

AARI & English Learners



OaklandSchools

Adolescent Accelerated
Reading Initiative

Is the Adolescent Accelerated Reading Initiative an appropriate intervention for English Learners (ELs) and Experienced ELs (EELs)?

Who are ELs?

The term “English learner” (EL), when used with respect to an individual, means an individual —

- (A) who is aged 3 through 21;
- (B) who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school;
- (C)
 - (i) who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English;
 - (ii)(I) who is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas; and
 - (II) who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; or
 - (iii) who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and
- (D) whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual —
 - (i) the ability to meet the challenging State academic standards;
 - (ii) the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or
 - (iii) the opportunity to participate fully in society. (ESEA Section 8101(20))

Who are EELs/LTEs?

The term “Experience English Learner” is an asset based replacement for the term “Long Term English Learner”. The term “Experienced Multilinguals” was coined by educator Tan Huynh. Huynh coined this term to move away from deficit-based language (like “limited,” “long-term,” or “delayed”) and toward an assets-based approach that recognizes these students' extensive linguistic experience, maturity, and proficiency in multiple languages. The term highlights that these students are not simply failing to learn English, but are instead “experienced” in navigating school systems and communicating in multiple languages over many years. However, state and federal legislation still refers to these students as “Long-term English Learners”. A Long-term English Learner (LTE) is a formal educational classification given to students who have been enrolled in a school in the United States for more than six years and have not met the criteria to exit the ESL/Title III Program. Many Long-term English Learners have lived most or all of their

lives in the United States and are often orally bilingual and sound like native English speakers. However, LTELs lack academic proficiency in English and perform below grade level in reading and writing and, as a result, struggle in all content areas ([Resource Guide: Accountability for English Learners under the ESEA, 2017](#)).

What are ESSA Requirements for LTELs/EELs?

- ESSA requires LEAs to report LTEL data
- Starting in 2017/2018 Michigan LEAs began reporting LTEL data to MDE
- As of the 2017/2018 school year, no accountability measures have been attached to LTEL data

What is AARI?

The Adolescent Accelerated Reading Initiative (AARI) is a Tier 2/3 (MTSS) short-term, intensive intervention that accelerates reading comprehension and critical thinking in informational text. AARI is for general and special education students in grades three through twelve and English Learners with a minimum overall WIDA proficiency score of 3.0. The instructional framework is built on evidence-based strategies and culture-centered research.

How does AARI support ELs and LTELs/EELs?

- AARI targets reading comprehension skills
- Oral language (dialogue/student discourse) is used as entry point to reading comprehension
- Mastery of academic language happens through discussion-based learning using informational text
- Academic English language proficiency develops as a result of empowering emphasis on oral language development as a vehicle for teaching reading comprehension
- The Transition to Text component of AARI makes explicit connections between reading comprehension strategies and content area reading, creating a transfer of skills

AARI is a powerful reading intervention suitable for LTELs which increases critical thinking, reading comprehension, and access to content area reading. AARI improves the skills necessary for LTELs/EELs to achieve higher WIDA scores and overall academic success.

Are there any special considerations for ELs and LTELs/EELs?

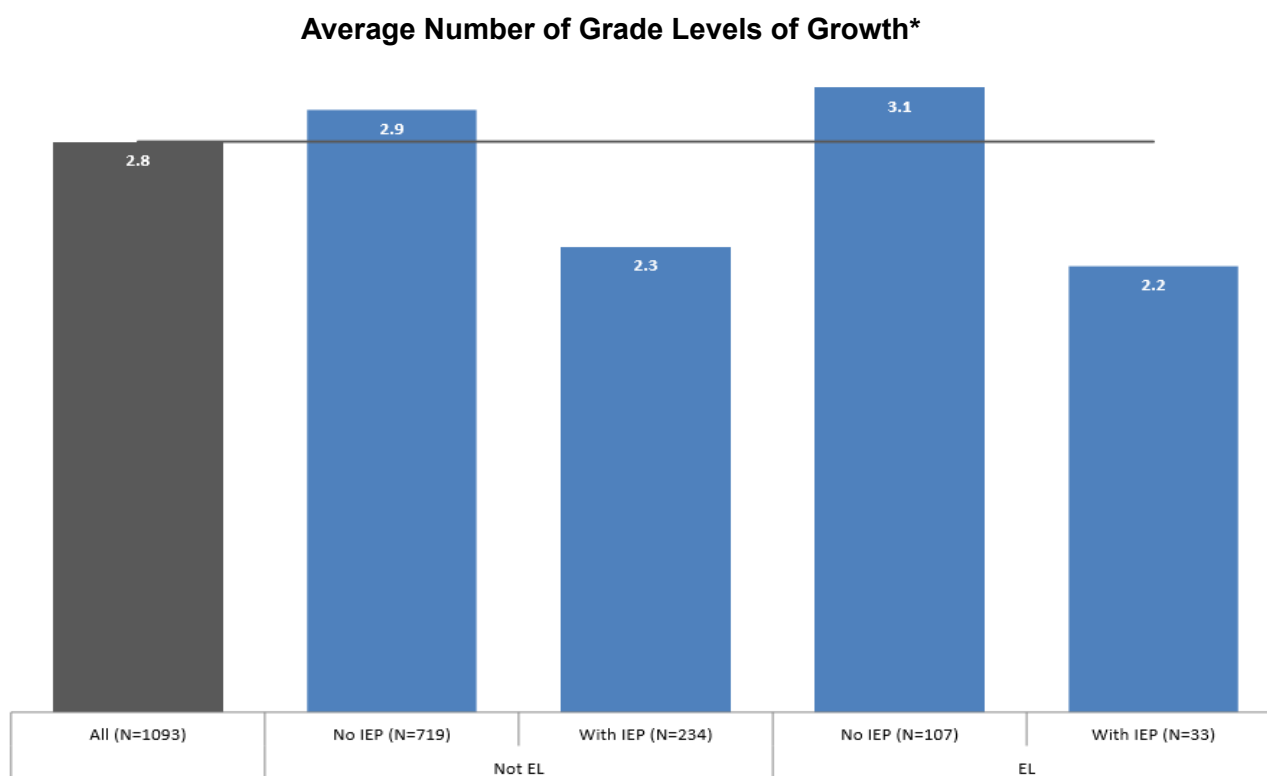
- In addition to [AARI required elements for successful implementation](#), schools considering AARI for LTELs/EELs should also consider the following:
 - ELs and LTELs/EELs should have a WIDA overall proficiency/composite score of 3.0+ with (minimally) 2.5+ in every domain
 - It is not advisable to place Newcomer ELs in AARI
 - AARI teachers of ELs and LTELs/EELs should engage in purposeful planning for additional instruction of academic language, including technical and content specific vocabulary and discourse, which are needed to move LTELs/EELs to English proficiency

How might an AARI schedule be structured to include ELs and LTELs/EELs?

- If a school wants to create AARI sections with only EL or LTEL/EELs students:
 - AARI sections should be organized by language proficiency level
 - Provide academic English language development appropriate and specific to the proficiency range in each section
- If a school wants to include ELs and LTELs/EELs in existing AARI sections:
 - AARI sections may blend ELs and LTELs/EELs, general education, and special education students in a variety of different groupings based on student need and other considerations

How does data support AARI as a reading intervention for ELs and LTELs/EELs?

- **Our Research Question:** How do ELs and LTELs/EELs compare to never-ELs across the data set in QRI growth as a result of participation in AARI? Do they grow more, less, at the same rate?
- **Our Hypothesis:** ELs and LTELs/EELs participating in an AARI intervention implemented with fidelity will grow at the same rate as never-ELs or slightly accelerated



**As measured by QRI*

- **The Findings Confirmed Our Hypothesis**
 - ELs grow at similar and sometimes greater rate than Non-ELs
 - ELs with IEPs grow at similar and sometimes greater rate than Non-ELs with IEPs
- **Notes About the Data**
 - This sample includes Oakland County students only
 - The intervention groups contained ELs, LTELs/EELs, and non/never-ELs
 - 140 ELs/LTELs/EELs
 - 953 Non/never-ELs
 - Data includes groups that met for a combination of 20 - 40 weeks of intervention
 - The [Qualitative Reading Inventory](#) (QRI) is the standard assessment (diagnostic) used to report AARI pre/post growth data

Additional Information

- Funding Streams include General Fund, Title I, 31A, Title III, Section 41, Immigrant Grant, IDEA
- [2016-2019 - 2021-2025](#) AARI Data Report (NOTE: this report includes general education, special education, and English Learner student data. It has not been disaggregated by student sub-group)
- [AARI Information Document](#)
- [AARI Institute August 3-7, 2026](#)
- [Supporting Students in Special Education with AARI](#)

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