

# **The English Learner Handbook**

## **English Language Learner Information & Procedures**

Norton City School District  
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Dear English Learner Families:

Welcome to the Norton City School District!

The materials provided in this handbook are designed to provide information about Norton's English Learner (EL) program. This handbook may also assist families with commonly used terms or frequently asked questions.

If you have any questions that are not answered in this handbook, please do not hesitate to contact your student's English Learner tutor.

Thank you for trusting your student with us!

Sincerely,

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# Philosophy

EL (English Learners) students have the same rights, privileges, and responsibilities as other students in the Norton City School District. The purpose of EL (English Learner) services is to help EL (English Learner) students overcome their linguistic, cultural, and academic difficulties and assure that they receive an equal educational opportunity. This will be achieved through active and regular collaboration between the general education classroom teacher and the English Learner Tutor. EL Students have access to all curricular as well as co-curricular and extra-curricular classes, clubs and activities as all other students served by the Norton City Schools' educational teams.

## Key Points:

- We believe that just as everyone learns a first language, everyone can learn a second.
- We believe that the first priority of EL (English Learners) Services is to foster basic interpersonal communication skills in English. Ultimately, the aim of the EL (English Learner) program is to help students function successfully in today's society.
- We believe that parental involvement and high-quality staff development are integral components of effective EL (English Learner) services.
- EL (English Learner) Services, by nature, are essentially transitional. This means that support is provided to the student while they learn English in order to be successful in the general education classrooms to the extent that they understand the language and can participate as active learners.
- EL (English Learners) Services have three major goals for students:
  1. To attain English language proficiency;
  2. To use English in their academic achievement in all content areas;
  3. To use English to fully participate effectively in U.S. society.

**The overarching goal for EL (English Learner) Services is for students to qualify for exiting the EL (English Learner) program to be successful in the general education classrooms.**

## **Ohio Department of Education’s Definition of English Learner:**

The terms “English Learner”, “English Language Learners and/or “Limited English Proficiency” refer to those students whose native or home language is other than English, and whose current limitations in the ability to understand, speak, read or write in English inhibit their effective participation in a school’s educational program.

## **Guidelines for Identifying English Learners:**

Students who are English learners have had significant exposure and communication experiences in a primary or home language other than English. These multilingual students benefit from specialized support in English as a second (or new) language to develop academically and participate equitably in school.

The federal and state requirements to identify and provide equitable educational opportunities that support the whole child apply to all students who are English learners attending public and non-public schools. It is the obligation and responsibility of all Ohio schools and districts to know and respond to student and family needs for language support. Parents and families with limited English proficiency have the right to language assistance to understand all notifications and select available programs.

Aligned with the provision of meaningful parent and family notifications to encourage school engagement, Ohio schools follow a two-step process for the identification of students as English learners.

### *Step 1: Language Usage Survey*

Schools must identify students who are English learners within 30 days of the student's enrollment. As part of welcoming new students and their families, Ohio’s Language Usage Survey must be completed for each student, in collaboration with parents and families, to support the identification and instruction of potential English learners and the provision of understandable communications. The language usage survey is included in the district’s final forms.

### *Step 2: Ohio English Language Proficiency Screener*

The Ohio English Language Proficiency Screener is the standardized assessment tool the Department uses to classify students as English learners. When students are identified as potential English learners, they take the [Ohio English Language Proficiency Screener](#) (OELPS) to gauge their development of English as a second or new language in the domains of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

## **Parent and Family Notification of English Learners:**

Districts and schools that are recipients of Title I funds are required to initially and annually notify the parents and guardians of each student who has been identified as an English learner.

Per the requirements in ESEA sections 1112 (e)(3)(A) and (B) each school that uses funds under either [Every Student Succeeds Act Title I](#) or [Title III](#) to supplement its language instruction educational program (LIEP) must provide a parent of an English learner (EL) with notification that outlines their child's identification as an EL and placement in the language instruction educational program. The ESEA requires that this notification be provided no later than 30 calendar days after their enrollment or within the first two weeks of placement in an English Learners Program for a student who enrolls after the start of the school year.

After the initial English language proficiency screening assessment, (OELPS) specialized instruction in English may be recommended for the student. Depending on the assessment results, and with parent notification and approval, the student will be enrolled in the EL (English Learner) program.

There are three (3) levels of English language acquisition determined by the OELPA – Ohio English Language Proficiency Assessment in the four identified areas:

1. Emerging – when a student earns scores of 1's and 2's in the measured areas
2. Progressing – when a student earns any mixture of scores, 1's through 5's in the measured areas.
3. Proficient - when a student earns scores of all 4's and 5's in the measured areas

Once the student is placed in the appropriate level of instruction, he/she will receive a special instructional program designed to help improve English with the goal being English Language proficiency (determined by assessments in Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking). The content of this program is coordinated with the mainstream classroom, district and state standards for content (i.e. math, science, social studies) and literacy development.

When a student reaches the "Proficient Level" as demonstrated by the OELPA testing each February/March of the academic year, they are "exited" from the formal program of instruction they are then monitored for two years. Once a student is mainstreamed and/or exited from the EL (English Learners) program, based upon their academic progress in all content areas they can return to the program if it is determined that they are not progressing as expected based upon the degree of complexity of the academic content.

## English Learner Levels of Proficiency:

### 1. Pre-functional – Pre-production or the silent period.

- New students just listen, initially they have limited or NO understanding of English.
- They may respond nonverbally to simple commands, statements, and questions. Some may not speak for weeks or months. Don't force them.
- Some will start using simple learned phrases and simple sentences.
- As their oral comprehension increases, they begin to imitate the verbalizations of others by using single words or simple phrases and begin to use English spontaneously.
- At the earliest stage, these learners construct meaning from text primarily through non-print features (illustrations, graphs, maps, tables, etc).

### 2. Emerging/Beginner –Students will develop a vocabulary of about 1000 words.

- Students will speak in one or two word phrases, memorized chunks and simple sentences.
- They gradually construct more meaning from the words themselves, but the construction is often incomplete.
- They are able to generate simple texts that reflect their knowledge level of syntax.
- These texts may include a significant amount of nonconventional features, such as invented spelling, some grammatical inaccuracies, pictorial representations, surface features and rhetorical patterns of the native language (i.e., ways of structuring text from native culture and language, as in Spanish, the adjective comes after the noun). This stage may last about 6 months (or longer).

### 3. High Beginner/Early Intermediate –Students will develop a vocabulary of about 3000 words.

- Students understand more complex speech, but still may require some repetition.
- They acquire a vocabulary of stock words and phrases covering many daily situations.
- They use English spontaneously, but may have difficulty expressing all their thoughts due to a restricted vocabulary and a limited command of language structure.
- Students at this level speak in simple sentences, which are comprehensible and appropriate, but which are marked by grammatical errors.
- They may have some trouble comprehending and producing complex structures and academic language.
- Proficiency in reading may vary considerably depending upon the learner's familiarity and prior experience with themes, concepts, genre, characters, and so on.
- They are most successful constructing meaning from texts for which they have background knowledge upon which to build.
- They are able to generate more complex texts, a wider variety of texts, and more coherent texts than beginners.
- Texts still have considerable numbers of nonconventional features.

4. Intermediate Trial Mainstream Level Students—Now students have a 6000- vocabulary.
- Students use more complex sentences, and ask questions. They will still have grammar errors.
  - At this level, students' language skills are adequate for most of today's communication needs.
  - Occasional structural and lexical errors occur.
  - Students may have difficulty understanding and using some idioms, figures of speech, and words with multiple meanings. They communicate in English in new or unfamiliar settings, but have occasional difficulty with complex structures and abstract academic concepts.
  - Students at this level may read with considerable fluency and are able to locate and identify the specific facts with the text. However, they may not understand texts in which the concepts are presented in a decontextualized manner, the sentence structure is complex, or the vocabulary is abstract.
  - They can read independently, but may have occasional comprehension problems.
  - They produce texts independently for personal and academic purposes.
  - Structures, vocabulary and overall organization approximate the writing of native speakers of English. However, errors may persist in one or more of these domains.
5. Proficient Level/Advanced Level Students –It can take 4 – 10 years to achieve this.
- Students are able to cope in the classroom but will still need help with vocabulary, idioms, writing and content such as social studies and or science.
  - At this final stage, students usually can participate in academic topical conversations without difficulty.
  - In most cases, they can follow complex and multilevel directions without assistance and they can understand oral language provided via electronic audio and video media.
  - Students at this level usually speak English fluently in social and grade level academic settings and they control age appropriate syntax and vocabulary in their speech.
  - Generally, students read and understand factual information in nontechnical prose as well as discussions on concrete topics related to special events.
  - They comprehend standard newspaper items addressed to the general reader, correspondence reports and technical materials. At this level, they can write short papers and clearly express statements of position, points of view and arguments. In their writing, they usually show control of varied sentence structures, spelling, and vocabulary, expressing well developed thoughts.

Source of the above proficiency level descriptions:

<https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Student-Supports/English-Learners/Teaching-English-Learners>

## **Will my student participate in other assessments? Yes.**

**Locally Developed Assessments:** Like all students in the regular education program, EL (English Learner) students participate in grade level assessments periodically throughout the school year to monitor academic progress. Those assessments as well as student progress can be reviewed with the student's classroom general education teachers.

**Ohio State Assessments:** Also, in addition to the annual OELPA (Ohio English Language Proficiency Assessment), EL (English Learner) students participate in the state mandated online assessments in the spring of each school year. Students in third grade also participate in the Ohio State Assessment for Reading in early fall (generally late October) to insure students are on target for academic progress.

Additional Information can be found at this site: <https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Testing>

**Gifted Assessments:** Norton City Schools conducts whole-grade screenings for gifted identification in superior cognitive ability in grades 2 and 4. **These are not language based assessments.** Currently, Norton uses the InView and CogAT for whole-grade screening and assessment. InView and CogAT measure a student's ability to think and reason, so they are not tied to a single subject area like other tests given in school. Students whose results meet the qualifying score are identified as gifted in superior cognitive ability.

Whole-grade screening for specific academic ability in reading and math is conducted in grades 2 through 8 through the use of NWEA MAP (Measures of Academic Progress). The MAP assessment is administered three times during the year. The resulting scores of each administration are reviewed, and students whose scores reach the 95th percentile (national percentile rank) on the reading and/or math are identified as gifted.

Screening and consideration of identification in visual and performing arts ability is conducted upon parent, teacher, or student referral. A checklist of behaviors related to the specific arts area will be completed, and if a qualifying score is achieved, then a demonstration of superior ability in the area of visual and performing arts will be scheduled, with the student performing an audition or displaying work through a portfolio or other exhibition before trained assessors.



## Can my EL student participate in all school activities?

EL (English Learner) students are welcome and encouraged to participate in any and all activities and programs just as any other student in the school district. Norton City Schools offers a variety of interscholastic athletics, extra-curricular clubs and activities for all students. In addition, Norton City Schools is part of the Four Cities Compact at the high school level with Copley Local Schools, Barberton City Schools, and Wadsworth City Schools.

## Are there any additional fees for English Learner Services?

No. All English Learner services are part of the regular school program at Norton City Schools.

## What is my student's English Learner schedule?

Each proficiency group level follows requirements for EL (English Learner) instruction. At Norton City Schools, EL (English Learner) students in grades K-4 (primary and elementary school) leave their classrooms for the required EL (English Learner) individual or small group instructional time, during the non-literacy times in the general education classroom. The same instructional method applies to students in grades 5-12 (middle and high school). Families may ask your student's EL (English Learners) tutor for the exact days and times for their child's schedule during the day/week.

The following district programs are available to help your English Learner make academic progress:

1. **English-only Supplemental Instructional:** A program designed to meet special language needs of English learner students in which none of the instruction during the day incorporates the student's native language. Examples of instructional delivery options provided in this program are English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, pull-out tutoring sessions, sheltered content-based classes (such as a mathematics class adapted to the English proficiency level of English learner students), and support provided by an EL specialist.
2. **Sheltered English Instruction:** An instructional approach used to make academic content instruction in English understandable to English learner students. In the sheltered classroom, teachers use physical activities, visual aids and the environment to teach vocabulary for concept development in mathematics, science, social studies and other subjects.

3. **Consultation and Monitoring:** Mutually agreed upon interactions between teachers and EL tutor to gain information and resources to better support English learners as a population, as individuals and as language learners. English language proficiency standards are addressed across the curriculum.

## **What determines when a student is ready to exit the English Learner Program?**

Each year EL (English Learner) students take the Ohio English Language Proficiency Assessment (OELPA) which is a computer based assessment. Based upon this assessment, there is a specific set of criteria used to determine if an EL (English Learner) student is still demonstrating limited English proficiency. If a student reaches an overall Proficient rating on the OELPA by earning a score of 4 or 5 in each part of the test (listening, speaking, reading and writing) then he or she will be exited from the program. Parents or guardians will be notified when this occurs.

## **Monitoring English Learner achievement upon exiting the program:**

When exited from the program, your student's performance will continue to be monitored for two years to determine if additional support is needed or if the English Learner should re-enter the program.

In order to ensure academic achievement in the content areas of English Language Arts and Math, each 9 week quarter, the EL Tutor of the student who left the program will review the student's progress based upon local assessments and the most recent MAP score. Based upon the score, the tutor will determine IF the student has demonstrated work in the 25 percentile or lower. At that time, the EL Tutor will meet with the general education teacher of the student to review and discuss the student's achievement/mastery in that grade level. Based upon results of the meeting, a student may be pulled back into a small group setting to assist and monitor the EL student's progress. If this occurs, the parent or guardian will be contacted.

## **Additional Supports:**

<https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Student-Supports/English-Learners/Lau-Resource-Center>

<https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Student-Supports/English-Learners/Teaching-English-Learners/Ohio-English-Language-Proficiency-ELP-Standards>

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/eltoolkit.pdf>