

English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) HANDBOOK ENGLISH LEARNER PROGRAM



FORT  SMITH
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

REVISED 06/23

This is a live document and is subject to review and change according to the Arkansas Department of Elementary and Secondary Education guidelines.

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INTRODUCTION

The English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Handbook is a resource for district staff providing program knowledge for meeting the needs of English Learners (ELs). This handbook will serve as a tool to ensure student success and school improvement. It contains the policies and procedures of our program, as well as copies of forms used in identifying, assessing, placing, serving, and monitoring ELs in reaching proficiency.

The EL staff is dedicated to providing every member of the Fort Smith School District with sufficient information about the district's ESOL program and making a difference in the lives of our ELs. All staff members will have access to this handbook through the district website. In addition, all staff members will receive staff development and training designed to help them understand the policies and procedures outlined in the handbook, as well as ESOL practices which will serve as tools to help our ELs reach college and career readiness.

FORT SMITH DISTRICT MISSION

Equip all students with the skills to be productive members of society.

FORT SMITH DISTRICT VISION

We are a destination district built on relationships, collaboration, and a culture of excellence.

Motto

Believe. Belong. Become.

Values

- We will always put student needs first.
- We believe relationships matter.
- We expect accountability.
- We operate with transparency.
- We prioritize student and staff safety.

Goals

- Students will master grade-level reading targets by the beginning of third grade. For their remaining school career, they will achieve reading targets at/or above grade level.
- Students will perform at/or above grade level in math.
- Schools and administrative buildings will be safe, welcoming environments where authentic, productive relationships are valued.
- Our system guarantees relevant classes for every secondary student and maximizes student choice.

PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

Our mission is to provide effective English Language Development programs and provide support to English Learners so that they learn to effectively use English in an academic setting while learning content knowledge and skills through English.

To accomplish this, we shall:

- Accurately identify, place, and assess the progress of students, and maintain comprehensive program records,
- Provide SIOP training for all staff who serve students,
- Utilize scientifically validated instruction,
- Provide access to the same academic content and academic achievement standards that are established for all children,
- Provide multi-culturally responsive curriculum and instruction for students,
- Assure comparable access to all school programs and services,
- Include parents and family in their child's education, and
- Evaluate program effectiveness

ARKANSAS ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY (ELP) STANDARDS

[ELP Standards](#)

[ELP Standards At A Glance](#)

The 10 English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards are organized according to a schema that represents each standard's importance to ELs' participation in the practices called for by college- and-career-ready ELA & Literacy, mathematics, and science standards. In the complete ELP Standards documents, the ten standards are linked to K-12 Practices in math, science, and ELA, as well as to the Arkansas ELA/Arkansas Disciplinary Literacy Standards.

Standards 1 through 7 involve the language necessary for ELs to engage in the central content-specific practices associated with ELA & Literacy, mathematics, and science. They begin with a focus on extraction of meaning and then progress to engagement in these practices. 1. Construct meaning from oral presentations and literary and informational text through grade-appropriate listening, reading, and viewing. 2. Participate in grade-appropriate oral and written exchanges of information, ideas, and analyses, responding to peer, audience, or reader comments and questions. 3. Speak and write about grade-appropriate complex literary and informational texts and topics.

4. Construct grade-appropriate oral and written claims and support them with reasoning and evidence.
5. Conduct research, evaluate and communicate findings to answer questions or solve problems.
6. Analyze and critique the arguments of others orally and in writing.
7. Adapt language choices to purpose, task, and audience when speaking and writing.

Standards 8 through 10 hone in on some of the more micro level linguistic features that are undoubtedly important to focus on, but only in the service of the other seven standards. 8. Determine the meaning of words and phrases in oral presentations and literary and informational text.

9. Create clear and coherent grade-appropriate speech and text.
10. Make accurate use of Standard English to communicate in grade-appropriate speech and writing.

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ACRONYMS

| ACRONYM | WHAT IT STANDS FOR |
|---------|--|
| ADE | Arkansas Department of Education |
| EL | English Learner |
| ELD | English Language Development |
| ELL | English Language Learner |
| ELP | English Language Proficiency |
| ELPA | English Language Proficiency Assessment |
| ELPA21 | English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century |
| ESL | English as a Second Language |
| ESOL | English for Speakers of Other Languages |
| HLUS | Home Language Usage Survey |
| IEP | Individualized Education Program |

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| LEP | Limited English Proficiency |
| LIEP | Language Instruction Education Program |
| LPAC | Language Proficiency Assessment Committee |
| OCR | Office of Civil Rights |
| PHLOTE | Primary Home Language Other Than English |

LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM (LIEP) COMPONENTS

I. SCHOOL DISTRICT OBLIGATIONS TO EL STUDENTS AND LEP PARENTS *The obligation not to discriminate based on race, color, or national origin requires public schools to take affirmative steps to ensure that limited English proficient (LEP) students, now more commonly known as known as English Learner (EL) students or English Language Learners (ELLs), can meaningfully participate in educational programs and services, and to communicate information to LEP parents in a language they can understand.*

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The following materials include information for students and parents, OCR guidance and resources for education officials about their obligations to EL students and LEP parents, and added resources with related information.

The following summary provides the legal context for services provided to ELs and their families: [Legal Context for EL Services](#)

Freedom to Talk

| CASE LAW | SUMMARY |
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| Brown vs. Board of Education, 1954 | On May 17, 1954, the US Supreme Court ruled that where a State has undertaken to provide an opportunity for an education in public schools, such an opportunity is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms. Segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race deprives children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities, even though the physical facilities and other tangible factors may be equal. |

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| <p>Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VI</p> | <p>“No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” Title VI is the focal point and center to all interpretations regarding any legal challenges regarding the provision of equal opportunity to all groups that are found in a protected class. This has been interpreted to prohibit denial of equal access to education because of a language minority student’s limited proficiency in English. This means that limited English proficiency students that are unable to participate in or benefit from regular or special education school instructional programs are protected by their Civil Rights. The triggering mechanism for Title VI is the receipt of financial assistance from the federal government. Consequently, public schools in the United States receive some form of financial assistance from the federal government. Therefore, the Act was the catalyst for the education of all children in a setting that was all-inclusive.</p> |
| <p>Office for Civil Rights’ (OCR) May 25, 1970 Memorandum</p> | <p>“Where the inability to speak and understand the English language excludes national origin-minority group children from effective participation in the educational program offered by a school district, the district must take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency in order to open its instructional program to these students.” A school district is required to take affirmative steps in remedying a student’s limited English proficiency.</p> |
| | <p>Plaintiffs filed on behalf of Mexican-American children in Monterey</p> |

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| <p>Diana vs. State Board of Education, CA 1970</p> | <p>County, California, alleged that the school system was inaccurately identifying Spanish speaking children as mentally retarded on the basis of IQ tests administered in English. The court ruled that non-English proficient children cannot be placed in Special Education on the basis of culturally biased tests or tests administered in English.</p> |
| <p>Lau v. Nichols, 1974 (U.S. Supreme Court)</p> | <p>“Equality of educational opportunity is not achieved by merely providing students with “the same facilities, textbooks, teachers and curriculum; because students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education.” This case was initiated by parents on behalf of approximately 3,000 Chinese students who were unable to understand the language of instruction in the San Francisco Public Schools. These students had been required to attend classes taught exclusively in English and had received no assistance in learning English. The parents argued that the basic skills in English were the very foundation of what the public schools of San Francisco teach. The U.S. Supreme Court held that the San Francisco school system violated Title VI by denying the students a meaningful opportunity to participate in the educational program.</p> |

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| <p>Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA), 1974</p> | <p>“No state shall deny equal educational opportunity to an individual on account of his or her race, color, sex or national origin, by...failure of educational agency to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by its students in its instructional programs.” EEOA required schools to “rectify appropriately a limited English proficient student’s English opportunities.” The OCR stepped in to formulate the Lau remedies which would provide a standard of approaches for school districts to follow. These remedies set the approach for OCR to determine if a school district was in compliance. The Lau remedies are: 1. Identifying and evaluating the English language skills of language minority students 2. Determining appropriate instructional treatments 3. Deciding when LEP/ELL children are ready for mainstream classrooms 4. Determining the professional standards to be met by teachers of language minority children</p> |
| <p>Castañeda v. Pickard, 1981 (5th Circuit Court)</p> | <p>“The court’s decision states that the burden of proof is upon the district that the instructional program designed for an ELL student has clearly developed English language skills of comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing necessary for learning and achieving in English-only instruction at a level substantially equivalent to pupils whose primary language is English.” OCR determined that the standards reasoned by the Court was appropriate in determining whether programs for language minority students meet the requirements of Title VI. A three-part test was developed by the Court to evaluate the adequacy of a district’s program. The test is as follows: 1. The alternative language program must be based on a</p> |

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| | <p>sound educational theory. 2. The program must be effectively implemented and adequately supported so that the program has a realistic chance of success. 3. Assurance that the program is working through an evaluation and subsequent program modification to meet this requirement.</p> |
| <p>Plyler v. Doe, 1982</p> | <p>“States cannot deny a free public education to undocumented immigrant children regardless of their immigrant status.” The Court ruled that schools are required to provide full access to its instructional programs, irrespective of the student’s immigration status. Consequently, this case established that if undocumented students attend public schools they could not be excluded from provisions and the protections of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Thereby, not having schools enforce immigration laws within their district boundaries.</p> |

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| <p>Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 1990</p> | <p>This act requires that student evaluations must be conducted in the child’s native language, and that parents must be informed of the evaluations and their rights in a language they can understand. IEPs must state the modifications of instruction, methods, and materials needed for both native language and English as a second language instruction.</p> |
| <p>OCR’s September 27, 1991 Memorandum</p> | <p>The policy update is designed to determine whether schools are complying with their obligation under Title VI and to evaluate the adequacy of the program. This policy update provides for: staffing requirements, exit criteria, access to all programs, schools may not relegate LEP/ELL students to “second-class status” by not providing them with equitable facilities (putting them in classes in the hallway, closets, etc). This policy also placed the responsibility on school districts to train teachers in the language acquisition theory, methods and practices. Furthermore, the district also has to ensure that the alternative language program teachers are evaluated by someone familiar with language acquisition. The OCR adopted the three prongs of the Castañeda case and required that all language minority students be assessed for fluency, that parents be provided school information in a language they understand, and that schools ensure that instruction to limited English proficient students is carried out by qualified staff.</p> |
| <p>No Child Left Behind Act of 2001</p> | <p>The primary goal or purpose was the reenactment and reform of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). With the focus on ensuring that “all children have a fair, equal and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments.”</p> |

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| <p>The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, 2009</p> | <p>An economic stimulus package that was signed into law on February 17, 2009. This act funds the Race to the Top grant. States are awarded points for satisfying certain educational policies, such as performance-based evaluations for teachers and principals based on multiple measures of educator effectiveness (and are tied to targeted professional development and feedback), adopting common standards (though adoption of the Common Core State Standards was not required), adoption of policies that do not prohibit (or effectively prohibit) the expansion of high-quality charter schools, turning around the lowest-performing schools, and building and using data systems.</p> |
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| <p>Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)</p> | <p>Equity: The Every Student Succeeds Act maintains Title III as a separate title with a separate funding stream dedicated to the education of English learners. Funding increase: In an era of fiscal constraint and funding reductions, ESSA recognizes the large increase in the number and percentage of English learners in this country, and increases the Title III authorization levels. Fair accountability: ESSA gave states two options for delaying English learners' inclusion in accountability systems while they are learning English. Arkansas chose for the first year of the student's enrollment in a U.S. school, report on but exclude from accountability system the results on these tests; for the second year of enrollment, include a measure of student growth on both tests; and for the third year of enrollment, include proficiency on both tests in the accountability system. Additionally, English learners who have successfully left the English learner subgroup by attaining English proficiency will be included in that subgroup for accountability purposes for four years. This is something that educators have long argued is an appropriate and fair way to consider the unique needs of such students. Greater integration into the law's core: For the first time, English language proficiency for English learners is integrated into the system by which all schools and districts are held accountable. Furthermore, the academic achievement of English learners is more fully integrated into that accountability system. Movement of these two items out of the separate Title III system (while maintaining Title III as a dedicated funding stream) ensures that English learners' academic and language needs can be fully considered by education systems. Supports for English learners: ESSA provides resources to states and school districts to establish, implement, and sustain high-quality language instruction educational programs designed to ensure that English learners, including immigrant children and youth, develop both English language proficiency and content proficiency in math and English, as measured against challenging academic standards. ESSA requires states to measure school districts' progress in these areas and to provide assistance and support to those school districts with ineffective language instruction educational programs. Statewide</p> |
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| | <p>entrance and exit procedures for English learners: ESSA requires the establishment of statewide entrance and exit procedures for English learners to ensure that English learners get the resources they need while still learning English. This also benefits these students by providing them with the stability they need if they move between schools or districts. Reporting requirements: ESSA requires reporting on English learners with disabilities, as well as reporting on the percentage of students who are long-term English learners, as measured by students who have maintained the classification for five or more years.</p> |
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II. EDUCATIONAL APPROACH

The Arkansas Department of Education and the Office for Civil Rights does not prescribe a specific program design/educational approach. It is the district's responsibility to ensure that the educational approach selected addresses:

- Whether the approach provides for English Language Development (ELD)
- Whether the approach provides for meaningful participation of EL students in the district's educational program.

[LIEP Codes](#)

In Fort Smith schools, sheltered instruction is the approach chosen to provide English language development. It is an approach to teaching English learners which integrates language and content instruction. The dual goals of sheltered instruction are: to provide access to mainstream, grade-level content, and to promote the development of English Language Proficiency (ELP).

III. IDENTIFYING AND ASSESSING ALL STUDENTS UNDER THE Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) **https://docs.google.com/document/d/1KCJ_I8qtNsNeAeT1F5LkXtDBc95Y5DthL6cKarTAA/edit?usp=sharing** **L POTENTIAL EL STUDENTS**

Upon enrollment into Fort Smith School District, all students will complete the [Arkansas Home Language Usage Survey \(HLUS\)](#). The HLUS determines which students should be referred for English language proficiency (ELP) assessment to determine their classification as EL students entitled to language assistance services. Students initially indicated by the HLUS or other means for English proficiency testing are often referred to as those with a Primary or Home Language Other than English (PHLOTE).

Home Language Usage Survey

- The HLUS form is a required component of ALL registration packets.
- Completion of the HLUS is ensured by the school secretary.
- If the HLUS indicates a language other than English is spoken at home, the ESL box on the student information screen of e-School is checked and the original

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form will be sent by the secretary to the Parker Center – EL Coordinator secretary immediately. Once processed, the EL Coordinator will return to EL Paraprofessional or EL Designee for student file. All students must have a completed HLUS in their permanent/cumulative folder.

- The EL Paraprofessional or EL Designee will then begin the screening process at all schools when directed by Parker Center. Parker Center staff will assist with the screening process if necessary.

Teacher Referral/Recommendation

- A teacher may notice a student's social behavior or academic achievement indicates a potential language barrier issue; even though the HLUS indicates English only. In this case, the teacher must contact the EL Paraprofessional or EL Coordinator and provide documentation on a [Home Language Usage Verification Form](#) for concern.
- The EL Coordinator or EL Paraprofessional will then begin the screening process.
- If it is determined that the student is in need of ESOL services, a notation should be made on the HLUS.

Parent-Student Interview

- EL Coordinator or EL Paraprofessional may conduct a parent-student interview should further information about students' home language be needed. Information will be documented on a [Home Language Usage Verification Form](#).

Assessment Procedures

Based on the results of the HLUS, students are given an initial language proficiency assessment. Currently, the state of Arkansas uses the ELPA21 screener. The ELPA21 assesses the student's academic English in all four language domains (Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening) and must be administered by a trained testing administrator. (Training guidelines are outlined in the District Test Coordinator's (DTC) Memos in the [Livebinder](#) on the Arkansas Department of Education website.)

Initial Placement

Initial placement of a student is determined by a committee of educators responsible for the appropriate education of the EL student. This committee is called a Language Placement and Assessment Committee (LPAC) and consists of at least three people from the following list:

- Building Administrator (required)
- EL Coordinator (required)
- Classroom Teacher (required)
- Other staff members as deemed necessary, for example:
 - Special Education teacher
 - GT teacher

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- Counselor
- Coach
- Therapist
- EL Teacher or EL Paraprofessional
- Parent (*not required*)

Students demonstrating proficiency (a score of 4 or 5) in each of the four domains of the ELPA21

screeener also need to have a “Professional Judgment Rubric” completed to verify whether or not they qualify for services for English Language Development. Screeners indicating limited English proficiency qualify a student for placement in the EL Program.

Transfer Students

- All new students to a district must receive a new HLUS.
- If a student transfers into the district from another Arkansas district, the EL or school Secretary/Registrar should check TRIAND for student data, in order to determine if the student has already been identified as an EL.
- If a student transfers into the district from a state, territory, or country *other than Arkansas, the student must be screened using the ELPA21 screener unless there are recent ELPA21 scores available.* The district has 15 days for screening, placement, and parent notification of services.

Re-enrolling Students

If a student has previously been enrolled in the district, transferred, and returns, procedures for all transfer students apply. If the student data is more than one year old, the student should be re-administered a screener *unless data shows that the student has exited the program.*

Foreign Exchange Students

Based on the language of Title VI and the Lau decision, a foreign exchange student who is enrolled in a public school in the United States, is a ‘person in the United States,’ and the Lau provisions would therefore apply. Foreign exchange students must be given the same identification and assessment procedures as other students. The Parker Center EL staff will follow district procedures and administer the ELPA21 screener to determine the proficiency level of the foreign exchange student.

If the results of the assessment indicate the student is LEP they should be placed into the EL program. Foreign exchange students who qualify for services must also be administered the annual ELPA. All students in the program, including those who have waived services and foreign exchange students must participate in all assessments. Foreign exchange students' scores will not count for the district.

Parental Notification FORT SMITH EL Program Guide 11

- At the opening of the school year, parents and guardians of students who require EL services and are placed in the district’s EL program must be notified within 30 (calendar) days of their child’s placement.
- After the school year begins, parents and guardians of students should be notified within two weeks of their child’s placement. (This includes all steps of the process: HLUS, referral, screening, LPAC meeting, and notification.)

*Parents/guardians must be notified in a language or manner they understand regarding the information and decision of the LPAC. It is optional to invite the parent to the actual LPAC meeting, but if invited, invitations to attend the LPAC meeting must be in a language and/or manner that the parent understands. If a parent does not understand English and requests a school-provided interpreter, the school must provide an interpreter to the extent practicable. Notification letters must be dated and signed by district or school personnel.

It is the responsibility of the EL District Coordinator to ensure the accuracy of all EL Data in eSchool for the Fort Smith School District.

Data Entry



Students who are initially assessed for English proficiency should have the following information entered into eSchool:

- ESL box checked on Personal screen
- ELL/LEP Entry Date--*The date the student entered a U.S. school for the first time in grades K-12, regardless if the entry was in Arkansas or another state. MM/DD/YYYY*
- Check the box to the left of the ELL/LEP Entry Date
- If student meets [exit criteria](#) upon initial assessment,
 - Enter the date determined on the “ADE Language Minority Student Exit-Monitoring Form” as the ELL/LEP Exit Date-*The date the student met criteria for Fluent English Proficient status and was exited from the ESL/LEP program; no longer receives services; is a regular education student. MM/DD/YYYY*
 - Uncheck the box to the right of the ELL/LEP Entry Date

IV. PROVIDING EL STUDENTS WITH A LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ESOL instruction is based on current linguistic research and philosophy that emphasizes an integrated language arts approach. Instruction will be based on the Arkansas English Language Proficiency Standards.

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Sheltered English Immersion Approach: Sheltered instruction is an approach to teaching English learners which integrates language and content instruction. The dual goals of sheltered instruction are to provide access to mainstream, grade-level content and to promote the development of English language proficiency. All curriculum, instruction, and assessment will be based on grade-level standards with scaffolding for ELs.

As needed, students will receive more intensive English instruction by a certified teacher or an instructional aide under the guidance of a qualified teacher. These students will receive one-on-one or small-group instruction using a research-based approach.

V. STAFFING AND SUPPORTING ESOL PROGRAM

All teachers will be certified in the grade levels/content areas they teach. When possible, ELs will be placed in an ESL certified/endorsed teacher’s classroom. All certified and

classified staff will receive ESOL training. Trainings may include but are not limited to:

- Policies and Procedures
- Integrating language acquisition and content instruction which includes sheltering English through teacher scaffolding
- Authentic Assessment for EL students
- Classroom coaching and support of teachers of ELs
- Cultural Sensitivity training
- Specific training for paraprofessionals who provide instruction

VI. MEANINGFUL ACCESS TO ALL DISTRICT PROGRAMS

CORE CURRICULUM

Because ELs have to acquire English proficiency alongside their learning in other curriculum areas, it is the obligation of the district to design and implement programs that are reasonably calculated to enable EL students to attain both English proficiency and parity of participation in the standard instructional program simultaneously within a reasonable period of time.

The Fort Smith School District meets its obligation to provide full access to grade-appropriate core curriculum by employing the appropriate use of language assistance strategies in the classroom, so students can participate meaningfully as they acquire English. In adapting instruction, Fort Smith staff provides grade-appropriate rigor with specialized instruction and scaffolds designed so that the EL can meet grade-level standards within a reasonable period of time. Students are placed in age-appropriate grade levels upon

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enrollment, so that they can have meaningful access to their grade-appropriate curriculum and an equal opportunity to graduate.

CLASSROOM MODIFICATIONS:

The mainstream classroom teacher has the primary responsibility for instruction of the EL. All teachers and paraprofessionals must be trained in ESL strategies. Classroom teachers will receive an EL Plan for each EL. The form will list specific modifications to use dependent upon the student's proficiency level. Classroom instruction should be delivered using comprehensible input, or instruction meaningful to the learner. Classroom teachers will be provided professional development training providing strategies and methods for instruction delivery and assessment. Teachers are strongly encouraged to continue their education and research concerning our growing population of English Learners. Professional development is provided as needed.

TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS: Accommodations are available on state mandated tests. The LPAC decides which students receive which state allowable accommodations. The classroom teacher must regularly use the accommodation throughout the school year in order for the accommodation to be valid on spring state assessments. If the student has not been receiving the accommodation throughout the year, he will not be allowed to use it on state tests in the spring. *There are no exemptions to state assessments for ELs.*

GUIDELINES FOR GRADING: While acquiring English, a failing grade is inappropriate if language is the only reason. Likewise, it is not appropriate to assign grades that indicate satisfactory work if grade level standards (as viewed through the lens of ELP standards) are not being met by the student. Every effort must be made to teach the EL at grade level using appropriate modification and sheltered English instruction.

- If an assignment/test is modified, teachers should note that the assignment was modified and how.
- Teachers must provide to what extent grades were modified for the LPAC at the spring annual review meeting.

STUDENTS ENTERING 9th GRADE as BEGINNING ELs: If an EL student enters ninth grade with beginning-level proficiency, Fort Smith will provide a program of instruction to help the student earn a regular high school diploma with his/her grade-level peers. Specific attention will be paid to classroom modifications and mapping of courses for the four years will be a team effort with the counselor and teacher team. In addition, EL students will be offered academic programming, like their never-EL peers, with the chance and support for participation in courses with college prerequisites.

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RETENTION: According to the law, a student may not be retained solely on the basis of low English language proficiency. When making decisions the LPAC will consider the following:

- Cognitive ability is NOT related to English language proficiency.
- Timeline to proficiency could take 5 to 7 years.
- Research shows retention to be a factor leading to dropout rates.
- Separating a child from his peers can cause self-esteem issues, and EL students already experience the need to fit in with peers.
- Retention may only be considered if students have received appropriate modifications and accommodations in mainstream classes but have NOT shown progress in their language AND content skills. *Documentation of appropriate modifications and accommodations must be provided. In addition, documentation that the alternate program of instruction has otherwise proven to be effective is required.*

G/T and AP: All students will have equal access to “Gifted and Talented and “Advanced Placement” programs.

- Instruments used to identify students for gifted and talented programs will not prohibit EL students from being identified due to language.
- Teachers of AP classes will use sheltered English strategies that allow EL students to participate when language is the only barrier.
- Parents of EL students will be provided the same information (in a language they can understand, when possible) about opportunities, requirements, selection criteria, and general information regarding the G/T or Pre-AP/AP courses that is provided to the parents of native English speakers.

Special Education: All students will have equal access to Special Education services and programs. Proper documentation must be made to prove that the student is being placed in the special education program based on a learning disability and not because of language proficiency level. ELs are eligible for dual services.

Extracurricular Programs

All students will have equal opportunity to participate in extracurricular and nonacademic activities.

- Language issues will not prohibit EL students from participating in athletics and other non-academic activities.
- Effort will be made to make these activities as accessible as possible to all students regardless of their language, ethnicity, or financial capabilities.

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VII. AVOIDING UNNECESSARY SEGREGATION OF EL STUDENTS

The Fort Smith School District does not segregate students on the basis of national origin or EL status. While the EL program may require that students receive separate instructions for a limited period of time, we will make every effort to ensure that this is done in the least segregated manner possible.

VIII. EVALUATING EL STUDENTS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES AND PROVIDING SPECIAL EDUCATION AND ESOL SERVICES

All EL students who qualify for special education services and ESOL services may receive both according to the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and LPAC decisions.

- All assessments administered to EL students will be in a form or language that will yield the most valid results.
- Parents will be informed how the language instruction education program meets the Objectives of their child’s IEP.
- Students qualifying for both programs of service will receive both services, with neither

outweighing the importance of the other.

IX. MEETING THE NEEDS OF EL STUDENTS WHO OPT OUT OF ESOL PROGRAMS Parents have a right to decline or opt their children out of the ESOL program or out of particular ESOL services within an ESOL program.

If a parent/guardian declines ESOL program services, the student must be marked in eSchool as an English Learner with a parent ESL Waived Services Date recorded until the student meets exit criteria or the parent/guardian requests that the student be placed back into ESOL services.

- To ensure the needs of opt-out EL students are being met, the district will periodically monitor the progress of students who have opted out.
- If an EL student who opted out of the programs or services does not demonstrate appropriate growth in English proficiency, or struggles in one or more subjects due to language barriers, the district will take affirmative steps including informing the EL student's parents of his or her lack of progress and offering the parents further opportunities to enroll the student in the ESOL program or at least certain ESOL services at any time.
- Opt-out EL students must have their English language proficiency assessed at least annually to gauge their progress in attaining English proficiency and to determine if they are still in need of and legally entitled to ESOL services. There is no assessment exemption for students who do not receive ESOL services. This means all EL students in Arkansas must participate in Arkansas' annual summative English proficiency test, currently ELPA21. Once opt-out EL students

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meet valid and reliable criteria for exiting from EL status, the Fort Smith School District will monitor

their progress for four years, as it does with other exited EL students.

X. MONITORING AND EXITING EL STUDENTS FROM ESOL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES Fort Smith School District will monitor the progress of all EL students in achieving English language proficiency and acquiring content knowledge as mandated by the state of Arkansas. This applies to all students, even if they are opted out of the ESOL program. We will take appropriate steps to assist students who are not adequately progressing

To monitor EL students' acquisition of English proficiency, the following assessments will be used:

- ELPA21 (English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century) ○
 - Standardized test aligned with English Language Proficiency Standards ○
 - Assesses language acquisition in the four domains of Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing

To monitor EL students' growth in acquiring academic content knowledge, the following assessments will be used:

- ACT Aspire
 - Standards-based system of assessments to monitor progress toward college and career readiness from grade 3 through early high school, connecting each grade level to the next
- I-Station
 - Norm-referenced test administered to grades K-2.
- Formative assessments
- Classroom performance/report cards
- List of state approved assessments in the Arkansas [Professional Judgment Rubric](#)

To exit an EL student from the ESOL program, he/she must meet the following criteria: ●

Demonstrate proficiency on ELPA21

- Separate proficient scores of 4 or 5 in each of the four domains (Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening)
- Demonstrate proficiency on the Arkansas Professional Judgment Rubric by having at least two pieces of required evidence.

The decision to exit or reclassify the EL student from the EL program must be made on an annual basis by the Language Placement Assessment Committee (LPAC) following a review of spring ELPA results with their exit recorded in eSchool no later than September 30 following the spring ELPA.

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Fort Smith School District will monitor and provide assistance to all exited students for four years after exiting the ESOL program, as mandated by the state (ADE) to ensure that: ● The

student has not been prematurely exited

- Any academic deficits they incurred as a result of participation in the EL program have been remedied
- The student is meaningfully participating in the standard instruction program comparable to the never-EL peers

If the student is re-entered into EL services, the EL Coordinator will document the basis for the re-entry and will acquire parent consent to do so.

XI. EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ESOL PROGRAM

Fort Smith School District's EL program will be evaluated yearly by a committee of district and

building administrators, counselors, and teachers to determine if it is producing results which indicate that students' language barriers are actually being overcome. The following areas will be considered:

- EL students are able to attain English proficiency within a reasonable period of time
- EL students are able to meaningfully participate in the standard educational program comparable to their never-EL peers
- EL students are progressing from grade to grade without content-area deficits that require remediation due to inclusion in the EL program
- EL students are on track to graduate and have comparable opportunities to their never-EL peers to become college and career ready
- The achievement gap between EL students and never-EL students is declining over time
- The degree to which current and former EL students are represented in advanced classes, special education services, gifted and talented programs, and extracurricular activities relative to their never-EL peers

XII. ENSURING MEANINGFUL COMMUNICATION WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT PARENTS

Fort Smith School District will ensure meaningful communication with LEP parents in a language they can understand. This includes all school-home communication, report cards, parent-teacher conferences, parent handbooks, etc.