



Smith County School District

English Language Learner Manual / Plan

2024 – 2025

Definition of an English Learner

According to ESEA, an EL is an individual:

- Who is aged 3-21;
- Who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in elementary or secondary school;
- Who was not born in the United States OR whose native language is a language other than English; and
- Where difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding English language may be sufficient to deny the individual:
 - The ability in meeting the State's proficient level of achievement on State Assessments described in section 1111(b)(3)
 - The ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; and
 - The opportunity to participate fully in society.

Definition of Immigrant ESEA Sec. 3201(5)

According to the ESEA, an immigrant:

- Is ages 3 through 21;
- Was not born in any state or U.S. territory; and
- Has not been attending one or more schools in any one or more states for more than three full academic years.

Definition of a Refugee

A refugee is an individual who has fled his or country of origin because of past persecution based upon race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group.

Federal Civil Rights Laws in the Education of English Learners

Federal law prohibits entities that receive federal funds, including LEAs and public schools, from discriminating based on race, color, or national origin.

Federal law also requires LEAs to take "appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by their students in their instructional programs.

Process for Enrolling and Identifying English Learners

Enrolling English Learners

- LEAs and their public schools must enroll all students regardless of their or their parents' or guardians' actual or perceived citizenship or immigration status.
- LEAs may not bar a student from enrolling because he or she lacks a birth certificate or has records that indicate foreign place of birth.

- When enrolling students, schools may not request information from students or their parents or guardians in order to deny access to public schools based on race color, or national origin.
- If a social security number is requested, inform the family that providing it is voluntary and refusal will not bar the child from enrolling in or attending school, and explain for what the purpose the number will be used. **A school district may not require families to provide a social security number to enroll in or attend school.**
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Identifying English Learners

Step 1: Home Language Survey

- ❖ A Home Language Survey (HLS) must be completed for each student registering for enrollment in a school in Mississippi.
- ❖ The survey is provided to **all new entering students**
- ❖ The completed survey becomes part of the student's cumulative record and must be available for future reference.

Step 2: The placement Test for Instructional Placement

- ❖ The LAS Links Placement Test must be conducted to determine the level of English proficiency and to facilitate appropriate instructional and program placement decisions.
- ❖ Students who have the potential to be identified as EL because of the HLS and who enroll at the beginning of the year must be assessed for English Language Proficiency within **30 calendar days** of enrollment.
- ❖ Those who enroll after school has started must be assessed **within 10 days.**

Step 3: Parent and Family Notification

- ❖ A parent or guardian whose child is receiving or is eligible to receive EL services has the right to decline or opt his/her child out of any or all ELL services. Opting out may not be recommended to the parent or guardian for any reason.
- ❖ The school must provide guidance in the language the parents or guardians can understand to ensure they understand their child's rights, the EL services their child could receive and the benefit of those services. This will ensure parents are able to make informed decisions about opting out.
- ❖ Parents or guardians must be notified in writing, within 30 days of the start of school (or within 10 for later- arriving students) of their child's recommended placement in an EL program.
- ❖ The school must maintain the documentation to support the parent knowingly and voluntarily opted his/ her child out of EL programs or services.

- ❖ If a parent does decide to opt his/her child out, the child retains EL status. The school remains obligated to take affirmative steps and action to ensure that the EL student has meaningful access to its educational program.
- ❖ The school must continue to monitor periodically the opted- out student's academic progress. If an LEA finds that a student is struggling, it must take the appropriate steps to assist the student.
- ❖ ELS who opt out of services must, have their ELP reassessed yearly during the annual LAS Links assessment period.
- ❖ After it is determined an EL no longer qualifies, the school must continue to monitor the student for at least 4 years, just as it would an EL who has received EL programs and services.

Step 4: Placement in a language instruction program

- ❖ After ELs are identified using the LAS Links Placement Test, schools must provide ELs with appropriate services.
- ❖ The goal for students who are ELs is that they attain fluency in English, master the state's academic content standards as demonstrated by proficiency on the state's required student assessments, and pass any other state required tests.

Step 5: Developing a Language Service Plan

- ❖ MDE requires that each student with an EL designation have Language Service Plan (LSP), which must be updated annually until the student exits the EL program.
- ❖ The Student Evaluation Team (SET) must meet to develop the LSP at the beginning of each academic school year. The team must be comprised of
 - Teachers (including EL teachers)
 - Administrators
 - Counselors
 - Parents or Guardians

The team must meet quarterly to evaluate the student's progress and make adjustments as necessary.

- ❖ The LSP must contain the following:
 1. Student's demographic information
 2. Date of first enrollment in the U.S. school
 3. Yearly ELPT scores
 4. Classroom accommodations
 5. State Testing accommodations
 6. Signatures of the SET members

Step 5: EL Data Entry

- ❖ Once a student has been identified as an EL, the district must ensure the student is correctly marked in their student data package.
- ❖ This information has to be completed in the EL roster screen on MSIS and must be checked monthly for accuracy.

Process for Assessing English Learners

Federal Regulations:

ESEA requires that the LEA must assess all ELs using the annual English language proficiency assessment, including those students whose parents have declined to enroll them in, or had them removed from, Language Instruction Education Programs (LIEPs).

English Language Proficiency Test

The LAS Links Assessments is a secure, large-scale, English language proficiency assessment administered to kindergarten through 12th grade students who have been as ELs. The assessment is administered annually in the spring to monitor each EL's progress in acquiring academic English.

English Language Proficiency Testing Basics

The students are tested in four domains:

1. Listening: Domain assesses the student's response to variety of audio passages
2. Speaking: the student's production of grammar and vocabulary as used in social and academic language
3. Reading: Assess the student's reading comprehension based on answers to multiple-choice questions about passages, tables, charts, and illustrations.
4. Writing: student's ability to produce grade-level appropriate words, sentences, and paragraphs

Accommodations on State Academic Assessments

ELs must be provided reasonable accommodations when taking assessments. In the current edition of the Mississippi Testing Accommodations Manual, accommodations are available for students who have been officially identified as ELs.

Exiting Students

Assessment score requirements for English Learners (EL) to officially exit EL status:

- a. Overall Proficiency Level 4 or 5 and
- b. Reading Proficiency Level 4 or 5, and
- c. Writing Proficiency Level 4 or 5.

Monitoring Students

- After students have exited EL status, school district must monitor their academic progress for at least 4 years.
- Monitoring must be conducted and documents every 9 weeks, with the SET team reviewing monitored students' grades, assessments and other related data.
- If exited EL is not progressing academically as expected and monitoring suggests a persistent language need, districts may retest using the LAS Links Placement test to see if the student needs to be offered additional language assistance services.
- In no case should the re-testing of an exited student's ELP be prohibited.
- If a student does re-enter, the school is required to document reasons why, as well as obtain parental consent prior to reentry.

SCSD Description of Services and Instructional Supports

EL students in the Smith County will provide the following supports and services for ELs in the district:

- Pull out model of support. With this model, students are provided small group or individualized supports.
- Accommodations and supports to be successful in the classroom.
- Professional development opportunities provided to personnel who are serving EL students in the district.

