



Waconia Public Schools  
Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP)

The Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP) is a legal requirement for districts with students who are in the process of learning English as an additional language. The goal of the English language (EL) program is to develop students' communicative and academic language skills in English and in the home language. This is to ensure that students will be able to access the same challenging grade-level academic content as their peers. The purpose of the LIEP plan is to provide transparency and coordinate support for implementation. The plan's intended audience includes district stakeholders such as staff, students, parents and community members.

- From the Minnesota Department of Education's Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP) Plan

Revised June 2026

## EL Identification Procedures

In Waconia Public Schools, families go online to complete the enrollment process. Families are welcome to come to the District Office for support with the enrollment process, and interpreters are available upon request.

To be eligible for EL services, a student must meet the entrance criteria according to Minnesota's standardized procedures, as follows:

1. As part of the online forms, all families fill out a Minnesota language survey (MNLS) prior to starting school. This form is kept in each student's cumulative folder. The student's MNLS indicates:
  - a. The language(s) the student learned first;
  - b. The language(s) the student speaks;
  - c. The language(s) the student understands;
  - d. The language(s) the student has consistent interactions in.
2. If a language other than English is indicated for 1a-d above, the form is verified by the Director of Educational Services. The student is then referred to the EL teacher at the building they will be attending. That teacher will screen for English language proficiency to determine whether the student is eligible for English language development instruction.
3. When available by file or in MARSS, the EL coordinator reviews information provided from the previous school or district about EL status or English language proficiency (ELP) assessments to guide English language instruction placement. The EL teacher may also call the previous district to obtain EL proficiency results.
4. If a student is newly enrolling in a public school or does not have EL proficiency results, the EL teacher would administer the appropriate WIDA screener based on the student's age. The specific scores required to qualify for English Learning services may vary depending on their grade level. For current qualifying score information, see [MDES's English Learner Proficiency Screeners](#) webpage. In general, students who score below the designated proficiency level on the WIDA Screener are eligible for English Learner Services.

## *SLIFE Identification*

Students with limited interrupted formal education (SLIFE) may need special consideration in identification, programming, and graduation pathways. SLIFE are English learners who have at least two fewer years of schooling than their peers when entering school in the United States.

If needed, upon enrollment and qualification for EL services, the EL teacher, student, and parent/guardian will have a conference to determine if the student has SLIFE status. Transcripts from previous schools will also be reviewed for indicators, if available.

### **EL Placement Procedures**

1. Students identified for EL status during the identification process will be placed into EL program instructional levels based on the following:
  - a. WIDA Screener scores are used to inform initial placement.
    - Students who take the screener are identified as English Learners if either of the statements below are true:
      - Overall composite is below 4.5.
      - Any domain score is below 4.0.
    - Students who take the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten are identified as English Learners if either of the statements below are true:
      - During the first semester of kindergarten the Listening & Speaking score is 27 or less.
      - During the second semester of kindergarten the Listening & Speaking score is 27 or less OR the Reading score is 10 or lower OR the Writing score is 11 or lower.
  - b. The professional judgment of K-12 ESL-licensed teachers based on in-class student performance also informs placement until performance data and ACCESS results are available.
  - c. Additional information, such as time in U.S. schools, prior education history, proficiency and literacy levels in students' home language(s), also inform placement.
2. When a student's EL program instructional services have been determined, the EL staff member responsible mails a notification letter to the family within the required timeframe. The letter notifies parents of their child's eligibility to receive EL support.
3. The school begins providing EL services and enters into MARSS:
  - a. The student's status as "EL-Yes".
  - b. The home (primary) language, and
  - c. The date the student was identified to receive EL services.

## Description of the EL Program

The Waconia EL program integrates language and content to support students' achievement of English language proficiency and to meet state academic standards. All EL instruction will be aligned to grade-level standards, and all grade-level instruction will include supports that allow for access and promote language acquisition.

Classroom teachers have primary responsibility for all students, including those with English learning needs. Staff will be trained in the alignment of ELD and content standards through professional development. In addition:

- EL licensed teachers provide direct English language instruction to students in four domains of instruction: Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing;
- EL licensed teachers collaborate with classroom/content area teachers and student support staff to support students' success based on each student's English learning needs;
- All staff provide culturally-responsive resources and services to EL students and their families;
- EL teachers align their program with the district's curricula in English literacy, [Minnesota's ELD Standards](#), and [Minnesota state content standards](#).

The following program models are the main modes of instruction in our district's EL program:

Elementary School	Pull-out Instruction	20-30 minutes a day
Middle School	Multilingual Learner Services	54 minutes a day
High School	Multilingual Learner Services	70 minutes a day

### Programming for RAEL or SLIFE

A recently arrived English learner (RAEL) or Newcomer is a K-12 student who has been identified as an English learner in MN and who has been enrolled in one of the 50 states in the U.S. or District of Columbia for less than 12 months.

A student with limited interrupted formal education (SLIFE) is an English learner with an interrupted formal education.

Students that are identified as RAEL or SLIFE will have English language instruction based upon consultation with parent/guardian and student during enrollment, along with any administered assessments.

- At the elementary level, this may mean an increase of instruction in the EL classroom while still prioritizing core, large-group instruction in the grade-level classroom.
- At middle school, this may mean increasing the number of Multilingual Learner Classes a student takes from one to two.
- At the high school, this may mean creating a unique course pathway to graduation.

## **Assessment and Ongoing Identification Process**

Annually, all students with EL status take the ACCESS. The ACCESS test is a language proficiency assessment that measures listening, speaking, reading and writing skills of ELs. The ACCESS test provides scores based on a 1-6 scoring scale. Teachers administering the ACCESS will complete the online training and quizzes annually to correctly administer the assessment. The results of the ACCESS are used to:

1. Determine the English language proficiency needs for each student;
2. Determine which language domains need additional instruction;
3. Measure sufficient language growth over time; and
4. Determine continuation in or exit from EL program support.

The EL teachers will evaluate the ACCESS data as it becomes available in the summer to determine each student's EL eligibility for ongoing language instruction.

- If ACCESS results show between 1.0 and 4.4 overall composite, the student continues to qualify for EL services.
- If ACCESS results show at least a 4.5 composite with two or more domains lower than 3.5, the student continues to qualify for EL services.

## **EL Program Exit Procedures**

Students will qualify for the EL Program until they meet MDE exit criteria (when ELs reach a level of English proficiency that allows them to fully access the grade level curriculum) on the ACCESS test: If ACCESS results are 4.5 overall with no more than one domain lower than 3.5, they must be exited and reclassified in MARSS to EL-N by the beginning of the school year and no longer receive EL services. Upon exit, the EL staff will send a notification letter to the family (in a language and format accessible to the family) within 30 calendar days. The letter will explain:

- Which assessment was used
- Description of how scores informed placement
- Where to access written policies and procedures/information

## **Family and Community Communication Procedures**

Waconia Public Schools is committed to equitable access to information for all families. In alignment with [Minnesota Statute § 123B.32](#) and [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#), our [Language Access Plan](#) outlines the tools, resources, and procedures in place to support students, families, and staff who prefer to communicate in a language other than English—removing barriers and promoting meaningful engagement in education, school communications, and decision-making processes.

Waconia Public Schools views multilingualism as a strength and is committed to ensuring language is not a barrier to all students and families accessing services, engagement opportunities and information about their schools.