

***Higher Ground Academy's LIEP
(Language Instruction Educational
Program Plan)***

EL Identification Procedures

To be eligible for EL services process (see Appendix A), a student must meet the entrance criteria as follows:

1. The family must fill out a Minnesota Home Language Survey (MNLS) (required for all students) prior to starting Higher Ground Academy. (See Appendix B). The student's MNLS indicates:
 - a. The language the student learned first;
 - b. The language is most often spoken in the home;
 - c. The language the student usually speaks.
 - d. Some students may have an MNLS in their CUME folder.

Once the student has been identified as potentially qualifying for EL services based on the parent/guardian's report of a language other than English used by the student, the student will take the

WIDA Kinder Screener First Semester: At the start of kindergarten, students who still need to read and write at a second-semester kindergarten level should take only the listening and speaking domains. Most students will only take the listening and speaking tests. The student is *identified for English learner status* if the statement below is true:

- The oral Composite score is below 4.5.

Student is *English Proficient* (student is not eligible for English learner status), if the statement below is true:

- Oral Composite score is at or above 4.5.

WIDA Kinder Second Semester: All students taking the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten on or after January 1 should take all four domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) unless the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team or another specialist determines that the child is not able to attempt all four domain tests.

The student is *identified for English learner status* if the statement below is true:

- The overall Composite score is below 4.5.

The student is *not eligible for English learner status* if the statement below is true:

- Overall, the Composite score is at or above 4.5.

The ELL teacher will administer the WIDA Screener (Grades 1 through 12) to determine the student's entrance level of English into the EL Program. The student must have an overall score between 1 and 4.4. If scoring 4.5 or above with all language domains of 4.0 or above, the student is not eligible for EL program services.

SLIFE Identification Criteria

Students with limited interrupted formal education (SLIFE) are an essential group of English learners who need special consideration in identification, programming, and graduation pathways. The definition of a Student with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) (Minn. Stat. § 124D.59, Subd. 2a) is an English learner with an interrupted formal education that meets three of the following five requirements:

1. comes from a home where the language usually spoken is other than English or usually speaks a language other than English;
2. enters school in the United States after grade 6;
3. has at least two years less schooling than the English learner's peers;
4. functions at least two years below expected grade level in reading and math; and
5. may be preliterate in the English learner's native language.

Upon enrollment and qualification for EL services, the EL Coordinator, EL teacher, student, and parent/guardian (with an interpreter, if requested) will complete the EL Educational History Interview Form. Question number 2 will indicate potential SLIFE status. Transcripts from previous schools will also be reviewed for indicators, if available. Local Reading Assessment is used to show reading grade level correlation, while Local Math Assessment is used to establish grade level correlation in math. Assessments are provided in the student's home language whenever possible. A home language assessment (Native Language Literacy Assessment) is also administered to determine home language proficiency. An annotation of SLIFE status will be entered into the student information system and reported to MDE by June 1 each year.

Immigrant Identification Criteria

Upon enrollment, the EL teacher, student, and parent/guardian (with an interpreter, if requested) complete a locally created Intake Form. The intake form asks questions to determine if the student meets the following criteria to qualify for the Immigrant Children and Youth Grant:

1. a child who is aged 3 through 21;
2. was not born in any State or any U.S. territory;
3. has not been attending one or more schools in any one or more states for more than three full academic years (on a cumulative basis)

An annotation of immigrant status is entered into the student information system and reported to MDE by June 1 each year.

Note: Eligible students are not required to be eligible for English learner status, though most eligible students also qualify.

Migratory Children and Families

In the spring, migratory families may move into district boundaries. Because migratory children have particular needs due to the migratory lifestyle and high mobility rates, the district's Migrant Liaison is well-connected with new families and the community. The migrant liaison is in close contact with the Tri-Valley Opportunity Council (TVOC) to support qualification for migratory services. District staff does not discriminate based on race, language, or culture. The team submits recruitment requests to TVOC only when conversations with the family confirm their move was to seek agricultural work for economic necessity. Refer to the TVOC website for more information.

Once a student is identified by TVOC and is given an official Certificate of Eligibility (COE), the migrant liaison contacts food service staff to ensure the student receives free meals. The liaison speaks with the family to confirm eligibility for McKinney Vento. It communicates with the counselor, the student's home base district and the Midwest

Migrant Education Resource Center (MMERC) to ensure instruction meets the requirements of the home base district. The liaison has access to the Migrant Student Information Exchange (MSIX) national database to gather and update student academic and health information.

Dual Identification

The EL and Special Education coordinators review special needs and referrals for EL-identified students. The EL program does not substitute for other educational services for which a student may qualify. Likewise, neither special education services nor tiered reading interventions may substitute for EL services.

Suppose a student demonstrates the possible need for special education services. In that case, staff begins the process for special education evaluation as there is no wait-time requirement for multilingual or EL-identified students to be evaluated for special education service. Further, students being considered for special education support must demonstrate a disability in both languages; identification must not solely result from being a culturally or linguistically diverse student. If a team documents evidence that the student's ability/achievement/behavior is significantly below a comparable peer's, disability screening may be appropriate.

Suppose a student qualifies for both EL and Special Education services. In that case, the teams will collaborate with grade-level/content-area teachers in all stages of scheduling and programming.

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.
- 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 central office mails an EL coordinator 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 first received EL services in the district.

Rather than content-area proficiency, students will be placed into instructional levels based on language proficiency (and other factors such as time in the country and SLIFE status).

Clustering

To improve instruction, students will be clustered in mainstream classrooms into groups of 5 to 7 students with similar proficiency levels. Every attempt will be made to ensure that each newcomer student is placed in a class with at least one or two students with similar linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Description of the EL Program

The EL program provides instruction using various instructional models and appropriate materials. It integrates language and content to support students' achievement of English language proficiency and meet state academic standards. All EL instruction will be aligned to grade-level standards, and all grade-level instruction will include supports that allow access and promote language acquisition.

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

- EL licensed teachers to 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 programs with the district's English literacy curricula, Minnesota's ELD Standards, and Minnesota state content standards.

The EL teacher participates in mainstream curriculum writing and lesson planning, focusing on language scaffolding and targeted supports. Instruction focuses on developing English communication and academic language skills through listening, speaking, reading, and writing for success in school. The WIDA language proficiency standards support the mainstream curriculum. Along with EL instruction, students receive content-area assistance or education as coordinated by the EL teacher with the general classroom teachers. Staff collaborates to implement the LIEP as shown below:

Administrators: All building principals prioritize and clarify that teachers integrate language and content in all contexts. They must align their instruction to grade-level content and English language development standards. Principals support new multilingual learner programming through professional development, clustering/placement decisions, commitment to equity, hiring of multilingual/multicultural staff, and supporting diversity/multiculturalism. Principals provide collaboration time for EL teachers, bilingual liaisons/EAs, and classroom teachers to work together.

Mainstream Teachers: All mainstream teachers receive ongoing professional development on integrating language and content, providing language support, and integrating culturally responsive pedagogy. Teachers identify language objectives for every lesson, including language forms, functions, and target vocabulary. Classroom teachers collaborate with EL and bilingual liaisons to provide emotional, linguistic, and

academic support for new multilingual learners. All mainstream teachers meet with the grade-level EL teacher once every two weeks through a virtual video meeting. Teaching teams discuss student well-being, academic achievement, language development, and shared learning targets and supports. Teachers will also receive professional development on integrating home languages into instruction. Strategies include using bilingual texts, pre-teaching resources, and bridging charts.

EL Teachers: All EL teachers align their instruction to grade-level expectations and learning standards from ELA, Math, Science, or Social Studies. EL Teachers advocate for new multilingual learners and families. They coordinate schedules and support services for new multilingual learners.

Social Worker/Counselor: Social Workers/Counselors work with new multilingual families to provide needed support services (e.g., translation, interpretation, community resources, etc.).

Program Models

The following program models are the main modes of instruction in Higher Ground Academy's EL program:

- A) **Push-in instruction** serves intermediate and advanced students in situations where coteaching is impossible. Ideally, push-in occurs when students work in small-group instruction (in any content area).
- B) **Pull-out instruction** is used for beginner/newcomer students and is aligned with grade-level education. Students are always kept from the core, large-group instruction. Pull-out only occurs during independent reading time or intervention time.

Timeline of Services:

Level 1: Entering. Students in grades K-12 receive 60 min each day of pull-out intensive English instruction in a separate classroom. Students will also be supported through scaffolding techniques in mainstream classrooms so that each student can access the content.

Level 2: Beginning. Students in grades K-12 receive 60 min each day of pull-out intensive English instruction in a separate space. Students will also be supported through scaffolding techniques in mainstream classrooms so that each student can access the content.

Level 3: Developing. In grades K-12, students receive co-taught core classes and ILP-specific EL strategies. Students will also be supported through scaffolding techniques in mainstream classrooms so that each student can access the content.

Level 4: Expanding. In grades K-12, students receive co-taught core classes and ILP-specific EL strategies. Students will also be supported through scaffolding techniques in mainstream classrooms so that each student can access the content.

Levels 1-4: The EL Specialist will coach mainstream teachers to incorporate EL strategies within their classes and implement the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) model for 9th-12th

graders where each student has an ILP based on their schedule. ILP's will include specific items below based on each student's needs:

Bilingual Seals Heritage Language: According to the Minnesota Department of Education, ***heritage language programming*** aims to develop proficiency in a language spoken by the students' relatives, ancestors, or community members. Students may have some level of proficiency within the language(s). Higher Ground Academy's program will be school-based and consist of 1-2 hours per week of instruction. We will utilize community experts who hope to see students retain their heritage language and culture. Bilingual Seals is an AP language class that celebrates home languages within the school setting and new language learning. Any student is welcome to participate, regardless of gifted and talented abilities. This class uses talk-read-talk-write strategies in addition to gifted and talented pedagogies. The instruction occurs via asynchronous and in-person support, with parents, guardians, and multilingual staff as primary coaches. Bilingual seals utilize ***heritage language programming*** and encourage students to study another language.

Programming for Recently Arrived English Learners/Newcomers

Please see Appendix A for detailed information about how our district identifies and serves new-to-country students.

Long Term English Learners (LTEL)

Although there is no official definition for LTEL identification, students who have been officially classified as EL for at least five years may be considered LTEL. Since students in this category often have oral proficiency in English, we focus on literacy skills, especially writing, across the curriculum to ensure their academic success.

In our district, these LTEL supports may include an identified cohort with optional meetings, time to work with a peer mentor, optional before and after-school resource opportunities, quarterly meetings with a counselor to discuss academic trajectory options, and an assigned teacher advisor with specific training in identifying rigorous coursework and post-secondary options for LTELs.

Staffing to Support Students with EL Status

The district employs 1 EL teacher for every 45 students to deliver effective programming and services schoolwide. All EL teachers will hold a current tiered Minnesota K-12 English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching license. Ongoing professional development around supporting the needs of students with EL status and their families is required of all EL teachers, content teachers, and paraprofessionals who work with EL-identified students, which may include the annual Minnesota English Learners Education Conference (MELEd) or school-wide EL professional learning.

All teachers are responsible for designing and delivering instruction that meets the needs of all students, including ELs. They are also accountable for creating education to be delivered by paraprofessionals. At Higher Ground Academy, on-site ELL teachers provide K-12 pull-out services. Kindergarten-12th grade students receive pull-out instruction from licensed ELL teachers in person.

Assessment and Ongoing Identification Procedures

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

1. Determine the English language proficiency needs of 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 supports.

Transitioning students from one year to the next

The EL teachers will evaluate 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.
- The student may exit the EL program if ACCESS results show a 4.5 composite with one domain lower than 3.5. However, students may remain in the EL program only if staff can provide evidence that the student needs continued support in the domain in which the student scored below 3.5 (listening, speaking, reading, or writing). Staff will establish additional criteria and measures to justify the student's continued placement in the EL program. The following other steps could be used:
 - ❖ Speaking: Minnesota Modified Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (MN SOLOM)
 - ❖ Writing: Test of Emerging Academic English (TEAE) Writing Rubric
 - ❖ WIDA MODEL for listening, speaking, reading, and writing

Program Evaluation and Adjustment

A committee will be formed and meet annually to discuss the multilingual education program and the current needs of the students, their families, and their communities. This committee will represent all stakeholders, including students, parents, community members, grade-level/content teachers, administrators, multilingual learner teachers, and support staff. This committee will focus on analyzing the program components and student progress based on various levels of assessments and collecting parent input.

Students are assessed annually to ensure appropriate EL services are being provided. These assessments include ACCESS testing for all students receiving EL instruction each spring. Additionally, the teacher monitors progress in all four language domains. Using this data, classroom and EL teachers decide how to serve the students best. The data collected from each student is confidential.

The district meets annually to review data related to current and exited English learners to:

- Use data available from the state (ACCESS, Progress Indicator, MCA, Graduation, Demographic, etc.) to improve programming and instruction.
- Identify locally available data (student work, formative assessments, perception data, etc.)
- Differentiate analysis for particular groups (LTEL, SLIFE, Former EL)

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 access the grade level curriculum fully) 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 call or send a notification letter to the family (in a language and format accessible to the family) within 30 calendar days. The letter will explain the following:

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

Monitoring Exited Students

Students who exited from EL services are monitored for two years after their exit. If, at any point during these two years, it is decided by a team (including, at a minimum, a core teacher, EL teacher, the student and student's parents, and administrative representation) that the student should again receive EL services, based on data/evidence of an EL need, the district can rescreen a student utilizing the WIDA Screener. The screener's results will be analyzed similarly to those of a new student, and if the student is found to be eligible for services based on those scores, they may receive EL services again.

Family and Community Communication Procedures

Our district values transparency with families and the community and accommodates their preferred modes of communication. They are notified via multiple modes to ensure they are aware of their right to request it at any time:

- The plan is available on our district's English learner program page.
- Enrollment staff hand EL Program brochures to families when an MNLS reports a language other than English.
- Classroom teachers explain and hand the LIEP plan to families at parent/teacher conferences. Interpreters are available.
- We send text messages to families with a link to the website, which includes resources, contact information, and our LIEP plan.
- EL staff do home visits and phone calls with interpreters to promote student success, share educational materials, refer families to local resources, and provide EL program information.

- We solicit input on the program, services, and updates to the LIEP plan during at least one of our Parent Advisory Committee meetings annually.

Families and their broader communities are integral to our framework, mission, and vision. Creating a positive relationship with families builds trust that we will best serve their children. When we meaningfully partner with families and communities, we can:

- Involve them in their child's education
- Empower them to become active participants in using strategies to assist their children
- Build a greater understanding of EL programming and its supports
- Bolster community understanding of the process and involvement in assisting schools to create an EL program responsive to the ever-changing academic needs of multilingual children and their families.

To match the increased focus on meaningful family and community engagement called for by ESSA, each school incorporates professional development for staff to promote culturally sophisticated and welcoming environments for families and community partners at sites. In partnership with the EL Department, educators have opportunities to meaningfully strengthen family and community partnerships and be a welcoming environment for all families.

Parent/teacher conferences: Our district recognizes the importance of trained interpretation rather than using family members. Interpreters are available for families during meetings. A bilingual liaison contacts the family to arrange the conference time and day. Schools make every effort to have a quiet location for these conferences to allow the interpretation to be heard. EL teachers report to parents of multilingual students using report cards, and a conference format is used throughout each parent-teacher conference.

Beyond parent-teacher conferences, staff works with schools to host two-way communication events and activity nights. The following activities build community and allow us to share information and gain feedback about multilingual programming, assessments, and resources for families:

- Families and staff call upon the school's cultural liaisons to facilitate ongoing communication.
- Annual EL parent meetings are held thrice yearly to welcome families into the building, solicit parent feedback on the program, and answer questions.
- EL staff share information about the assessment, classification, placement, program, services, and any changes proposed for their children in the EL program.
- Parents also receive information about their rights.
- Other topics that can be shared with families include community activities, extracurricular options, academic support/homework help, state testing, school calendar and events, bilingual seal testing, the parent portal, vaccinations, free and reduced-price lunch (FRPL) forms, legal support resources, etc.

Liaison and home language outreach for school activities and events: It is a federal requirement to provide families access to information. Schools should provide interpreters for all school events. Bilingual liaisons should proactively contact parents to

explain upcoming events and encourage participation. When it is determined a family needs interpretation services, liaisons are called in to assist with the registration process. Liaisons are also available for conferences and school events. The language line can be used with families if an interpreter for a particular language is unavailable. All letters home are translated into the languages necessary for our multilingual students and their families. Parent surveys will be conducted annually to determine if current modes of communication continue to be the most effective practices for parents.

Parent Advisory Committee: Our district's Parent Advisory Committee includes parents representing our diverse student population to ensure district-wide decisions are informed by the diversity of our families voices. Additionally, parents are invited to participate in other district focus groups and committees.

Appendix A: Programming for Recently Arrived English Learners (RAEL)/Newcomers

Definition of RAEL (from MDE) and Newcomers

A recently arrived English learner (RAEL) is a K-12 student identified as an English learner in MN and enrolled in a school in one of the 50 states in the U.S. or the District of Columbia for less than 12 months. A student can only be identified as RAEL one time. (RAEL-identified students are uniquely included in accountability under ESSA. See the MDE RAEL definition for specifics. “Newcomer” is more broadly defined as new-to-district and new-to-country students.

Identification of math and literacy skills in home language and English

All newcomer students may be assessed in their home language for reading proficiency and math, as determined by the EL teacher.

Orientation for New Multilingual Students and Families

Initial enrollment: All families new to the district should go to the main office to register for school. The main office will have a list of interpreters to call when needed. Families will complete paperwork, and students will be placed in a school and given a start date within three days of enrollment, with or without transcripts.

Home visit option: EL teachers may offer a home visit for newcomer families. The family will be asked beforehand if they want to receive a home visit from the EL teacher. If they agree, the EL teacher will arrange a time to visit and may bring staff, including a bilingual liaison, school social worker, EL coordinator, and outreach liaison.

Supporting Initial Acclimation to School: EL teachers and bilingual liaisons will meet newcomer students on the first day of attendance. Students will receive a building tour. They will be introduced to a language buddy with the same lunch period as the student. Students will receive help at the end of the day on getting home (catching the bus, meeting parents, walking, etc.) from the main office for the first week of school. The EL teacher will ensure the student has met the social worker/counselor and received school supplies as needed. The EL teacher will advocate for the student if they need anything additional to participate in school activities (PE clothing, tennis shoes, boots, winter gear, etc.) If available, the district will try to provide curriculum materials in the student’s home language (Everyday Math, anchor texts, independent reading texts).

Arrival Materials: All elementary newcomers will receive a picture chart that identifies their teachers/administration and provides essential data about the school (bilingual liaisons’ phone number, map, school address, attendance policy). Middle school newcomers will receive the school planner/handbook and a copy of their schedules. All newcomers will receive a supply list translated into the family’s home language, information on free and reduced-priced lunch applications (FRPL), busing information, health immunizations, 19 free clinics, and a parent portal (computer and app). Parents will receive help from the bilingual liaisons as needed.

Academic program

Elementary EL-specific Progress Report: Newcomers will receive an EL-specific progress report each trimester. This progress report is created for parents and students in their primary language(s).

Newcomer Plan: Newcomers will receive a “Newcomer Plan” that includes their schedule and identified language supports throughout the day. The EL teacher develops the plan in collaboration with the classroom teacher. The Plan is shared with all the students’ teachers and support staff, including bilingual EAs, liaisons, and the principal.

Placement and Scheduling: Schools will include EL teacher input for student placement. The EL teacher will create the student's schedule with the school administration. Ideally, the student will be placed in a classroom with a student from the same language background or another student receiving EL instruction. It is recommended that schools cluster students receiving EL instruction; therefore, the newcomer student can join a clustered classroom.

Counseling/social work support: After the EL teacher introduces the newcomer student to the school social worker/counselor, the social worker/counselor will follow up with the student and family to determine additional needs (e.g., trauma support, necessities, community orientation, etc.).

Additional academic services (Special Education, Tier 2/3 support, Speech, etc.): Newcomer students identified for other services need to receive those services. EL-placed students must also receive Special Education/Speech services following their IEPs. Translating IEP documents should be a top priority when a student arrives so that services can be provided.

Multi-Tiered System of Support

Tier 2 Support: Newcomer students should receive Tier 2 services if a literacy/numeracy need is identified.

Tier 3 Support: Newcomer students should receive Tier 3 services if a literacy/numeracy need is identified and the EL teacher recommends appropriate support for the language.

Additional Instructional Supports: As other multilingual learners, newcomers may be referred to targeted services after school program options. EL teacher input should be included in the decision-making process.

School-based support services: Schools will develop their school-based services to assist newcomer students in integrating into mainstream culture and maintaining their home culture.

Physical area in the school for working with peers: Schools should try to identify a "safe space" where new multilingual learners can go when they need to take a break or feel like there is a "home" for them within the school. Language fatigue and culture shock

will tire students. Teachers should also be aware that students will often need even more understanding after the "honeymoon" period (in which students are excited about their new home and school). Even though the Newcomer student has been in school for several months, they will still need emotional and academic support.

Home language support: Whenever possible and when the EL teacher determines a need, bilingual liaisons/EAs will work to provide home language support for Newcomer students in classrooms. They can pre-teach, provide bridging charts, translate materials, provide support in the home language, and interpret during lessons. Before scheduling bilingual liaison/EA support in the classroom, the EL teacher, classroom/content area teacher, and the bilingual liaison/EA will meet to determine roles and responsibilities.

Visual support in schools: Schools should have translated signs around the building that provide a welcoming environment for all students and families, including especially new multilingual learners. Classroom teachers should make every effort to have bilingual labels posted in the classrooms and have pictures/books that represent children and families from that student's home culture.