

English Learners (ELs) in North Dakota A Step-by-Step Guide

ALL DISTRICTS

School Board Policy

All districts must have a policy approved by the school board for providing alternative language services in compliance with North Dakota Century Code (NDCC) chapter 15.1-38. An annual assurance of this policy is issued by the district in the MIS01 Fall Report. A [sample policy - GABAA](#) is available through policy services of the North Dakota School Boards Association (NDSBA) or on the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) website.

EL Program Director

All districts must assign administrative responsibility of compliance with the Federal civil rights laws and ND state laws to a program director with an administrative credential who has authority to allocate resources. This administrator is identified in the [STARS MIS01 Fall Report](#) each year.

EL Coordinator/Teacher

All districts must identify a qualified program representative who serves as a contact for English learner student services, EL data, and is the certified test administrator for the English language proficiency (ELP) assessments. This individual must hold an EL or bilingual endorsement or degree and be certified to administer the WIDA assessments applicable to the district's needs.

EL Student Identification Plan

All districts must develop a plan to identify students who meet the definition of an English learner based on the State Identification Criteria and Procedures. For assistance, including the Federal and State definition of an EL, refer to the [Guidance on Identification and Screening](#) or the [MIS01 Fall Report Guidance](#). The district's EL Student Identification Plan is documented annually in the MIS01 Fall Report in the STARS.

EL Student Assessment Assurances

All districts must annually assure through the MIS01 Fall Report they will identify potential English learners using the ND ELP screener assessments and all identified ELs will participate in the annual ND ELP assessment and the annual NDSA for academic achievement.

Home Language Survey (HLS)

Every child enrolled in North Dakota schools must have on file a [Home Language Survey](#) or [Student Information Form](#) completed by a parent/guardian. If a language other than English is indicated and the student does not have documented academic success, the student must be screened to determine their English language proficiency (ELP) using the ND ELP screener.

English Language Proficiency Screener Assessments

The state-approved English language proficiency screener assessments are the WIDA Screener for students in grades K-12. Test administrators must be certified to administer the ELP screeners. For more information see the NDDPI's [Identification and Screening Guidance](#) or the [WIDA](#) website.

Parent Notification of Eligibility

Parents/guardians must be notified, (to the extent practicable, in a language/format they understand) of their child's participation in the EL screener, whether the child qualifies for EL services, qualifies to continue receiving EL services, or has attained EL proficiency and exited the program within 30 days of enrollment. If a student enrolls after the start of the year, identification must be completed within 30 days and notification must be sent within two weeks of the student's identification. A sample [Parent Notification of Eligibility](#) is available on the NDDPI website.

SCHOOLS WITH IDENTIFIED ELs

Placement in EL Services

Eligible students must be provided a language instruction educational program (LIEP) by a qualified and effective EL endorsed teacher. LIEP models are listed and described in the [Programming Guidance](#) on the NDDPI website.

Enter Students in the ND STARS

EL students must be identified in the [State Automated Reporting System \(STARS\)](#) for the district to receive appropriate funding and to be registered for the annual ELP assessment (ACCESS for ELLs). This can be done by identifying the student in PowerSchool which then transfers the information to STARS (if the [vertical reporting](#) function is turned on). Be sure to verify the students are identified in STARS. All portions of the EL enrollment must be completed and up to date for the district to be eligible for funding. State funding is determined using the ADM calculation and weighted factors for ELs.

EL Program Plan or “Lau” Plan

Districts must have an equal access plan on how they will provide an LIEP for students identified as English learners. A high-quality Lau, or EL Program Plan, should minimally include a description of:

- EL student identification procedures,
- Assessment procedures for ELs,
- The LIEP/program model(s) implemented by qualified/effective staff,
- EL program exit procedures and criteria,
- Monitoring procedures for students exiting, and
- Program/student evaluation plans.

The plan may also include: basic district demographics, definitions and acronyms used in the plan, the district’s approved school board EL policy, and parent involvement opportunities. A template of an [EL Program \(Lau\) Plan](#) is available on the NDDPI website.

ACCESS for ELLs

All ELs in grades K-12 must participate in the state ELP assessment (currently WIDA ACCESS for ELLs) each year. The assessment measures student progress toward attaining English proficiency. The test window for North Dakota runs from mid-January through the mid-late February. For more information visit the [ACCESS for ELLs webpage](#) on the NDDPI website.

Individualized Language Plan (ILP)

All ELs must have an annually updated Individualized Language Plan (ILP) created in collaboration with a team of educators including the EL teacher, classroom teacher, an administrator and parent. Parent(s) must minimally be invited, but every effort should be made to include parents in the process. The ILP documents a student’s English language proficiency growth compared to the expected trajectory goals, assessment scores/growth, and identifies steps for ensuring the student is making progress throughout the year in attaining English proficiency. The plan also lists any accommodations or modifications the student requires, as well as goals for the year.

Continuously Monitor ILP Goals

Schools must continuously monitor the ILP throughout the school year and make instructional adjustments as needed. Schools are encouraged to use spring ACCESS scores and trajectory data to determine whether the student is on track for making progress in their English language development.

Professional Development

Take advantage of any professional development offered by the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) or other organizations on instructional strategies for ELs or cultural awareness. The EL population is a diverse group that is growing and changing rapidly. It is important for all educators of ELs to stay informed of the latest research, information, and methods of instruction. Title III districts are required to provide annual training on EL instructional topics for **ALL** staff.