

The Westford School Committee seeks to ensure that our students who are English learners become literate in the English language. The law defines an “English learner” as a child who does not speak English or whose native language is not English and who is not currently able to perform ordinary classwork in English. This policy uses the acronym ELL to designate English learners. To ensure that ELL students become literate in English, Westford Public Schools shall:

- Implement ELL instruction aligned with the principles of high-quality programming.
- Create partnership among Westford Public Schools, families, students, and the broader community.
- Adhere to Federal and state laws and regulations.
- Be accountable for educational results while allowing for innovation and flexibility in the design and implementation of quality.

The School Committee recognizes the importance of establishing an environment for ELL students that celebrates diversity and learning, and promotes purposeful interaction and authentic communication between and among students and adults in a classroom setting. The School Committee also recognizes the importance of using research, evaluation, and assessment in the development and implementation of ELL programs that are effective and evidence-based.

The Superintendent, or designee, shall ensure that a comprehensive, system-wide plan for the education of ELL students is designed, implemented and maintained consistent with this policy and in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Such plan shall address:

- The assessment, identification, and placement of students
- Family and community involvement
- Program-related elements including curriculum and instruction, student support services, resources and materials, program evaluation, monitoring and record keeping
- Professional development of staff in methods and best practice when teaching ELL students

ELL Identification

In order to identify ELL students, the Westford Public Schools shall administer a home language survey (HLS) to the parents of all new students entering grades Pre-K through Grade 12 in the district. Every newly enrolled student whose HLS indicates that a language other than English is spoken at home must then be screened for English language proficiency, using an approved assessment tool.

ELL Programming

Unless a waiver is granted, ELL students shall be provided with language support services until assessment data indicates they have reached a level of English proficiency which would allow for full participation and success in non-ELL Westford classrooms.

Monitoring of Education Progress

To ensure the proper monitoring of educational progress of ELL students in learning English and other academic subjects, the Superintendent, or designee, shall ensure the appropriate tests are administered at least annually. Tests shall include: (i) a standardized nationally-normed written test of academic subject matter given in English, which shall be administered to ELL students in grades 2 and higher, and (ii) a nationally-normed test of English proficiency in grades Kindergarten and higher. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education shall specify the tests used for assessing ELL performance.

In addition, the school district shall assess English learners' mastery of academic standards on a regular basis.

Former English Learner (FEL)

Students who at one time were classified and reported as ELL, but who subsequently met Westford English language proficiency criteria, are designated as Former English Learner (FEL). Federal civil rights law requires that FEL students' academic progress is monitored, and NCLB requires that FEL students receiving Title III-funded services are monitored for four years.

Communication with Parents/Legal Guardians

Report cards and other school information shall be sent to parents and guardians of ELL students in the same manner and frequency as is sent to other parents and guardians and, to the maximum extent possible, in a language understandable to the parent and guardians.

Massachusetts General Law References:

M. G. L. c. 71A, §1 et seq., Massachusetts' English Language Acquisition Law
603 C.M.R. 14.00 Massachusetts' Education of English Learners Regulations
Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. §2000d et seq., 34 C.F.R. Part 100
Equal Educational Opportunity Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. §1701 et seq. Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C. §6811 et seq.
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Guidance on Identification, Assessment, Placement, and Reclassification of English Learners. October, 2017.

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WESTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Westford, Massachusetts