

LEA COMPREHENSIVE ENGLISH LEARNER DISTRICT PLAN

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)**

The Gadsden City Board of Education recognizes that within the district there are students who have a primary language other than English. It is the policy of the Gadsden City Board of Education that no student will be excluded from participation in or 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. Each child and youth regardless of immigrant status or non-English speaking status has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a preschool education, as provided to other children and youth. In order for effective teaching and learning to take place in our schools, there must be a cooperative relationship among students, parents, guardians, and educators. (Student Code of Conduct Handbook) In keeping with its desire to provide the best possible education for all students, the Gadsden City Board of Education shall provide education programs for the students of disparate ability, background, and achievement. (School Board Policy, IIDD, adopted July 10, 1990)

This English Learner District Plan is an outgrowth of the State Department of Education's voluntary agreement with the U.S. Department of Education and the Office of Civil Rights for providing services to students who are English Learners (ELs). It incorporates requirements and applicable references to Title I and Title III of *Every Student Succeeds Act 2015 (ESSA)*. The document is intended to relate the basic requirements and to provide guidance for policies, procedures, and practices for identifying, assessing, and serving English Learners (ELs). The Plan follows the findings of federal court cases such as *Lau v. Nichols*; *Castaneda v. Pickard*; and *Plyler v. Doe*.

The Plan was devised with the cooperation of a committee that represents all aspects of the student's world. Parents, teachers, counselors, administration, and other stakeholders collaborated to develop a plan that will serve as a framework for the Gadsden City English Language Development Program (ELD Program) for years to come. It will be reviewed and modified annually to accommodate any challenges, address future needs, and comply with new federal, state, and local laws, regulations, or guidelines.

The Plan will be revised at the beginning of each school year using input from a committee composed of at least one school administrator, ESL teacher, regular program teacher, EL parent and the federal programs coordinator. The current EL Plan will be made available on the system's web site. Paper copies will be made available in multiple formats/languages to the public at each school office and at the central office.

Educational Theory

Based on current research of second language acquisition, Gadsden City Schools faculty and staff are cognizant of the fact that it takes an English Learner (EL) five to seven years or longer to acquire the language skills needed to function in an academic setting. The World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium, of which Alabama is a partner, has developed English Language Proficiency Standards for English Learners (K-12). These standards have been adopted as a means to align curriculum, instruction, and assessment for ELs. This program meets the requirements of the "*Every Student Succeeds Act 2015*" by linking language learning with state academic content standards. This program places emphasis on the development and mastery of the four language domains - listening, speaking, reading, and writing - along with content area concepts and skills. This standards-based approach to deliver instruction addresses the language needed and used by ELs to succeed in all academic content areas and enables all students to participate effectively in the regular academic classroom.

Goals

The instructional goal for all school personnel, including regular classroom teachers, special education teachers, Title I teachers, counselors, administrators after-school staff, summer school staff, and ESL teachers is:

- To increase the English language proficiency and academic performance of each program participant to the degree necessary to allow independent functioning in the regular school program and to become productive successful citizens.

Section B: Identification and Placement Procedures

1) Procedures for identifying the EL Advisory Committee

Implementing the EL Advisory Committee

Gadsden City Schools will establish/maintain an EL Advisory Committee for the purpose of program needs assessment, program evaluation, and the development of the Comprehensive English Learners Plan. This committee includes central office administrators, assessment specialists, school administrators, school counselors, ESL staff, parents, and community representatives who work with these students and their families in other settings.

The EL Advisory Committee shall make recommendations to the LEA regarding its English Learners 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.
- The budgeting of state, local, and federal funds.
- The English language program evaluation.
- Support EL School Teams as needed

2) Methods for identification, placement, and assessment

Identifying and Assessing Students

Home Language Survey

A *Home Language Survey* shall be administered to every student upon initial enrollment. This begins the procedure to identify, assess, and place English learning students, including immigrant children and youth, who have a primary/home language other than English. Upon registration for the first time, parents and/or students in grades kindergarten through twelve are asked to complete a *Home Language Survey* (HLS) which contains, at a minimum, the OCR and DOJ approved questions:

- 1) What is the primary language used in the home, regardless of the language spoken by the student?
- 2) What is the language most often spoken by the student?
- 3) What is the language that the student first acquired?

In Addition, the HLS will identify the student's country of origin.

A translation to appropriate language is available as needed through *Transact*®, Language Line, and the assistance of a bilingual translator may be required for completion of the survey. The completed survey becomes a part of the student's cumulative record.

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. School system procedures for placement of general student population are followed.

If any response on the HLS indicates the use of a language other than English by the student or/and individual in the home, the student is considered a potential English Learner. The registrar notifies the counselor to complete a referral to conduct further assessment. 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. Assessments of English language proficiency will be conducted for two purposes:

- to determine the development and attainment of English proficiency and
- to make appropriate instructional and program decisions.

The State required screening assessments will be administered by ESL teacher to determine the student's English-language proficiency level.

Enrollment Policy

It is the policy of the Gadsden City School System that every English Learner is allowed to attend school, regardless of ability to produce a birth certificate, social security number, or immigrant 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. The district will use procedures described in *Alabama Administrative Code* to create a student number. Procedures will be developed and followed so that students learning English will be considered for EL services.

The staff at Gadsden City Schools will make every effort to obtain immunization records. If the parents do not have immunization records available, information may be obtained from a previous school. The staff will also work collaboratively with community and area agencies to facilitate the school enrollment process. Bilingual translators will provide counselors with assistance in communicating methods of meeting immunization requirements for entrance into school.

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. English Learners 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. English Learners who register after the beginning of the school year must be assessed within ten (10) days of enrollment. The LEA will record the registration date as "original entry date in PowerSchool or "date first enrolled" when completing the demographics page of the ACCESS for ELs English proficiency test.

The ESL teacher will review the student's records and gather all pertinent data. If this data includes scores for the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs 2.0) assessment from a previous school, the results may be used to establish English language proficiency. When there are no former ACCESS scores, the ESL teacher will assess the student using the WIDA Online Screener for grades 1-12 and the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten to help determine eligibility for placement in the English language development program. The WIDA Screener for Kindergarten assesses English language proficiency in the speaking and listening domains for the first semester. In the second semester of kindergarten and the first semester of first grade it assesses all four domains of language development- listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The WIDA Online Screener assesses all four domains of language development- listening, speaking, reading, and writing for the second semester of first grade through twelfth grade.

The WIDA Online Screener and WIDA Screener for Kindergarten yields an overall composite score based on the language domains tested. The following guidelines must be adhered to in determining eligibility for placement in the English language instruction educational program:

1. Any student scoring an overall composite score of 5.0 or below on the screener must be identified as an English Learner and will require placement in an English language instruction educational program.
2. Any student scoring an overall composite score of 5.1 or above on the screener may be identified as an English Learner and may require placement in an English language instruction educational program. Further assessment of the student's English language proficiency is needed to determine placement.
3. Any Kindergarten student scoring an overall composite score of 4.0 or below on the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten must be identified as an English Learner and will require placement in an English language instruction educational program.

The WIDA Online Screener/WIDA Screener for Kindergarten 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.

English Learner Committee

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, EL staff, and other members as appropriate (e.g., parents and central office administrators). Every effort will be made to ensure regular two-way, meaningful communication between family members and school staff, and, to the extent practicable, in a language that family members can understand.

Individual English Language Plan

An Individual English Language Plan (I-ELP) is developed for each student designated as an English Learner (EL) which is updated annually until the student achieves Former LEP (FLEP) status.

The EL Committee will 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 high stakes 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. Determine and record the date of placement into the ESL program on ACCESS for ELLs
8. Date of placement into the EL program is entered into the Federal Program page of PowerSchool.

General Education Placement

It is the goal of the Gadsden City School System that students who are ELs be able to attain fluency in English, achieve the state's performance standards and progress to graduation. Research related to student placement and retention shows that ELs should be placed in their age-appropriate grade to the maximum extent possible. It is important that ELs be placed in the least restrictive environment. Retaining or placing a student in a lower grade is generally ill advised, and it is to be understood that such a placement will not expedite the learning of English. Age-appropriate grade placement is recommended.

Roles of Response to Instruction Team (RTI) and EL Committees

1. The RTI team 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 RTI team is to help guide general education intervention services for all students who are at risk of failure academically or behaviorally. (At-risk definition: Students that are scoring below the 25%tile in grade appropriate measures in curriculum-based measures, students that are below mastery on grade level standards noted on skills-based report cards, students that are below a C on grade level material, students that score IN NEED OF SUPPORT on Summative testing, and chronic behavior referrals, etc.). Although it is a required step before special education testing, it is not used only for pre-special education testing purposes. ELs may be referred to the RTI team only after differentiated instructional strategies have been provided for a reasonable amount of time in Tier I and there is data showing this instruction has been unsuccessful. ELs cannot be referred to the RTI team if language is the barrier to achievement. RTI 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 is being discussed for possible special education issues and language clearly is not the issue, then RTI is the appropriate vehicle, provided EL staff members are part of the team. Once language has been eliminated as the barrier to achievement, ELs must be served in the same way as all other students.
The EL Committee and RTI team are separate entities, but may include some of the same members. Appropriate personnel include content-area or general classroom teachers of ELs, assessment specialists, school administrators, school counselors, and EL staff.

Waiver of Services

Upon written instructions from a parent, an EL may be withdrawn from the EL supplemental program. The student will be placed in the regular classroom and will be served as an EL student with regards to classroom instruction by the classroom teacher. The system is still obligated to provide appropriate, informal strategies to ensure that the student's English language and academic needs are met. A waiver of EL services should be utilized by the school and parent to provide documentation of denial of services. A bilingual translator will be utilized to explain benefits of services and the form will be provided in the parent's/student's home language, when appropriate. Whenever necessary the district utilizes TRANSACT® for pre-translated documents.

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

3) Exit Procedures

A student may be exited from the EL program when the following criteria apply:

1. The student meets State ACCESS level requirements. (4.8 Composite Score or higher)
2. The EL Committee convenes to review and determine if an EL meets all the following criteria below:
 - Work samples/grades of the student are examined and indicate on-grade-level performance without accommodations in the core content classes (math, science, social studies and English).
 - Teacher observation indicating student readiness to work in the classroom on regular curriculum activities without accommodations or assistance.
 - Other formative and summative assessments
3. The parent of the student requests that his/her child no longer receive EL services.

When EL students score a 4.8 they will exit the ESL program. A meeting will be held to exit students and students will be monitored for four years. During this four-year monitoring the committee can meet and determine the student is not performing

without ESL support and retest the child for entry. Exit criteria should be the same statewide and that exit criteria is a 4.8 composite score on ACCESS.

Monitoring ELs Who Have Exited the EL Program

Exiting the EL program is based on achieving a 4.8 on the ACCESS. A follow-up review will be updated to verify that the student is functioning academically and socially in the new setting. Students who are exited from ESL services are placed on monitoring status for four academic years. The EL teacher will continue to monitor the student for the next four years. During the monitoring time, the EL teacher and classroom teacher(s) communicate regularly (at least once every nine weeks during the first year of monitoring, and at least once each semester during the second, third, and fourth years of monitoring) to ensure that the exited student is functioning in the classroom without EL support. Students are classified as FEL 1 (Former English Learner, Monitor Year 1) during the first year of monitoring, FEL 2 (Former English Learner, Monitor Year 2) during the second year of monitoring, FEL 3 (Former English Learner, Monitoring Year 3) during the third year of monitoring, and FEL 4 (Former English Learner, Monitoring Year 4) during the fourth year of monitoring. Upon successful completion of four years of monitoring, ELs are classified as Former English Learner (FEL) and are no longer included in the EL subgroup for accountability purposes

If the student is having difficulty, then he/she will be recommended to the EL Committee. Progress monitoring may include:

- review of grades
- review of formal & informal student assessment results
- review of student work samples
- interview with the student
- interview with the student's parent(s) or guardian(s)

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

Comprehensive Needs Assessment

A comprehensive needs assessment is conducted by the LEA and by individual schools. The following data is analyzed:

- ACCESS for ELLs 2.0
- ACAP
- ACT
- DIBELS Amplify
- IXL& iReady
- Other District Approved Computer Programs
- Discipline Reports
- Community/Parent/Student/Teacher Surveys
- Counseling and Physical Educations Reports

Content

English Learners must simultaneously learn English and content. The World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium, of which Alabama is a partner, has developed *English Language Proficiency Standards for English Language Learners in Kindergarten through Grade 12*. These standards have been adopted as a means to align curriculum, instruction, and assessment of ELs and also meet the requirements of the “*Every Student Succeeds Act (2015)*” by linking English language acquisition standards and state academic content standards.

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.

Instruction

To provide effective instruction that leads to the timely acquisition of proficiency in English and enables each student to become proficient in the state's academic content and student academic achievement standards and in College and Career Readiness Standards, Gadsden City Schools will implement various instructional methods that will be utilized by EL staff and general program teachers. To ensure that EL students gain the English language skills necessary to function successfully in an English-speaking academic setting, the following instructional strategies of language instruction will be utilized:

- Instruction that makes content comprehensible
- Adequate amount of pre-activities and modeling
- Meaningful hands-on activities that contextualize abstract concepts
- Opportunities for all students to feel successful by providing appropriate accommodations for the needs of students' different proficiency levels
- Integration of language skills, thinking skills, and content knowledge
- Enhance the students' technology proficiency in all content areas and acquisition of language proficiency.

There will be communication and collaboration between EL teacher(s) and content-area teachers to determine appropriate instructional strategies and assessments for the same challenging academic content as outlined in the Alabama Course of Study for Reading, Math, Science, and Social Studies. ELs remain in the regular classroom for academic subjects with classroom teachers so that they can effectively participate in classroom activities and comprehend the academic material being presented.

The primary program of instruction used by Gadsden City Schools is English as a Second Language (ESL). ESL is a 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.

In addition to sheltered instruction, interventionists and EL teachers deliver language development services through both **Pull- Out** and/or **Push- In** instructional approaches.

ESL Pull-out

In this approach, students are taken out of their mainstream classroom, in the same facility, for a scheduled time with an interventionist or EL teacher to receive English language development instruction. Interventionist, who may or may not be bilingual will provide the pull-out instruction. The focus of instruction is on English language development which promotes content area comprehension.

ESL Push-In

The same goals are applied as in ESL Pull-out; however, an interventionist or EL Teacher will provide instruction by working with ELs in the regular classroom.

Summary

These programs will be implemented in various ways to best meet the needs of ELs in Gadsden City Schools. Instruction in the EL program will be provided by qualified and appropriately trained teachers. The EL program will be evaluated annually and changes will be made as needed to ensure that the best program is being implemented.

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

Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP)

Each school writes a Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) to indicate how and when goals and strategies will be met and to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. Each plan includes goal(s), action step(s) and specific strategies for increasing the percentage of students making progress achieving English language proficiency. The Central Office CIP Committee monitors implementation of each plan by conducting on-site school walk-throughs, instructional rounds, and debriefing sessions with each school's CIP Team.

Data Meetings

Data Meetings are held with all certified staff at individual schools. Data is analyzed to drive teacher instruction and student achievement.

Problem Solving Team

Problem Solving Team meetings are held at individual schools. Data is analyzed to determine effectiveness of instruction and program decisions are made to ensure the needs of students are met.

Materials

The following materials are used for instruction:

- Alabama Course of Study / College and Career Ready Standards
- WIDA Consortium English Language Proficiency Standards for English Language Learners (WIDA ELP Standards)
- District Pacing guides for content areas
- College and Career Readiness Standards
- Materials from the Alabama State Department of Education distributed for state and national assessment preparation (Grades 3-12).
- WIDA Can Do Descriptors

A combination of strategies is used to teach language: whole language techniques, phonics, vocabulary development, oral language skills, cooperative learning, and integrated reading. Emphasis is placed upon the development of the four communication skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing across all content areas including social and instructional language development. The WIDA Language Acquisition Standards are used in regular classroom instruction as well as in the EL classroom.

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION STANDARDS

Standard 1: *English language learners communicate in English for SOCIAL AND INSTRUCTIONAL purposes within the school setting.*

Standard 2: *English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of LANGUAGE ARTS.*

Standard 3: *English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of MATHEMATICS.*

Standard 4: *English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of SCIENCE.*

Standard 5: *English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of SOCIAL STUDIES.*

3) Grading and retention policy and procedures

Grading: It is against the law to fail a student because he/she is not proficient in English.

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 2015). 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. (Alabama EL Policies and Procedures Manual)

Assessments must allow students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in spite of language barriers. Alternative assessments are to be used when needed. Examples of alternative assessments include but are not limited to portfolios, presentations, oral reports, making lists, or any product that allows a student to express what they have learned.

- An accommodations folder for each EL is to be kept in the regular classroom with evidence of accommodated work and assessments.
- Grades placed in a student's cumulative folder is based on the students' level of proficiency and must reflect the student's academic achievement on grade level academic content and student academic achievement standards.
- When applicable, designate on the report card that an EL has received grading accommodations.

Retention

School districts are directed, by federal law, to ensure that English Learners can participate meaningfully in the districts' educational program. This does not mean that ELs cannot fail. Rather, the classroom teacher must provide full documentation of accommodations having been made to assure the student full access to the content. Classroom teachers and the EL teacher must collaborate in order to guarantee this access. Evidence and documentation of instructional and assessment accommodations are kept by the classroom teacher in each ELs accommodations folder. When a student is not demonstrating mastery and appropriate assessment suggestions have been implemented, the classroom teacher will collaborate with the EL teacher to consider other accommodations. If the student is still not performing successfully, the EL Committee will convene to review the child's accommodations folder and discuss other possible strategies.

Retention of ELs shall not be based solely upon level of English language proficiency (*Lau vs. Nichols*). Prior to considering retention of an EL, the following points should be addressed and documented by the EL Committee:

1. What is the student's level of English language proficiency?
2. Has an Individual English Language Plan (I-ELP) been implemented to document classroom accommodations and student progress?
3. 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, tests)?
4. How much individual English language development instruction is the student receiving during the school day?
5. Has an alternate grading strategy been implemented (e.g., portfolio, checklist, teacher observation, or rubric assessment on content and language objectives)?
6. Has the student's classroom teacher been adequately trained with instruction and assessment strategies specifically designed for the students learning English?
7. Do the report cards indicate that students were graded according to their I-ELPs?

At the end of each nine-week grading period, the EL Teacher will review the grades of ELs. These grades will be discussed with the principal and EL Committee, if needed. Grades will be filed in the student's cumulative record.

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

Staffing

Gadsden City Schools will strive to employ educational personnel who have formal training in second language acquisition. All teachers and paraprofessionals in any language instruction educational program for English Learners are fluent in English, including having written and oral communication skills. EL staff members are responsible for English language instruction for ELs. They may also provide tutoring and monitoring to English Learners and Former English Learners (FEL) as indicated in the Individual English Language Plan (I-ELP).

All ELs will receive their primary instruction from certified teachers through the regular academic program.

If sufficiently qualified teaching applicants are not available, non-certified applicants may be employed who are bilingual, have EL experience, and/or have EL training. Non-certified EL personnel will work under the direct supervision of a certified teacher.

Currently a Federal Programs Director, EL program supervisor, (5) Certified ESL teachers, (1) Certified ECE/Elementary resource teacher (Praxis), (1) Certified Elementary resource teacher (Praxis); (1) Certified Spanish teacher, and (3) bilingual translator are employed by Gadsden City Schools.

State Requirements for Teaching ESL

- ESL Certification is awarded through programs at Alabama colleges or with reciprocal agreements with other states and as of June 1, 2007, with PRAXIS II.
- ESL P-6 Teachers can have:
 - ESL Certification
 - Foreign Language Certification
 - Regular Elementary Certification
- Secondary ESL Teachers can have:
 - ESL Certification
 - Foreign Language Certification
 - Regular Elementary Certification
 - English/Language Arts Certification

Gadsden City Schools will maintain its status of hiring only teachers and staff that meet state certification and licensure requirements (ESSA, Sec1112(c)(6)). Gadsden City Schools will provide appropriate professional development for teachers who have not received formal ESL certification.

5) Method for collecting and submitting data

Collecting and Submitting Data

The Federal Programs Director works closely with ESL teachers, to ensure that EL data is correctly entered into PowerSchool. Periodic data verifications are made to ensure that data requested by the ALSDE is correct. Upon identification and placement, students are given a code in the PowerSchool Program. The SDE uses the following coding system for ELs:

EL 1- Active EL students who are in their first year in a U.S. school.

EL2- Active EL students who are in their second year or more in a U.S. school.

FEL 1- (Monitoring Year 1)- Students who have exited the EL program and are in their first year of systematic monitoring by the EL teacher. Should these students experience academic failure based on their lack of proficiency in English, will be given the appropriate language screener and when applicable will be re-identified as an EL and will be served again in the EL program.

FEL 2- (Monitoring Year 2) - Students who have exited the EL program and are in their second year of systematic monitoring by the EL teacher in the regular classroom. Should these students experience academic failure based on their lack of proficiency in English, will be given the appropriate language screener and when applicable will be re-identified as an EL and will be served again in the EL program.

FEL 3- (Monitoring Year 3) - Students who have exited the EL program and are in their third year of systematic monitoring by the EL teacher in the regular classroom. Should these students experience academic failure based on their lack of proficiency in English, will be given the appropriate language screener and when applicable will be re-identified as an EL and will be served again in the ESL program.

FEL 4- (Monitoring Year 4) - Students who have exited the EL program and are in their fourth year of systematic monitoring by the EL teacher in the regular classroom. Should these students experience academic failure based on their lack of proficiency in English, will be given the appropriate language screener and when applicable will be re-identified as an EL and will be served again in the EL program.

FEL- Former EL students who have successfully completed four years of monitoring and are no longer an EL.

LEP Waived Services- Students who are EL yet parents have refused supplemental Title III services.

NOMPHLOTE- National Origin Minority Student Whose Primary Home Language is Other Than English.

These students have a non-English language background but are fluent in English and do not require EL services. Parents, however, may need information in their home language

6) Method for evaluating the effectiveness of the program

Program Evaluation

All districts awarded Title III grants must report to the SDE how their Title III program and professional development activities link to evidence-based research on the education of ELs.

Gadsden City Schools uses both formal and informal evaluations of the program to determine progress in meeting the determined goals. The evaluation is an ongoing process. The progress of each EL is assessed by reviewing a variety of data and Report Cards. These reports are available in data portals and will be used in the annual evaluation.

A formal evaluation of the EL Program is conducted at the end of each school year and a copy of the results is submitted to the SDE. This evaluation consists of data collected from the individual schools concerning the following:

- The number of students in the district who attained language proficiency (4.8 or greater on the ACCESS for ELLs)
- The percent of students in the district who scored proficient
- The number of students in the district who have been in an EL program seven years or longer
- The percent of students in the district who have been in an LEP program five years or longer who scored proficient
- Number of students in the EL program
- Number of students who were recommended to exit the program
- Promotion and retention rates

All of this information will be compiled into a system report that will be completed by the Federal Programs Director. The EL Main Data Collection is submitted annually to the ALSDE through the Accountability Web Portal.

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

Gadsden City Schools receives Federal financial assistance and does not, on the basis of national origin or limited English proficiency:

- provide services, financial aid, or other benefits that are different or provide them in a different manner,
- restrict an individual's enjoyment of an advantage or privilege enjoyed by others,
- deny an individual the right to participate in federally-assisted programs, or
- defeat or substantially impair the objectives of federally-assisted programs.

It is understood that the regulatory requirements from Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 have been interpreted to prohibit denial of equal access to education because of a student's limited proficiency in English. It is also understood that all teachers are language teachers and models of language for their students. Throughout life, all individuals are language learners perfecting their skills in understanding, speaking, reading, and writing. When ELs enroll in this system, it is essential that needed support such as language development and instructional accommodations be provided. It is expected that as the EL gains fluency, fewer variations and accommodations in classroom activities will be necessary.

Services provided to all eligible students, including EL students, are as follows:

Referral of ELs to Special Education

There is no minimum age, English proficiency level, or time in school requirement to meet before a child can

be referred for evaluation. Delaying a special education evaluation of an English Learner (EL) suspected of having a disability based on his EL status is not permissible under IDEA.

I. 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 an English Learner (EL) 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. Home language survey and parent/family interviews are vital to gain developmental information, current level of functioning, and functioning compared to culturally/linguistically similar peers. The WIDA ACCESS test or comparable measure should be administered to determine English proficiency. Assessments should always be "provided and administered in the child's native language or other mode of communication and in the form **most likely to yield accurate information on what the child knows and can do academically, developmentally, and functionally**" (34 C.F.R. §300.304(c)(1)(ii)). All meetings regarding an EL suspected of having a disability **MUST** include personnel with qualifications and/or expertise in second language acquisition. Information will be conveyed in a language and form best understood by parents.

II. Determining Eligibility

- All meetings regarding an EL must include personnel with qualifications and/or expertise in second language acquisition to rule out limited English proficiency as the determining factor in eligibility decisions.
- If the student is assessed in English, then the disability should manifest in English.
- If the student is assessed in the native language, then the disability must be present in the native language.
- A student **cannot** have a disability in one language but not in another.

The EL with disabilities has a right to the same individual special education services as other students with disabilities. ELs must be provided English language acquisition services that are an integral part of their IEP.

ELs are eligible to receive Special Education Services on the same basis as all other students. Care should be exercised to ensure that Limited-English proficiency is not the basis of a referral. (See Appendix I, Information on preventing inappropriate placements of ELs in SES).

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 decide 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 determinant 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 must consider the language needs of the student as those needs relate to the child's IEP when developing, reviewing, and/or revising IEPs (34 C.F.R. §300.346 (a)(2)(ii)).

The IEP Team should consider a continuum of placement/service options. If they determine that both services are appropriate and necessary for the student to access the curriculum, then ELs may receive **both** special education and English language services concurrently. ALL ELs with IEPs must have an EL plan documented on the profile page of the IEP. On the IEP, the Student Profile page should include a statement regarding the EL plan and the question “Does the student have limited English proficiency?” should be checked YES under Special Instructional Factors. The EL staff will coordinate with the Special Education case manager to add EL services.

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 (NOM-PHLOTE). These accommodations must include a translator for oral communication, and written communication must be in the parent’s native language.

The full guidance document titled *English Learners (ELs) and the Special Education Eligibility Process* may be accessed at <http://www.alsde.edu/sec/ses/Pages/home.aspx>.

ELs cannot be referred to the Response To Instruction (RTI) Team if language is the barrier to achievement.

English Learners may be referred to the RTI Team only after accommodations and differentiated instructional strategies have been provided for a reasonable amount of time in Tier I and there is data showing that this instruction has been unsuccessful.

The RTI team is the appropriate vehicle if an EL is being discussed for possible special education issues and language is clearly not the issue, provided EL staff member(s) are part of the team. Once language has been eliminated as the barrier to achievement, ELs must be served in the same way as all other students.

The school system ensures:

that the individualized education program for each child with disabilities is reviewed in accordance with Federal and State regulations, and

- that an evaluation of the child, based on procedures which meet Federal and State regulations, is conducted every three years or more frequently if conditions warrant or if the child’s parent or teacher, requests an evaluation.

Gifted and Talented

Gadsden City Schools’ Gifted Education Program is available to all students identified for placement in accordance with regulations established by the Alabama State Department of Education regardless of their race, ethnicity, sex, national origin, or primary language. In compliance with the Title VI Resolution Agreement, Gadsden City Schools will focus on finding gifted students in under-represented populations. ELs will not be denied access to gifted services on the basis of EL status. Information will be conveyed in a language and form best understood by parents.

Title I

EL students are eligible for Title I services on the same basis as other students who receive service.

Advanced Placement (AP) Courses

English Learners are eligible to participate in advanced placement courses; however, according to the College Board Advanced Placement Program, accommodations for ELs are not permitted on AP Exams. This information is shared with parents and students.

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

Participation Requirements

All ELs, whether they receive or waive supplemental Title III services, must be tested annually on the state adopted English proficiency test, *Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to State for English Language Learners* (ACCESS for ELLs 2.0).

All ELs must participate in the statewide assessment program for accountability purposes with the following exceptions per ALSDE Memo.

An EL student during his/her first 12 calendar months of enrollment in U.S. schools is defined as an EL student who has attended schools in the United State (not including Puerto Rico) for 12 months or less. The definition provided a window (the student's first 12 calendar months attending schools in the U.S.) within which time such a student is entitled to an exemption from academic content assessments in reading/language arts for accountability purposes.

All EL students in Grade K-12, regardless of the number of years of enrollment in U.S. schools, must participate in ACCESS, the state-administered English language proficiency test, or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs

EL K-12 students, during their first 12 months of enrollment in U.S. schools, must take the mathematics test of ACAP, the mathematics test of The ACT Plus Writing for grades 9-12, or the mathematics test of the K-12 AAA, with accommodations as necessary.

EL students, during their first 12 calendar months of enrollment in U.S. schools, must take the science portion of the ACAP (Grades 5th & 8th), the science test of the 9-12 ACT Plus Writing, or the science test of the AAA (Grades 5, 7, and 11), with accommodations as necessary.

EL 9-12 students, during their first 12 months of enrollment in U.S. schools, must take the English and the writing test of The ACT Plus Writing.

All EL students must participate in the end-of-course assessments for any of the courses for which they are enrolled and receiving course credit and for which an end-of-course assessment is administered.

The EL Committee must include decisions regarding the criteria outlined above in the Individual English Language Plan for EL students in their first 12 months of enrollment in U.S. schools. These decisions must be made on an individual basis.

Accommodations on High Stakes Assessments

Decisions regarding appropriate accommodations for ELs must be made on an individual basis by the EL Committee.

All ELs will participate in the high stakes' assessments. Accommodations for ELs will be according to the current guidelines found in the *Alabama Student Assessment Program Policies and Procedures for the Students of Special Populations*

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

AMD – is the progress EL students make in learning English. The district will follow state guidelines

INTERIM PROGRESS- Percent of ELs attaining ACAP & English Language Proficiency.

Adequate Progress in Language Acquisition (APLA) and Annual Measurable Determination (AMD)

Proficiency Accountability

Gadsden City Schools will use a variety of methods to measure the adequate progress of ELs. Instructional specialists collaborate with classroom teachers weekly for input on student progress. This input is shared and discussed at PST meetings held at each building. During the meeting, the Problem Solving Team consisting of instructional specialists and administrators meet to discuss student progress in reading and math at each grade level. By following the District's Reading and Math Progressions in grades K-3, high stakes assessment preparatory materials in grades 3-8, and ACAP language and reading standards skills assessments and report card grades in 9-12th all ELs are receiving instruction that will move them toward the goals of attaining English

proficiency while achieving high levels of instruction in core academic areas and becoming contributing members to the community. In order to track their progress, the following instruments will be used:

* ACAP- will be administered at the end of year to show growth in the areas of reading, math and science.

*Progress Reports - Student progress reports are sent to parents. The criteria used in these reports include achievement in core academic subjects and attendance in the regular classroom program for grades K-12.

*Scores on the Language Proficiency Instrument - Each student in the EL program will be given the WIDA Online Screener grades 1-12, WIDA Screener for Kindergarten to assess language proficiency when the Home Language Survey indicates that they are an English Learner. This assessment tool will be administered upon their arrival from another destination and will be measured with the ACCESS assessment in the spring. The scores are compiled on a chart by the EL Teacher and compared to measure adequate progress in language acquisition.

Through the various methods of systematically monitoring student progress, data driven instruction and assessment can be planned using the WIDA Amplified Standards and Performance Indicators appropriately. Assessments must allow students to demonstrate their content area knowledge in spite of their English language proficiency. The WIDA Model Performance Indicators, WIDA Amplified Standards, and WIDA Can do Descriptors can be used to develop appropriate assessments for ELs.

Section E: Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

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

Parent Notification

Gadsden City Schools will implement effective means of outreach so parents can be involved in the education of their children. It is the goal that parents of ELs be active participants in assisting their children to learn English, to achieve at high levels in core academic subjects, and to meet the same challenging state content and achievement standards of all students. Since the parents of ELs may speak little or no English, assistance in understanding school-related information is needed. When possible, documents are translated into the parent's home language and/or an interpreter is employed to assist. When needed and possible, each school will:

1. Annually evaluate educational programs to determine any barriers that may exist in preventing parents of ELs from participating in school activities.
2. Provide an interpreter to assist in the registration of ELs or non-English speaking students.
3. Provide an interpreter for parent/teacher conferences.
4. Provide information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities in the home language.
5. Provide full opportunities for the participation of parents with Limited-English proficiency in the education of their children, including providing information and school profiles in a language and form parents can understand.
6. Include parents of ELs in the development of school and/or system plans.
7. Parents are encouraged to participate in PTSO (Parent Teacher Student Organization)

Staff will consider the following factors that may impact the degree and extent of involvement by parents of ELs:

- Length of residence in the U.S.
- English language proficiency
- Prior experiences of parents
- Economic need of parents
- Availability of support groups and bilingual staff

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

- EL identification, placement, exit, and monitoring

It is the goal of the Gadsden City School System that students who are ELs be able to attain fluency in English, achieve the state's performance standards and progress to graduation.

Upon registration for the first time, parents and/or students in grades kindergarten through twelve are asked to complete a *Home Language Survey* (HLS) which contains, at a minimum, the OCR and DOJ approved questions. This begins the procedure to identify, assess, and place English learning students, including immigrant children and youth, who have a primary/home language other than English.

The ESL teacher will review the student's records and gather all pertinent data. If this data includes scores for the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs 2.0) assessment from a previous school, the results may be used to establish English language proficiency. When there are no former ACCESS scores, the ESL teacher will assess the student using the WIDA Online Screener for grades 1-12 and the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten to help determine eligibility for placement in the English language development program.

The primary program of instruction used by Gadsden City Schools is English as a Second Language (ESL). ESL is a 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.

The instructional goal for all school personnel, including regular classroom teachers, special education teachers, Title I teachers, counselors, administrators after-school staff, summer school staff, and ESL teachers is:

- To increase the English language proficiency and academic performance of each program participant to the degree necessary to allow independent functioning in the regular school program and to become productive successful citizens.

Research related to student placement and retention shows that ELs should be placed in their age-appropriate grade to the maximum extent possible. It is important that ELs be placed in the least restrictive environment. Retaining or placing a student in a lower grade is generally ill advised, and it is to be understood that such a placement will not expedite the learning of English. Age-appropriate grade placement is recommended.

ELs are eligible to receive Special Education Services on the same basis as all other students. Care should be exercised to ensure that Limited-English proficiency is not the basis of a referral.

Parent notification is to be communicated in a language and/or manner that the parents can understand. An interpreter, MasterWord, and/or *Transact*® will be used to assist in this communication. It is not necessary for parents to respond affirmatively to the notification for the student to participate in the ESL program.

Efforts will be made to furnish notices in a language appropriate to the parents. The district has determined that assessment results should be translated in the home language using either a translated document or presented orally by a translator.

Monitoring ELs Who Have Exited the EL Program

Exiting the EL program is based on achieving a 4.8 on the ACCESS. A follow-up review will be updated to verify that the student is functioning academically and socially in the new setting. Students who are exited from ESL services are placed on monitoring status for four academic years. The EL teacher will continue to monitor the student for the next four years. During the monitoring time, the EL teacher and classroom teacher(s) communicate regularly (at least once every nine weeks during the first year of monitoring, and at least once each semester during the second, third, and fourth years of monitoring) to ensure that the exited student is functioning in the classroom without EL support. Students are classified as FEL 1 (Former English Learner, Monitor Year 1) during the first year of monitoring, FEL 2 (Former English Learner, Monitor Year 2) during the second year of monitoring, FEL 3 (Former English Learner, Monitoring Year 3) during the third year of monitoring, and FEL 4 (Former English Learner, Monitoring Year 4) during the fourth year of monitoring. Upon successful completion of four years of monitoring, ELs are classified as Former English Learner (FEL) and are no longer included in the EL subgroup for accountability purposes.

If the student is having difficulty, then he/she will be recommended to the EL Committee. Progress monitoring may include:

- review of grades
- review of formal & informal student assessment results
- review of student work samples
- interview with the student
- interview with the student's parent(s) or guardian(s)

Waiver of Services

Upon written instructions from a parent, an EL may be withdrawn from the EL supplemental program. The student will be placed in the regular classroom. The system is still obligated to provide appropriate, informal strategies to ensure that the student's English language and academic needs are met.

A waiver of EL services should be utilized by the school and parent to provide documentation of denial of services. A bilingual translator will be utilized to explain benefits of services and the form will be provided in the parent's/student's home language, when appropriate. At present the state department of education is providing translation services using MasterWord. Whenever necessary the district utilizes TRANSACT® for pre-translated documents.