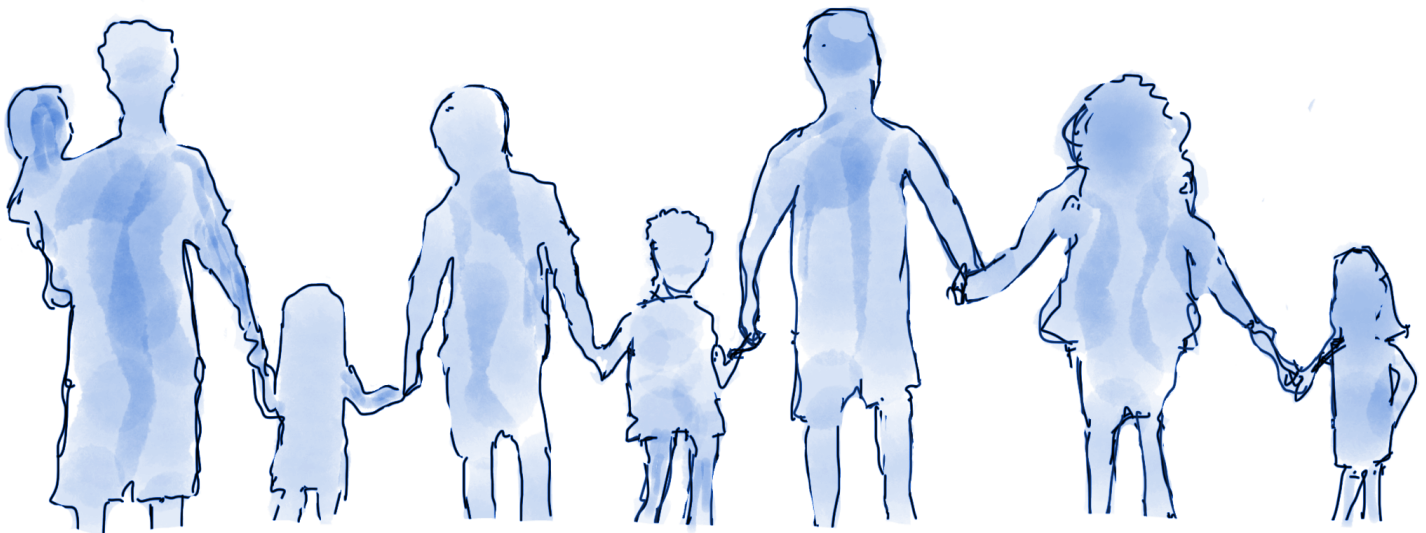




Wilmington Public Schools

Handbook for Families of English Learners



English Language Education ELE Department
Wilmington Public Schools
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*This document is posted on the WPS ELE Website
www.wpsk12.com - Our District - English Language Learners*

Welcome!

Dear Families,

Welcome to Wilmington Public Schools! Wilmington is committed to equity for all learners and provides instruction that honors and draws upon the cultural and linguistic assets of students and families. We are proud to be a multilingual community of learners who speak over thirty-five home languages.

This handbook contains information about the district's English Language Education (ELE) program and provides community resources and ways to help your child improve their social and academic English language skills.

Wilmington's English Language Education (ELE) program model is Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) which provides language instruction for multilingual learners in grades PreK-12. The goal of the program is to provide quality, research-based English language instruction that ensures the academic success of English learners (ELs) at each stage of language development.

To learn more about the ELE program, visit Wilmington's website:

www.wpsk12.com. Go to "Our District" then "English Language Learners."

If you have any questions that are not addressed in this handbook, or if you would like this handbook in another language, please contact the school's ESL teacher or the ELE Curriculum Team Leader, Colleen Billings colleen.billings@wpsk12.com

Identification and Placement

During the registration process, parents/guardians complete a Home Language Survey¹ to indicate language(s) spoken in the home. This information is required by state law, and it is essential for schools to provide meaningful instruction for all students.

When the parent/guardian reports a language other than English, the district sends home a program notification letter* explaining the ELE program and the district's obligation to assess the student's English language proficiency. A licensed educator with SEI Endorsement administers the WIDA Screener. For students in grades 1-12, the assessment measures English proficiency in listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Kindergarten students enter school in the fall, participate in the speaking and listening tests of the WIDA Kindergarten Screener, but may test again in the spring as part of the progress-monitoring process. Educators use the Pre K identification Tool for students in preschool, and students are screened again when entering kindergarten.

The results of the WIDA Screener determines whether a student is an English learner and if they are eligible to participate in Wilmington's English language support program, Sheltered English Immersion (SEI). Families receive a placement letter from the ESL teacher with the WIDA Screener results, an explanation of the instructional program, and the right to opt out² of the SEI program. Although all multilingual students interact in a language other than English, not all multilingual students are identified as English learners.

English Language Instruction

English learners in grades K-12 receive direct English language instruction (ESL) with a licensed ESL teacher. Students receive sheltered content instruction (SCI) from classroom teachers who have earned the SEI endorsement for licensure. For students in grades K-5, ESL instruction may take place in small groups inside or outside the regular classroom. For students in grades 6-12, ESL instruction takes place in an ESL classroom, and Wilmington High School Students receive credit for these classes. The amount of weekly language instruction English learners receive is based on their English proficiency level. Students with beginning levels of English proficiency will receive language support more frequently than students with higher English proficiency. For example, a student who is new to English receives 8-10 weekly blocks

¹ This [link](#) provides forms in multiple languages, such as the Home Language Survey, parent notification letters and the opt out form.

² Parents have the right to decline English language instruction (ESL) at any time by signing an opt-out form.

of ESL instruction and a student with intermediate to advanced English proficiency may receive 4 or 5 ESL classes weekly.

English learners in preschool are immersed in a classroom environment designed for language development. Preschool teachers use specific sensory, interactive and graphic support during lessons and routines, and consult weekly with the ESL teacher who is an expert in linguistics and language acquisition.

English Language Curriculum

The ESL curriculum used in Wilmington applies Massachusetts State Frameworks, and the 2020 WIDA English Language Development. ESL teachers currently use the National Geographic curriculum series *Reach Higher* (K-5), and *Time Zones* (grades 6-12) to provide units and lessons that support the rapid acquisition of English proficiency. When planning instruction and assessment, ESL teachers consider each student's level of English language proficiency to create appropriate and engaging activities that provide connections to rigorous content instruction.

English Language Proficiency Assessment

Massachusetts is a member of the WIDA Consortium. This is an organization that provides a comprehensive approach to supporting instruction and assessment for multilingual learners. All English learners in Massachusetts participate in WIDA ACCESS, an English language proficiency assessment tool that measures progress in acquiring listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills in English. The assessment is paper-based for kindergarten students and mostly computer-based for students in grades 1-12. ACCESS usually takes place in January to February and is administered by an ESL teacher or licensed content area teacher holding the SEI endorsement and a certificate of WIDA ACCESS training.

The results of WIDA ACCESS indicate English proficiency levels on a scoring scale of 1 to 6 with level 6 being equivalent to language skills of a native English speaker. Results arrive to schools by the first week of May, and schools send results home soon after. English learners returning to school each fall will also receive a yearly Notification letter with WIDA ACCESS assessment results. Teachers use ACCESS proficiency scores, State Standards, and WIDA Standards to plan appropriate and challenging instruction and assessment.

Exiting the Sheltered English Immersion Program

Students exit the SEI program when they achieve a 3.9 combined literacy score and an overall ACCESS score of 4.2. Each year, students are expected to demonstrate progress,

but learning happens at various rates, and there is no designated time limit to the Sheltered English Immersion program. Schools provide additional support for students to be confident, successful learners. After meeting the WIDA ACCESS exit score criteria, the school will notify the parents that their child has been reclassified from an English learner (EL/ELL) to a former English learner (FLEP/FEL). Schools will monitor former English learners' progress for four years after program exit as required by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Family Resources

Supporting Newcomers and Families in Wilmington [LINK](#)

This is an excellent resource for families who have recently moved to the United States and Wilmington. The document contains information on adjustment, housing, clothing, health, food, and immigrant resources. It also provides contact information for employment assistance and mental health services.

Multilingual Library

Wilmington values home and heritage cultures and promotes development of students' home languages. Each school library has multilingual books to check out or borrow. Many have been written in English and another language, such as Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Arabic, Hindi, Vietnamese, French, Russian, Croatian, Polish, Urdu, and Gujarati. These beautiful books tell stories from around the world. Please feel free to borrow at any time. Reading is a way for children to acquire new words and learn about the world, other cultures, and themselves..

Information about Adult Education programs and other helpful websites

A digital copy of this parent handbook is available on the Wilmington Public Schools ELE Website under "ESL Program Forms" [LINK](#)

Massachusetts Family Literacy Consortium (MFLC) [LINK](#)

Middlesex Community College ESL Classes for Adults [LINK](#)

Tips for Parents/Guardians of Multilingual Students [LINK](#)

Dictionary.com – a basic translator in many languages. [LINK](#)

Colorín Colorado - Website that provides information and resources for supporting multilingual learners [LINK](#)

Multilingual English Conversation Group

If you are interested in meeting others in the Wilmington Public Schools community and want to practice using English in a comfortable place, please contact Colleen

Billings at colleen.billings@wpsk12.com This is a great way to meet other multilingual parents, many of whom have help and advice to offer!

Community Resources in and Near Wilmington [LINK](#)

On this page, you can find links to the local library, information on how to join sports teams, a list of places to worship (churches, synagogues, mosques, temples). There are also links to the local YMCA for exercise and social activities and to places that offer music lessons and dance.

Adult ESL Classes

- Adult ESL English Classes at The New England Bible Church [LINK](#)
- Memorial Hall List of Resources for ESL Classes [LINK](#)
- Grace Chapel ESL Classes [LINK](#)
- English at Large ESL Classes [LINK](#)

Helpful Websites for Children Learning English

- Many Things - vocabulary with pictures [LINK](#)
- A4ESL- vocabulary games in many languages [LINK](#)
- - Sesamestreet.org - vocabulary and phonics games with Sesame Street characters [LINK](#)
- Ben's Guide. - helpful information on learning U.S. Symbols [LINK](#)

Community Service Opportunities for High School Students

Students in grades 9-12 who have demonstrated fluency in two languages may apply to become a student interpreter. Students interested in learning about other languages and cultures may also apply to volunteer. For more information, students can email Mrs. Billings at colleen.billings@wpsk12.com .

ESL Initialisms

EL - English learner or English language learner; English learners, or ELs, receive support for developing advanced English language proficiency.

ELE - English language education; programs include Sheltered English Instruction, Two-way Bilingual Education, Transitional Bilingual Education,

ESL - English as a Second Language or direct English language instruction.

FEL - Former English learner. These students met the ACCESS score exit criteria and have exited the ESL program. Former English learners do not participate in yearly WIDA ACCESS assessments.

MCAS - The state assessment system for mathematics, English language arts, science, and civics.

ML - Multilingual learner; students who understand, respond to, and consistently interact in a language other than or in addition to English; **WIDA ACCESS** - the English language proficiency assessment used to measure English learners' progress in acquiring English language skills in listening, reading, speaking, and writing

SEI - Sheltered English Immersion; Wilmington's English language support program; ESL and Sheltered content instruction

WIDA - (formerly known as World class Instructional Design and Assessment) an organization that provides a comprehensive approach to supporting, teaching, and assessing multilingual learners