

**DRAFT**

# English Language Learners



**Laws and Guidelines for  
Serving Their Needs**

# Definition

An English Language Learner (ELL) means a child who does not speak English or whose native language is not English and who is not currently able to perform ordinary classroom work in English.

- Speaks *another* language at home
- Speaks an *additional* language at home

# **Definition**

A student who is considered LEP (Limited English Proficient) is considered to be limited in his or her English language proficiency in one or more of the domains of language, including: reading, writing, speaking and listening.

# GOALS

- **Close the proficiency gap** between ELLs and their native-English peers
- Provide ELLs with instruction that is appropriate for their individual language proficiency level
- Develop their English proficiency
  - Provide rigorous content instruction
  - Provide rigorous ESL instruction

# **1. Federal Policy**

**Office of Civil Rights:** oversees that school districts ensure equal educational opportunity for ELLs.

**ELL students are to be provided with  
language services  
and  
equitable access to standards-based  
instruction**

# 2001: No Child Left Behind supports ELL instruction.

**To receive funding, school districts MUST:**

- ✓ Notify parents about ELL program placement within 30 days of the start of school , ELL academic achievement, and language progress
- ✓ Have certified ELL teachers
- ✓ Provide effective and research-based ELL instruction
- ✓ Establish English language proficiency benchmarks
- ✓ Assess students' language proficiency annually
- ✓ Align content standards with state language proficiency standards

\* MA participates in NCLB's Title III grant program.

# 2. Massachusetts State Policy

## G.L.c 71A

### School Districts MUST:

- ✓ Educate ELLs in English using **Sheltered English Immersion** (SEI) strategies
- ✓ Establish a process and criteria for determining whether students are ELLs upon initial enrollment
- ✓ Notify parents of their child's status and of their legal rights
  - Parents have rights:
    - May apply for a **waiver** to put their child in a mainstream or bilingual class/school. Bilingual classes can be created if there are 20 or more students in two consecutive grades who speak the same native language.
    - May **opt-out** of the ELL program.

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## **School Districts MUST: (continued)**

- ✓ Establish a process for placing students in a language program appropriate for their proficiency level
  - ✓ Must have certified ELL teachers
- ✓ **Assess** students annually using ACCESS
- ✓ Establish a process and criteria for determining whether ELLs are still considered ELLs at the end of each school year
- ✓ Establish a process for **exiting and monitoring** students who are deemed proficient and can be reclassified as FLEP (Former Limited English Proficient).

# SEI – Content Teachers

- All MA content teachers must use SEI strategies.
- Content is taught in English at a *comprehensible* level.
- Strategies simultaneously engage ELLs in developing grade-level content-area knowledge, academic skills, and increased English proficiency.
- Teachers use clear, direct, simple English and a wide range of scaffolding strategies to communicate meaningful input in the content area to students.

# SEI – Content Teachers

- SEI Learning activities:
  - Connect new content to students' prior knowledge
  - Require collaboration among students – pairing higher proficiency levels with lower proficiency levels.
  - Spiral through curriculum material
  - Offer ELLs the grade-level content instruction of their English-speaking peers, while adapting lesson delivery to suit their English proficiency level.

# 2012: RETELL: Rethinking Equity and Teaching for English Language Learners

**Goal:** To improve academic achievement of ELLs and close proficiency gaps.

## **Three components of RETELL:**

- Provide professional development about SEI instruction and language development to all teachers and administrators
  - In 2016, **ALL core content** teachers in MA must earn the SEI Endorsement and ALL teachers, even specialists, must complete 15 PDPs to renew their licenses.
- Implement the WIDA standards
- Assess students annually using ACCESS for ELLs

# INITIAL IDENTIFICATION

## STEP 1: Administer a Home Language Survey (HLS)

- At the time of registration, ALL parent(s)/guardian must complete a Home Language Survey (IN NATIVE LANGUAGE IF NEEDED)
- If the HLS indicates a language *other than* or *in addition to* English that is spoken in the home, a copy of the HLS will be forwarded to the ELL teacher, and the student will be tested within 30 days.

## STEP 2: Assess Language Proficiency

- ELL teacher uses the W-APT (WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test) or WIDA Model (or other) upon entry into the school district.
- W-APT test items are written from the MPIs of WIDA's Five English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards: Social and Instructional Language, Language of Language Arts, Language of Mathematics, Language of Science, and Language of Social Studies.
- For a Kindergartener to be eligible, s/he will need to receive an Oral Proficiency level of less than 5.0.
- For a student in 1-12 to be eligible, s/he must receive an overall composite score of less than 5.0 on the WIDA-APT and/or receive a literacy score (reading + writing) of less than 4.0.

# **STEP 3: Determine ELL or Non-ELL Status and Make Placement Decisions**

- A Language Assessment Team (e.g., ELL Teacher, Principal, Classroom Teacher, Reading Teacher, Guidance Counselors) will determine whether or not the student is an ELL and what services are to be provided.
- A student identified as an ELL should be **placed in an SEI classroom** unless the student's parent chooses to "opt out" of such language programs or requests a waiver.
- In addition to SEI instruction, the ELL teacher and team will **develop a Second Language Education Plan (SLEP)** to address the student's language and literacy needs.
  - **Targeted English language instruction** may range from 30 minutes a week for bridging students to 10+hours a week for beginning students, at least 2.5 hours per day according to the Transitional Guidelines set forth by the Massachusetts DESE.

## **STEP 4: Notify Parents and/or Guardians**

- **Parents will be notified in writing about the screening results and placement decisions (ELL and/or SEI)** within 30 days after the beginning of the school year or within two weeks if the student enrolls in the school district during the year.
- **Provide translated letters if needed.**
- Massachusetts law also requires districts to **inform parents of their rights to opt-out of language programs or to request a waiver** from the state-mandated SEI program model.

## **STEP 5: Code All ELLs Correctly in the SIMS Data Collection**

- Data for the Department's SIMS is collected three times each year (October, March, and June).
- All students identified as ELLs should be appropriately coded as LEP on SIMS Data Element DOE025 in all SIMS reports submitted to the Department. Those coding ELLs in the SIMS Data base will need to know the student's native language and use the proper code.

# **ANNUALLY: Assess language proficiency using ACCESS.**

- The ELL teacher or trained administrator will administer the ACCESS annually in January/February to all ELL students in grades K-12.
- WIDA-ACCESS is 15% listening, 35% reading, 35% writing, 15% speaking.
- ACCESS will provide raw scores, scaled scores, proficiency scores, reports for parents and teachers, student roster, school frequency, and district frequency.
- Scores are available in May/June, and they are used as part of the annual review by the LAT.
- If a student has an overall composite score of 5.0 on the ACCESS and a composite literacy score (reading and writing) of 4.0 or greater, the student may be exited from the ELL program and designated as FLEP; however, additional considerations should be made by the team, including MCAS/PARCC scores, general education grades and parent input.

# Maintain Records

**A file for each ELL student must be kept with the following:**

- ✓ Home Language Survey
- ✓ Initial testing results (W-APT screening)
- ✓ Annual parental notification of placement and options
- ✓ Second Language Plan specifying services
- ✓ ELL Progress Reports **for each term**
- ✓ MCAS, PARCC, and ACCESS results
- ✓ Report Cards
- ✓ If FLEPed (now a Former ELL), quarterly monitoring reports for two years

Recommendation: Records should be kept in a student's cumulative file, in a district file, and by ELL Coordinator

# Process for Exiting ELLs

If a student has an overall composite score of 5.0 on the ACCESS and a composite literacy score of 4.0 or greater, the student may be exited from the ELL program and designated as FLEP.

- Review other information: MCAS, report cards, writing samples
- Notify parents
- Monitor quarterly for two years and keep records