



## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS PROGRAM**

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**Central Mission: The English Language Learners (ELL) program is designed to provide support to students with limited English proficiency in grades K-12.**

The Rapid City School District ELL program is aligned to the State English Language Proficiency standards. Highly qualified staff provide instruction in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. All English Language Learners (ELL) and Limited English Proficient (LEP) students are assessed for their level of language proficiency to determine program placement.

ELL and LEP students provide a unique opportunity for teachers and administrators to expand their own educational methods and cultural sensitivity. The Rapid City School District has supported students from India, Russia, China, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Mexico, Germany, Romania, The Dominican Republic, Brazil, The Philippians, Kenya, and Korea.

**Services available for students:**

- Push-In English – English language tutors assist the ELL students in the classroom and coordinate integrated ELL activities.
- Pull-Out English – English language tutors
- English Language Learners Assessments: W-APT (WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test) and ACCESS (Assessing, comprehension, and Communication in English State-to-State)
- Learning Acquisition Plan (LAP)
- Coordination and integration of ELL materials by qualified staff
- Teacher and parent support with translation services

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**English Language Learners Coordinator Contact Information**

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**Staff Members**

Elisa Rangel – Teachers assistant Spanish interpreter      Whitnee Thorpe - Teachers assistant

Yanni Wang - Teachers assistant Chinese interpreter

**Recommended Links**

South Dakota Department of Education  
– Title III English Language Acquisition

<http://doe.sd.gov/oess/TitleIIIela.asp>

Academic Achievement for English Learners -  
What Can We Reasonably Expect? (PDF download)

<http://www.wida.us/get.aspx?id=485>

## **English Language Learners (ELL) Process**

### **1. Identify Students**

Under federal law, schools must identify all ELL students and screen eligible students for language assistance. School districts must administer a home language survey to parents/students. The four questions that must be part of the New Enrollment Card can be found at: [http://doe.sd.gov/oats/documents/ELA\\_Surveyquestions.pdf](http://doe.sd.gov/oats/documents/ELA_Surveyquestions.pdf)

### **2. Parental Permission**

If any questions from the Home Language Survey (via the New Enrollment Card) are answered something “other than English,” parents will be contacted and give written permission for the district to administer the W-APT assessment to determine the level of English language proficiency.

**Identification, screening, and parental notification of eligible students must be given within two weeks of enrollment.**

### **3. Identifying Criteria**

W-APT criteria to classify students in grades 1-12 as ELL with a composite score lower than 5.0 will be considered ELL.

**Kindergarten W-APT Option 1:** The Kindergarten listening and Speaking Test is an oral proficiency test intended for students in Pre-K through 1<sup>st</sup> semester Grade 1 (cannot be given earlier than May prior to entering). If the Listening and Speaking Raw Score is less than 29, the student will be deemed eligible for language assistance services and must be administered the annual ACCESS for ELLs assessment.

**Kindergarten W-APT Option 2:** The Kindergarten Reading and Writing Tests are diagnostic tests intended for students in 2<sup>nd</sup> semester Kindergarten through 1<sup>st</sup> semester Grade 1.

#### **Criteria for Option 2:**

- If Listening and Speaking Raw Score is less than 19, the student will be deemed eligible for language assistance services and must be administered the annual ACCESS for ELLs assessment.
- If student’s listening and Speaking Raw Score ranges from 19-28, the Reading and Writing portions need to be administered. If the Reading score is lower than an 11 and the Writing score is lower than a 12, the student is classified as ELL and must be administered the annual ACCESS for ELLs assessment.

#### **4. Language Acquisition Plan (LAP)**

Parents, teachers, and ELL staff meet to formulate a Language Acquisition Plan. Any parties involved with the education of the student are welcome to attend. Parents may request additional meetings at any time.

A sample LAP can be found at:

[http://doe.sd.gov/oats/documents/ELL\\_LanguageAcquisitionPlan\\_Sample.pdf](http://doe.sd.gov/oats/documents/ELL_LanguageAcquisitionPlan_Sample.pdf)

#### **5. Annual Assessment**

Assessment is an integral part of instruction and an important source of reflection for students and their educators. It can serve as a guide to learning and academic achievement for English Language Learners. The testing is done with two goals in mind; the acquisition of knowledge and skills as well as the development of academic language. Regular observation and informal testing can determine the level of ELL materials most useful for each individual student.

A yearly evaluation and update of the student's LAP is required. In addition, students in grades K-12 must be given the ACCESS (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State) each February. This large-scale test addresses the academic English Language Proficiency (ELP) state standards that help with instructing and evaluating the progress of English language learners.

There are many different factors that influence a student's ability to learn including: innate ability, previous education, and personal motivation. ELL staff works with the student to support and motivate learning.

#### **6. Types of Tutoring**

All students will receive education in speaking, listening, reading, and writing English. Content is related to WIDA's English Language Proficiency Standards. (LINK) Tutors use a wide variety of culturally sensitive research-based English language materials that best facilitate the language needs of each individual student (WIDA Can Do Descriptors Link)

**Push-In:** Students are given individual English language tutoring within the classroom setting.

**Pull-Out:** Students are given individual English language tutoring outside the classroom where they can improve speaking and listening skills without disruption of other students' learning.

#### **7. Recommended Modifications for grade 6-12 students**

The district recommends that Middle and High school students have and utilize electronic translators.

Recommended courses for high school students are: Art, Physical Education, Math, and Individualized Reading until students have acquired basic skills in speaking, listening, reading

and writing. Students may be enrolled in other classes with the understanding that the curriculum will need to be heavily modified to accommodate the learning needs of the student. The ELL student's primary goal is to learn the English language. Academic goals must be structured around the student's linguistic ability.

*Recommended reading for teachers:*

*Academic Achievement for English Learners -*

*What Can We Reasonably Expect? (PDF download)*

<http://www.wida.us/get.aspx?id=485>

(LINK TO second language acquisition form)

#### **8. Exiting from ELL status**

Exit criteria are based on ACCESS results. To exit, a student must obtain an Overall Proficiency Level of 4.8 or higher on Tier B or C *AND* in the Reading and Writing domains must be 4.0 or higher of the ACCESS assessment.

RAPID CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION PLAN FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_ Sims# \_\_\_\_\_ Home language \_\_\_\_\_

Family information:

Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

School history: Date of W-APT testing \_\_\_\_\_ ELL start date \_\_\_\_\_ LAS team meeting date \_\_\_\_\_

Last grade completed \_\_\_\_ Vaccines completed \_\_\_\_\_ School records \_\_\_\_ Home language assessment \_\_\_\_

Parental Permission \_\_\_\_ W-APT test administered to determine eligibility \_\_\_\_\_

W\_APT results:

	Score	Level	Language Service Plan
Speaking	____/____	_____	Staff & family team meeting
Listening	____/____	_____	Principle _____
Reading	____/____	_____	Parent/Guardian _____
Writing	____/____	_____	ELL staff _____
			Teacher _____
			Intervention specialist _____
			Student _____

LAP Initial Instructors plan: Push-In \_\_\_\_ Pull-out \_\_\_\_ ELL Materials: Moving Into English/ Level \_\_\_\_; Vocabulary Connections /Level \_\_\_\_; Newcomers /Level \_\_\_\_ ELL literature/ level \_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Individual ELL instruction in content areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing as it connects to school standards. Individual plan based on the level of English acquisition resulting from the W\_APT test. Individual ELL instruction. Basic letter sounds, vocabulary building, reading for understanding, social interaction.

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Language Acquisition Plan: Student \_\_\_\_\_

Monitoring status: Students receive support and monthly monitoring once they reach Medium High Proficiency.

Exit status: Date \_\_\_\_\_

Moved away \_\_\_\_\_

Graduated \_\_\_\_\_

Proficiency in ACCESS \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

## **Stages and Characteristics of Second Language Acquisition:**

### **Pre-emergent**

- Does not talk at all or says only isolated words and phrases.
- Cannot understand initially what is said or written in English.
- Begins to understand the main idea or an utterance by focusing on “key” words.
- Does not follow directions.
- Is easily distracted.
- Gets frustrated quickly.
- Is not able to achieve academically in English yet, but may have those abilities already developed in their native language.

### **Emergent**

- Begins to say a few simple words or short phrases.
- Understands some of what is said or written in English.
- Continues to focus on key words in an utterance.
- Follows a few directions.
- Continues to be distracted, but not as often.
- Continues to be frustrated.
- Says “yes” or “no” to answer questions.
- Responds with one-word answers for either/or questions.

### **Beginning**

- Begins to speak in longer phrases, often producing whole sentences.
- Does not speak fluently; has noticeable gaps and errors in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.
- Possesses vocabulary and facts necessary to “get the message across” but is still limited.
- Can understand more complex directions.
- Participates more in class discussion.
- Responds and interacts in dialogues.

### **Entering**

- Demonstrates native or near-native speaking ability.
- Understands most of what is said in English.
- Has mastered basic vocabulary in English, but needs expansion and refinement in subtle, descriptive vocabulary and terms used in content classes.
- Continues to have difficulty understanding and expressing abstract concepts.
- Produces few errors in speech.

### **Proficient or High Intermediate\***

- Demonstrates native-like literacy skills.
- Produces few if any speech errors.
- Experiences little difficulty understanding and expressing more complex concepts.
- Can interact in the academic classes with only “typical” problems.

## **Second Language Acquisition**

In your work as an ELL tutor or teacher, keep in mind that no two learners are alike. Three important areas of differences are the following:

### **1. Language skill level**

- Some learners will speak some English but not be able to read or write it.
- Some will be able to read and write English but not speak it.
- Some will not be able to read and write in their first language.
- Some will have a first language that does not use the Roman alphabet (eg. Russian, Arabic, or Thai).

### **2. Degree of comfort when trying to speak a new language**

- Some learners are not at all shy about “blurting out” something in English, and they are not overly concerned about perfect grammar or pronunciation.
- Some become embarrassed if they think they are making too many mistakes.
- Some think they shouldn’t say anything at all unless their English is perfect.

### **3. Learning rate**

- Some people can learn a language quickly; others simply don’t have a strong “knack” for picking up languages.
- Learners who have a lot of contact with English speakers usually progress faster than those who don’t.

## **Learners are more successful at acquiring language when their anxiety level is low.**

This principle applies to learning anything – not just another language. People seem to be able to learn best when:

- they are relaxed.
- they know it’s ok to make mistakes.
- they are reassured that, overall, they are doing well.

## **Language learners are more highly motivated when the communication in which they are involved is meaningful to them.**

People learning a second language want to learn to say, understand, read, and write those things that will be of real and immediate use to them. When they know they can use what they learn, they are more apt to remember it.

How did you learn your language?

- Listening
- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing

All four components are involved when teaching English as a learner's second language.

- Give listening opportunities.
- Have oral speaking practice.
- Use things in context (show by action and/or picture)
- Relate topics to learner's interests and needs

When working with students learning English as their second language:

- Don't make assumptions about their abilities.
- Some may be able to read English but no speak English
- Some may not have reading and writing skills in their first language.
- Some are from cultures using a different alphabet
- Some are shy, easily embarrassed, are reluctant to practice in class until perfect.
- Those around English speakers all day tend to learn to speak more quickly.

The ELL learner is usually more concerned about being able to communicate successfully than about being correct.

- Use practical activities.
- Teach what they need or want to learn.
- Set up role-play: buying stamps, making a doctor's appointment, job interviews, etc.
- Be patient.
- Use activities than allow for success.
- Have fun.
- Use charts, graphs, etc.

Progress in a second language depends in part on the amount of exposure to speakers of that language.

To move beyond very basic language ability, people must:

- have an immediate opportunity to use the language they are studying.
- be in a position where they won't get some of their basic needs met unless they can communicate in that language.