians. The school should use procedures described in *Alabama Administrative Code* (AAC) to create a student number.

If parents do not have student immunization records available, the dates of immunization may be obtained by calling the previous school that the child attended. The LEA may need to contact the former school system. If necessary, students can begin the immunization series at the local public health department. If appropriate immunization documentation cannot be obtained within a reasonable period of time, the student's case should be handled in accordance with approved state and local board of education procedures.

The LEA should work collaboratively with community and area agencies to **facilitate** the school enrollment process. **These efforts should be documented** for future reference as needed.

Initial Language Proficiency Assessment and Program Placement

Initial assessment of English language proficiency must be conducted to determine the level of English proficiency and to facilitate appropriate instructional and program placement decisions (**Appendix M**). Language-minority students identified through the HLS during registration at the beginning of the school year must be assessed for English-language proficiency within thirty (30) days of enrollment. Language-minority students who register after the beginning of the school year must be assessed within ten (10) days of enrollment (ESSA 1112 (3)(B)). **The LEA will record the registration date as "original entry date" in Chalkable or if the child is newly arrived in the county, "date first enrolled in US school" when completing the demographics page.**

The SDE has adopted the *World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)-ACCESS Screener Online* to determine eligibility for placement for students in **grades 1-12**, and the *WIDA-ACCECSS Placement Test (W-APT)* for students in **kindergarten and first semester 1st graders**. The *WIDA Screener* assesses English language proficiency in all four domains of

language development—listening, speaking, reading writing, and comprehension to ensure that students' language needs are properly identified and addressed through the LEA's educational program.

The *WIDA Screener* yields an overall composite score based on the language domains tested. *The WIDA W-APT Kindergarten Screener* may be used until the kindergarten *WIDA Kindergarten Screener Online* becomes available. The following guidelines must be adhered to in determining eligibility for placement in the English language instruction educational program:

- Kindergarten students taking the W-APT:
 - In the first semester of school have a composite score less than **25**.
 - In the second semester of school is: Listening & Speaking less than **28** and Reading less than **12** and Writing less than **14**.
- First grade students taking the W-APT in the first semester of school is: Listening & Speaking less than **29** and Reading less than **14** and Writing less than **17**.
- First grade students in the second semester of school and students in grades 2-12 taking the *WIDA Screener Online* is less than **5.0**.

The *WIDA Screener* should be considered as only one piece of evidence in the decision-making process regarding placement. Teacher judgment, other assessments, and extenuating circumstances, such as the student's age and amount and quality of previous schooling, should be factored into the decision. An up-to-date **Appendix M** will be on file at each school and copy sent to the EL Coordinator. **Parents may waive Title III Supplemental Services by completing Appendix B. However, they cannot waive the core EL instructional program.**

English Learner Committee (Appendix I)

The English Learner (EL) Committee is a school team responsible for guiding and monitoring the placement, services, and assessment of students who are ELs. The EL Committee may be comprised of content-area or general classroom teachers of ELs, assessment specialists, school administrators, school counselors, ESL staff, and other members as appropriate (e.g., parents, central office administrators, and school psychologists). Although there is nothing to prohibit members from the Problem Solving Team (PST) participating on EL Committees, these committees serve very different purposes.

Individual English Language Plan (Appendix J)

It is recommended that each student designated as EL have an Individual English Language Plan (I-ELP) which should be updated annually until the student achieves Former LEP (FLEP) status.

The EL Committee should use the following guidelines in implementing the I-ELP:

1. Ensure full consideration of each student's language background before placement in an English language instruction educational program.
2. Ensure implementation of systematic procedures and safeguards related to appropriateness of identification, placement, assessment, instructional and support programs, and program exit.
3. Review student's progress in language acquisition and academic achievement annually.

4. Convene as needed to discuss changes or adjustments in the ELs instructional services.
5. Identify accommodations needed on state assessments. Additional classroom strategies and accommodations should be identified as appropriate.
6. Communicate in a timely manner the student's I-ELP with faculty and staff who interact with and provide instruction for the child.
7. Ensure the I-ELP describes how the school will communicate with the student's parents in their native language.
8. Determine and record the date of placement into the ESL program on ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Demographics page so that "Length of time in LEP/ELs Program" is established.
9. **Please note** that the distinction between "date first enrolled" (which is the date of registration) and date to establish "length of time in LEP/EL Program" (which is the date student is first determined to be EL) are two different dates.

Roles of Problem Solving Team (PST) and EL Committees

1. The Problem Solving Team (PST) process plays a central role in implementation of Response to Instruction (RtI). The purpose of RtI is to combine core instruction, assessment and interventions within a multi-tiered system in order to increase student achievement and to reduce behavior problems. The role of the PST is to help guide general education intervention services for all students who are at risk of failure academically or behaviorally. (At-Risk definition: core grades below C, failure to make adequate progress on Curriculum Based Assessments,) Although it is a required step before special education testing, it is not used **only** for pre-special education testing purposes. **English Learners may be referred to the PST only after differentiated instructional strategies and sheltered instruction have been provided for them for a reasonable amount of time in Tier I and there is data showing that this instruction has been unsuccessful. ELs cannot be referred to the PST if language is the barrier to achievement.** PST committees may not have the specialized training needed to write appropriate strategies or accommodations for students whose primary language is other than English.
2. If an EL student is being discussed for possible special education issues and language is clearly not the issue, then PST is the appropriate vehicle, provided EL staff member(s) are part of the team. **Once language has been eliminated as the barrier** to achievement, ELs students must be served in the same way as all other students.
3. The EL and PST committees are separate entities but may include some of the same members. In smaller school districts, there are a limited number of personnel available for these important roles. The issue is not the duplication of personnel on the committees; it is the purpose of the committees. Appropriate personnel to serve on the EL Committee include content-area or general classroom teachers of ELs, assessment specialists, school administrators, school counselors, and ESL staff.

3) Methods and procedures for exiting students from the LIEP and for monitoring progress

ENGLISH AS SECOND LANGUAGE PROGRAM EXIT REQUIREMENTS

ELs will be included in the LEP subgroup for the purpose of accountability until they score 4.8 or higher (Composite Score) on ACCESS for ELLs® state English language proficiency test.

All EL students, whether they receive or waive services, must be tested annually on ACCESS for ELs state English proficiency test.

Classification of ELs and Exiting Procedures

When students have tested proficient (Level 4.8 – 6.0 Composite Score) on *ACCESS for ELs 2.0 Online*, state English Language Proficiency Test, they will be classified as “Former LEP” (FLEP) Monitoring Year 1. Once students are classified as FLEP and are on monitoring status, they no longer take ACCESS for ELs although they are still counted in the LEP subgroup for AMD. Monitoring consists of the EL teacher checking on the students’ progress in the classroom. Teacher communication and report card monitoring will be conducted throughout the school year. After exiting the program students will be monitored in the FLEP category for four consecutive years. If FLEP Monitoring Year 4 students perform at grade level for another consecutive academic year, they will then be classified as FLEP and are no longer on monitoring status. Thereafter, students are classified as FLEP and are no longer counted in the LEP subgroup.

Students who perform poorly in their academic courses may be considered for re-entry into the EL program and receive EL services. To re-enter the program they must go through the same procedure as a new student. Any students who have re-entered the program will not be classified as “Former LEP Monitoring” until they have again scored Level 5 (4.8 Composite Score) on *ACCESS for ELs 2.0 Online*, state English language proficiency test. Students who re-enter the EL program will go through the exiting steps described below.

Steps in Exiting:

1. All students who score 4.8 on the *ACCESS* will exit the program. This shall be done in the fall of the next school year upon receipt of score reports for ACCESS for ELs.
2. Written notice (EL Program Exit Form) shall be given to the parents of the student is to be exited from the EL program.
3. The EL Program Exit Form (**Appendix D**) will be completed by the English Learner Committee (ELC) and filed in the student’s EL folder.
4. Coinciding with the issuance of report cards at nine week intervals, ELC shall monitor the progress of the student for a period of four years.
5. If the student is not academically successful, or does not pass course work without modification, the student can be reclassified as EL by going through the same screening process as a new student.
6. EL students are considered on an individual basis and assessments will be administered as indicated.

MONITORING ELs WHO HAVE EXITED THE ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE PROGRAM

Students who are exited from ESL services are placed on monitoring status for four academic years. During the monitoring time, the ESL teacher and the classroom teacher(s) communicate regularly, (no less than once each nine weeks during the first year and at least once each semester during the second, third, and fourth year) to ensure that the exited student is functioning in the mainstream without ESL support. Students are classified as Former Limited-English Proficient Monitoring Year 1 (FLEP Monitoring Year 1) during their first year of monitoring, and Former Limited English Proficient Monitoring Year 2 (FLEP Monitoring Year 2) during their second year of monitoring, Former Limited English Proficient Monitoring Year 3 (FLEP Monitoring Year 3) during their third year of monitoring, Former Limited English Proficient Monitoring Year 4 (FLEP Monitoring Year 4) during their fourth year of monitoring. Upon successful completion of four years of monitoring, ELs are classified Former Limited-English Proficient (FLEP) and no longer included in the LEP subgroup for accountability purposes. If the student is not academically successful, or does not "pass" course work without modification, the student can be reclassified as EL by going through the same screening process as a new student (**Appendix G**).

Section C: Programs and Instruction

- 1) Programs and activities that will be developed, implemented, and administered to ensure ELs acquire academic language as part of the core LIEP

EL PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Alabama has a standards-based curriculum emphasizing academic and social language proficiency. The EL coursework is based upon WIDA Consortium English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards. Classroom teachers integrate these ELP standards with Alabama State Content Standards and College and Career Ready Standards to enable ELs to both communicate in English and demonstrate their academic, social, and cultural proficiency. Instructional approaches, both in EL and general education classes, ensure that the needs of Alabama's ELs are accommodated. To the extent practicable, it is appropriate to use the EL's home language as a means of facilitating instruction and providing parents with school related information.

In Houston County **the core instructional program** for EL students is a version of the **English as a Second Language**. Program of techniques, methodology, and special curriculum designed to teach ELs explicitly about the English language, including the academic vocabulary needed to access content instruction, and to develop their English language proficiency in all four language domains (i.e., speaking, listening, reading, and writing).

- ESL programs teach the following: conversational English, grammar, reading, listening, comprehension, writing, and vocabulary.

The regular classroom teacher will make EBR (Evidence based research) accommodations to the regular program to meet the needs of the EL student. Accommodations may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Making content comprehensible
- Providing content linked to students background knowledge
- Providing visual aids, graphic organizers, and hands on instruction
- Oral, rather than written assignments
- Different types of assessments such as formative and summative depending on the students level
- Extra time to complete assignments
- Shortened assignments
- Alternative assignments
- Tutoring

Accommodations in grading may also be necessary for EL students. Any of the following options may be recommended by the ELC:

- A grade may be assigned followed by explanatory comments.
- An accommodated assignment that consist of EL modifications
- Grades may be assigned to correlate with goals on the EL Plan.
- EL/classroom teacher planned assignment

PROGRAM CURRICULUM

The Houston County School System provides a program for English Learners (EL) that includes that all English Learners (ELs) receive quality instruction for learning both English and grade –level academic content. ESSA allows local flexibility for choosing program of instruction, while demanding greater accountability for EL’s English language and academic progress.”

- Under Title III, states are required to develop standards for English Language Proficiency and to link those standards to the state's Academic Content Standards. Schools must make sure that ELLs are part of their state's accountability system and that ELs' academic progress is followed over time by
- establishing learning standards, that is, statements of what children in that state should know and be able to do in reading, math, and other subjects at various grade levels;
- creating annual assessments (standardized tests, in most states) to measure student progress in reading and math in grades 3-8 and once in high schools;
- setting a level (cut-off score) at which students are considered proficient in tested areas; and
- Reporting to the public on what percentages of students are proficient, with the information broken down by race, income, disability, language proficiency, and gender subgroups.

- (2016- Title III of the Every Student Succeeds ACT)

EL PROGRAM METHODOLOGIES

Quality EL programs require the teacher to use a variety of approaches in organizing the classroom, designing a curriculum, and presenting lessons. There are several evidence based basic elements underlying all good language instruction:

- Versatility and flexibility
- Interactive lessons with hands-on activities and cooperative learning
- Encouragement and support of the mainstream or regular curriculum
- Opportunities for all students to feel successful by providing appropriate modifications and accommodations for the needs of students’ different levels of ability
- Integration of language skills, thinking skills, and content knowledge

Teachers usually need more time to prepare separate lessons for the limited-English proficient students and/or to work with them regularly on an individual basis. The lessons are taught as a whole group including all of the classroom students. The ESL model is not only for EL students, but beneficial for all types of learners. The following EBR methodologies are promoted as good teaching strategies for all students:

- Cooperative Learning
- Language Experience
- Dialogue Journals
- Learning Centers
- Hands-on Learning

All classroom teachers should:

- Announce the lesson’s objectives and activities.
- Write legibly and grammatically correct.
- Develop and maintain classroom routines.
- List and review instructions step by step.
- Present frequent summations of the main points of the lesson.
- Use visual aids with lists, charts, and other graphic organizers.
- Have students provide oral summaries.
- Present information in multiple and varied ways

2) How the LIEP will ensure that ELs develop English proficiency

Every year of program implementation, the LEA must conduct a program evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the program. Evaluating the EL program involves collection and analysis of data to determine whether or not the goals set forth during the comprehensive needs assessment (or previous program evaluation) was met. The data analysis should be summarized to illustrate the status of the EL program and should include the LEA’s future goals and plans to improve the program the following school year. According to Chapter 9 of the U. S. Department of Education English Learner Tool Kit for State and Local Education Agencies (SEAs and LEAs), updated November 2016, LEA’s should consider the following when evaluating the effectiveness of the EL Program:

- Successful EL programs enable EL students to attain both English proficiency and parity of participation in the standard instructional program within a reasonable period of time.
- LEAs should collect longitudinal data to monitor and compare the performance of current ELs, former ELs, and never-ELs in the LEA’s standard instructional program. Data should not be limited to ACCESS for ELLs 2.0.
- When EL programs do not produce both English proficiency and parity of participation within a reasonable period of time, SEAs and LEAs must modify the EL program.

Alabama Courses of Study and World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment English Language Proficiency (WIDA ELP) Standards

ELs are a diverse group of students whose personal, cultural, and educational backgrounds differ significantly, and thus require instruction that meets their particular needs. Like all students in Alabama, ELs must be provided with access to the Alabama courses of study and district curriculum but requires different instructional pathways to master those standards.

ELs require instruction that makes content comprehensible, which accelerates acquisition of academic language proficiency and literacy. Appropriate instructional support to increase academic English and achievement should include an adequate amount of pre-activities and modeling, access to reading material in their native language for classroom and homework assignments, availability of bilingual books (both fiction and non-fiction), meaningful hands-on activities that contextualize abstract concepts, and use of their native language in writing and speaking activities (even if the teacher does not know this language). “Any modification of instruction that depends on supports to bolster the students’ access to meaning” (Gottlieb, 2006) is considered a classroom accommodation. As the ELs attain fluency in English, fewer variations or accommodations in classroom activities will be necessary.

English Learners must simultaneously learn English and content. The WIDA ELP Standards facilitate the design of language development objectives that support, guide, and develop content knowledge and skills at the appropriate level of English proficiency. Educators must go beyond teaching ELs survival

English by developing their academic English through the context of all content areas.

Students who are acquiring a new language undergo five stages of language development: Entering, Beginning, Developing, Transitioning, and Bridging until they attain English proficiency. (See Table 2 for the WIDA Consortium’s description of the Performance Definitions.)

By implementing the WIDA ELP standards in the classroom, teachers are able to provide ELs with meaningful access to local curriculum as they progress through the stages of language acquisition. The WIDA ELP standards and other resources can be found at <http://www.wida.us/standards/index.aspx>.

Table 2 WIDA CONSORTIUM PERFORMANCE DEFINITIONS

WIDA LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVELS AND PERFORMANCE DEFINITIONS	
At the given level of English language proficiency, English language learners will process, understand, produce, or use:	
5- Bridging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Oral or written language approaching comparability to that of English proficient peers when presented with grade level material.
4- Expanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific and some technical language of the content areas. • A variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in oral discourse or multiple, related paragraphs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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 occasional visual and graphic support.
3- Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General and some specific language of the content areas. • Expanded sentences in oral interaction or written paragraphs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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 occasional visual and graphic support.
2- Beginning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General language related to the content areas. • Phrases or short sentences. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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 visual and graphic support.
1- Entering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pictorial or graphic representation of the language of the content areas. • Words, phrases, or chunks of language when presented with one-step commands, directions, WH-questions, or statements with visual and graphic support.

3) Grading and retention policy and procedures

EL GRADING GUIDELINES

Grading of ELs should be based on students' level of English proficiency. The teacher ensures this through the continual use of accommodations and assessments according to the students' I-ELP. This complies with the federal law (Every Student Succeeds Act of 2016 (ESSA)).

Appropriate instruction and differentiation must be adjusted according to language proficiency level in order to appropriately accommodate the student. Documentation of these components (lesson plans, work samples, and ongoing assessments) should be maintained by the classroom teacher.

1. For Intermediate English speaking students, teachers will grade on improvement as well as knowledge of content.
2. A grade of "F" cannot be assigned to an EL student without full documentation of modifications having been made to assure the student's full access to the content.
3. **Lack of ability to read and write in English is not the basis for an "F"**. It is illegal to fail a student because he/she is not proficient in English.

Strict adherence to a "number" grading system is often inappropriate for EL students. To ensure that EL students have a reasonable chance of succeeding in school, the following guidelines will apply:

1. For each EL student, an EL Instruction Plan shall be developed.
2. Satisfactory or unsatisfactory grades relevant to the learning objectives in that plan shall be assigned.
3. In regular classes (not EL), grades shall be assigned in accordance with the scale established by the Houston County Board of Education.

GRADING SUGGESTIONS

Traditional procedures for assigning grades to students are sometimes problematic for limited-English proficient students. The same methods and criteria applied to the English-speaking age and/or grade peers cannot be used to assess students who cannot comprehend English as the language of instruction. Teachers should be encouraged to maintain high expectations for student learning. Teachers should modify and adapt lessons and assignments, so students can demonstrate the knowledge and skills.

A "participation" grade may be assigned until the student can demonstrate sufficiently his/her content knowledge. Because such a grade is subjective, the student, within his/her language capabilities, should be expected to do the following:

- Pay attention in class
- Follow directions
- Have required materials
- Participate in adapted or modified activities
- Complete adapted or modified homework assignments within reasonable expectations

- Demonstrate progress

By way of example, a participation grade, based on cooperation and effort to the degree the student's English language proficiency allows, may be differentiated as follows:

- A or B (or Progressing) to students who demonstrate maximum effort
- C (or Satisfactory) to students who demonstrate satisfactory effort
- D or F (or Unsatisfactory) to students who demonstrate minimum effort

The student's report card should indicate the grade is for participation. This grading mechanism must be explained to the student's parent(s).

If a student can demonstrate knowledge and skills in a particular subject, i.e., math, he/she should be assigned an achievement grade. For courses in which the student's limited English proficiency does not prohibit access to instruction, i.e., art, physical education, an achievement grade should be assigned.

Extreme caution should be taken to ensure a "participation" grade is not substituted or confused for a grade-level content performance or achievement grade in the student's cumulative records.

Other Suggestions for Grading:

- Assign a grade with explanatory comments.
- Use "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory" instead of assigning a letter grade.
- Regarding learning objectives, indicate whether the student is "at," "above," or "below" expectations instead of assigning a letter grade. Include a narrative to explain the rating.
- Describe progress in narrative form and include examples of student work.

Accommodations and Grading

The regular classroom teacher will make accommodations to the regular program to meet the needs of the EL student. Accommodations may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Oral, rather than written assignments
- Modified assignments according to students learning level
- Extra time to complete assignments
- Shortened assignments
- Alternative assignments
- Tutoring

Accommodations in grading may also be necessary for EL students. Any of the following options may be recommended by the English Language Instruction Committee:

- A grade may be assigned followed by explanatory comments.
- An accommodated assignment given by the EL/classroom teachers
- Grades may be assigned to correlate with goals on the EL Plan.

TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

The purpose of testing accommodations for an EL student is to enable the student to demonstrate the degree of achievement which he or she possesses. Accommodations can be made to ensure that each EL student receives individual consideration of his or her language proficiency.

When determining appropriate accommodations for an assessment, the ELC must look at the accommodations regularly being made on the student's classroom tests over time in that particular subject area. Accommodations on state assessments must be accommodations which are a part of the student's instructional program; however, the ELC must work within the framework of the approved accommodations on the EL Accommodations Checklists. The EL Committee must remember that an accommodation on a state assessment cannot supplant the skill that the test is designed to measure. Accommodations which change the nature, content, or integrity of the test, such as reading of a reading test designed to assess the skill of reading, are not allowed.

RETENTION

Retention of ELs 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 an EL, the following points should be addressed by the EL Committee.

- What is the student's level of English language proficiency?
- Has an Individual English Language Plan (I-ELP) been implemented to document classroom modifications and student progress?
- To ensure meaningful participation, are classroom accommodations being made in the areas of:
 - Teacher lesson delivery?
 - Activities and assignments?
 - Homework?
 - Formal and informal assessments (e.g., quizzes and tests)?
- How much individual English language development instruction is the student receiving during the school day?
- Has an alternate grading strategy been implemented (e.g., a portfolio, checklist, teacher observation, or rubric assessment on content and language objectives)?
- Has the student's classroom teacher been adequately trained with instruction and assessment strategies specifically designed for students learning English?
Do the reports cards indicate that students were graded according to their I-ELPs?

4) Specific staffing and other resources to be provided to ELs through the program

EL STAFF

Houston County has a certified teacher that is highly qualified to work with our EL population. The teacher that works with the English Language Instructional Program is fluent in English and Spanish both written and oral. She recently earned a master's degree in ESL through The University of Alabama at Birmingham.

EL MATERIALS AND RESOURCES (Appendix N on file at each school.)

To provide effective instruction that: (1) leads to the timely acquisition of proficiency in English and (2) provides teaching and learning opportunities so that each student can become proficient in the state's academic content and student academic achievement standards expected for all students, EBR EL materials are used that stress the development of communication, comprehension, speaking, reading and writing skills.

EL personnel and regular instructional staff utilize EBR computer software, videos and numerous printed materials. The regular classroom teacher makes accommodations to meet the needs of the EL students. Accommodations include but not limited to:

- oral, rather than written assignments.
- extra time to complete assignments.
- shorter assignments.
- alternative assignments.
- tutoring.

Some of the EBR resources and materials utilized in the EL program include:

- Spanish and English Student Dictionary
- Picture Dictionary
- Computer technology/ipads
- Interactive online programs- Imagine Learning for ELs- Language & Literacy
- Audio learning
- Flash cards

Local churches provide EL activities for families.

Other EBR materials and resources will be added as funds become available to enhance the EL program and improve student academic development.

5) Method for collecting and submitting data

Collecting and Submitting SDE Required Data

The Houston County School System will collect and submit, in a timely manner, the data required by the SDE Program Compilation Data form. The data will be collected from several sources including: Chalkable, SDE Assessment Accountability Reports, ACCESS , DIBELS Reports, etc.

The Houston County School System will collect data from school/system personnel serving EL students. Such data may include state assessment results for individual students, performance indicators, report cards, progress reports, and waiver letters. Collected data will be compiled and submitted to the State Department of Education according to requirements.

6) Method for evaluating the effectiveness of the program

Accountability

The Houston County School System's method of evaluating the EL program will include a review and analysis of state assessment results for individual students, schools, and the school system's adequate yearly progress per subgroup, progress of Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMDs), school ACIP reform strategies, and revisions to school plans. Such review will determine the need to revise existing action plans.

The purpose of program evaluation is to provide information for decision making at several levels in the implementation of a program. The evaluation of the effectiveness of the program is based on student English language proficiency and proficiency on grade level student academic content standards. Evaluation is the outgrowth of the plan development and implementation and is an ongoing requirement. A formal evaluation of the EL program will be conducted at the end of each school year, and a copy of the results will be submitted to the

Alabama State Department of Education. Assessing scientifically based research methods, materials and approaches on teaching EL students is also an important component of evaluating the program. Distinguishing between learning the English language and attaining English proficiency is crucial. Three types of standards: English language proficiency standards, academic content, and performance standards will be assessed. The Annual Meaningful Differentiation goals will determine the effectiveness of the program and assist in program improvement. The Houston County School System is held accountable for improving EL English proficiency through public reporting and by state AMD requirements. Additionally, the ESL Program Evaluation and ESL Program Compilation Data Form are used to assess the program and make revisions (**Appendix L**).

Parents also play a role in evaluating the program by serving as active participants in offering input into the EL plan for program improvement.

7) Method of identification and referral of ELs to the Special Services Program including Gifted Ed

English Learners with Disabilities and Special Education Services

The education of ELs with disabilities raises several concerns about the legal requirements of LEAs. Among the concerns are identification, eligibility, and service provision for ELs suspected of having a disability. Special education programs and services must be provided in accordance with the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004* (P.L. 108-446). All LEAs are required to include a description for communicating with non-English speaking students/parents in their Individual Education Plan (IEP).

All students with disabilities are guaranteed the right to a free, appropriate public education; an IEP with related services, if needed, that meet their specific needs; due process; education in the least restrictive environment; tests that are not culturally discriminatory; and a multidisciplinary assessment. Public Law 108-446 requires that state and local education agencies ensure that the students are assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability. The materials and procedures used to assess a limited-English proficient student 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. The limited-English proficient student with disabilities has a right to the same individual special education services as other students with disabilities. Note that ELs must be provided English language acquisition services that are an integral part of their IEP.

Uncertainty often exists regarding the referral of ELs for Special Education Services (SES). ELs are eligible to receive SES on the same basis as all other students. Care should be exercised or used to ensure that limited-English proficiency is not the basis of a referral.

In situations where it is not realistic to test in the native language or mode of communication for an EL, the LEA must consider information that will enable the eligibility team to make a decision as to whether the child has a disability and the effects of the disability on educational needs.

A child may not be determined to be eligible for special education if the determining factor is the child's lack of instruction in reading, math, or limited-English proficiency. The IEP for an EL with

a disability must include all of the components as listed in the *Alabama Administrative Code*. The IEP team shall consider the language needs of the student as those needs relate to the student's IEP. Parent participation is a required part of the special education process and to ensure active participation, accommodations must be made at all meetings and in written communications for the non-English speaking parent. This may also be necessary for parents of students who are national origin of minority whose primary home language is other than English. These accommodations will include a translator for oral communication, and written communication must be in the parent's native language.

Gifted and Talented Education

The Alabama SDE and the U. S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) signed a Title VI Resolution Agreement focusing on underrepresented populations in gifted programs in Alabama. In the agreement, the SDE committed to a variety of actions related to screening/referral criteria and procedures, evaluation processes and eligibility criteria, program oversight, and technical assistance.

Section D: Assessment and Accountability

- 1) Method for holding schools accountable for annually measuring the English proficiency of ELs and for participating in the state-administered testing program

English Learners will be assessed on the ACCESS for ELLs® English language proficiency test until they are proficient in English with a composite score of 4.8 or above.

All EL students must participate in the statewide Student Assessment Program for accountability purposes. EL students, during their first 12 months of enrollment in U.S. schools, will not be required to participate in the Reading/Language Arts test of ACAP or the Reading test of the Alabama Alternate Assessment (AAA).

EL students in their first 12 months of enrollment in U.S. schools must participate in the Mathematics and Science tests of ACAP and the AAA. These students must participate in all parts of the ACT with Writing and the ACT WorkKeys assessments.

EL students, for which this is not their first 12 months of enrollment in U.S. schools, must participate in all subjects and all tests in the statewide Student Assessment Program. EL students in Grades K-12, regardless of the number of years of enrollment in U.S. schools must participate in Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs 2.0), the state-administered English language proficiency test, or the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs, the state-administered English language proficiency test for students in Grades 1-12 who have a significant cognitive disability. All ELs, whether they receive or waive supplemental Title III services, must be tested annually on ACCESS for ELLs or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs. Students in their first 12 months of enrollment in U.S. schools who take ACCESS for ELLs or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs will be counted as participants toward meeting the 95% participation requirement for Reading.

Participation of EL students in any of the assessments that allow flexibility during the first 12 months of enrollment in U.S. schools, will not result in their scores being used for accountability determination. However, these students will be counted as participants toward meeting the 95% participation requirement for accountability purposes.

All ELs, whether they receive or waive supplemental Title III services, must be tested annually on ACCESS for ELLs® state English proficiency test.

2) Method for holding schools accountable for meeting proficiency in academic achievement

The Houston County School System will hold schools accountable for meeting AIN proficiency using results from the required state assessments. Target goal attainment will be determined using results from the ACCESS, and other required state assessments. Each school will be held accountable for measuring annually the English proficiency of limited-English proficient students and for participation in the state-administered testing program by submitting a school wide plan (ACIP) that includes a needs assessment, reform strategies, professional development activities, parental involvement strategies, and an evaluation of the plan. The Continuous Improvement Plan (ACIP) will be monitored and evaluated each year. A copy of the plan will be submitted to central office personnel for approval. Based on the results of the ACCESS and required state assessments each school will review the scores of students in the subgroup – English as a Second Language. The results will serve as a needs assessment of specific areas to target. The ACIP committee will report such results to the entire faculty. The ACIP will reflect annual revisions designed to meet the needs of EL students.

Section E: Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

1) Methods for promoting parent involvement activities to help improve student achievement

How Parents Are Involved

Parents and community members who speak a language other than English are invited and encouraged to participate in all school and district programs and activities as English speaking parents (**See Appendix H**). These activities include but not limited to PTO, parent conferences, parent workshops and student programs.

Parents of EL students will be notified of Adult Education classes and special classes where they may attend that may benefit them as they adjust to a new culture.

As required by the State Department of Education, the Houston County School System will:

- Annually evaluate the educational programs to identify and eliminate barriers that may exist in preventing parents from participating in school activities.
- Provide an interpreter to assist in school registration.
- Provide an interpreter for parent/teacher conferences.
- Provide notices of school meetings (**Appendix H**) and other activities in the language parents can read.
- Provide opportunities for parents to participate in the education of their children.
- Include parents of EL students, to the extent possible, on committees

2) Methods (in a language they can understand) for notification requirements for ELs students regarding

- EL identification, placement, exit, and monitoring

Parent Notification (Appendix C)

According to ESSA, districts must, not later than 30 days after the beginning of the school year, provide notification to parent(s) of ELs identified for participation in an English language instruction educational program of:

9. The reasons for the identification.
10. The child's level of English proficiency.
 - a. How such level was assessed.
 - b. The status of the child's academic achievement.
11. The method of instruction used in the program.
12. How the program will meet the educational strengths and needs of the child.
13. How the program will specifically help their child learn English and meet age-appropriate academic achievement standards for grade promotion and graduation.
14. The specific exit requirements for such program, expected rate of transition from such program into the regular education classroom, and the expected rate of graduation from secondary school.
15. In the case of a child with a disability, how the program meets the objectives of the individualized education program of the child.
16. Information pertaining to parental rights that includes written guidance detailing:
 - The right of the parents to have their child immediately removed from supplemental Title III programs upon request. **(Appendix B)**
 - The options that parents have to decline to enroll their child in such supplemental Title III programs or to choose another program or method of instruction if available. **(Appendix B)**
 - The various programs and methods of instruction if more than one program or method is offered by the eligible entity.

Separate Notification Regarding Accountability for Annual Meaningful Differentiation Objectives (AMDs)

In addition to providing the above information, each LEA or school that is using Title I and/or Title III funds to provide a language instruction educational program and that has failed to make progress on the annual measurable achievement objectives (AMDs) for any school year, shall separately inform a parent or the parents of a child identified for participation in the program, or children currently enrolled in the program, of such failure not later than 30 days after such failure occurs.

If a child enrolls in school after the beginning of the school year, the LEA must notify parents of the failing school's language instruction educational program within two weeks of the child being placed in such a program. Parent notifications must be communicated in a language and/or manner that the parents can understand.

Acceptable parent notification forms are available in 22 languages online at TransACT. These parent notification forms, along with general education and NCLB compliance forms can be downloaded at www.transact.com.