

## Baltimore City Public Schools English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

When a family registers their child with City Schools, they complete a Home Language Survey. Based on the answers to the survey questions, a student whose primary language is not English is flagged in Infinite Campus for possible assessment of English language proficiency. Students who communicate primarily in a language other than English may be eligible for support in the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program that helps develop skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English, and also supports overall academic success. If a student is eligible for ESOL support based on the assessment, an ESOL teacher flags them as an English learner (EL) and the student is scheduled for service as appropriate to their age, grade, proficiency level, and academic background. All students identified as ELs must receive ESOL service.

A test is used to determine initial English proficiency level, so students can be placed in the right program to meet their needs. Another test, [WIDA ACCESS](#), is given every January or February to measure students' growth in English listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students receive an overall proficiency score from 1.0 to 6.0, as well as individual scores in the different test components. If a student has a proficiency level of 4.4 or lower, they receive ESOL service. Students exit the program once they have an overall proficiency score of 4.5 or higher.

Instructional services in ESOL programs take different approaches based on the student's proficiency, grade level, academic need, and other factors. In an **integrated instruction** approach, general education and ESOL teachers collaborate to provide targeted language instruction based on students' English proficiency levels. Teachers may share instructional responsibilities ("co-teaching") in the general education classroom. This is the primary mode of instructional service delivery at the elementary school levels. The ESOL teacher may support an individual student or small group in the general education classroom ("push in"). In some cases, the ESOL teacher may "pull out" students for extra language support outside the general education classroom — for example, to work with learners at beginning proficiency levels to focus on developing academic language skills in a compressed window of time. In **sheltered content instruction**, a teacher certified in both ESOL and a content area teaches that content area to a class of English learners. This typically happens only in middle or high school. An **ESOL class** is a scheduled, stand-alone English language instruction taught by an ESOL-certified teacher, and happens most frequently in middle or high school. In **dual language or two-way immersion**, native English-speaking students and native speakers of other languages learn together, developing academic content knowledge, bilingualism, and cross-cultural competence. The ESOL office has developed guidance to support schools in planning and scheduling ESOL instruction. Each school which has English learners has an ESOL Educational Associate to provide administrative and instructional support regarding ESOL services. Guidance documents include the [ESOL Instructional Matrix](#) and the associated [Guidance for ESOL Instructional Matrix](#).

English learners can receive support during instruction and on tests to make sure that language is not a barrier to learning, grading, or promotion. Some examples of this support include having another person read aloud to the student or write down what he or she dictates, providing bilingual dictionaries, or allowing extra time for tests. All teachers of EL students are responsible for ensuring that the student receives the [appropriate accommodations](#) regularly during instruction and assessment. Classroom teachers can look at a student's English language proficiency level, and what they [can be expected to be able to do](#) at that level, to help them develop appropriate instructional scaffolds. During standardized assessments, any certified teacher can provide the appropriate accommodations.

The ESOL teacher and general education teacher(s) together determine what support is most appropriate, based on individual student needs and abilities in both English and native language. This will be documented in the student's **English learner plan**. The **EL Plan** can be thought of as the continuum of services, supports, learner information, and parent communication that is enacted, documented, and maintained for ELs to facilitate their access to grade-level instruction and English language development. Documents such as state assessment accommodations, instructional supports, annual language proficiency assessments, and more, are placed in the student's EL folder by the ESOL teacher of record and considered part of the student's cumulative record. These items are required under Title III of the U.S. Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

English [learners with disabilities](#) may receive additional accommodations outlined under a 504 Plan or Individualized Education Plan. English learners may also be eligible for programs for students who are [gifted or advanced](#). English learners receive the same report cards as native English speakers, with grades representing content knowledge and understanding in the same way they do for native English speakers. English learners must not be penalized for not being fully fluent in English. Students do not have to make up work missed in the general education classroom while they are receiving ESOL services. City Schools has guidance for grading that includes specific guidelines for grading of ELs ([see IKA-RA, Grading and Reporting](#)).

Questions regarding English learners and the ESOL program may be directed to your school's lead ESOL teacher, your school's assigned ESOL Educational Associate, and/or the ESOL Coordinator for City Schools, [Maria Reamore](#).