

English Learner Program

Prince William County Public Schools Office of English Learner Programs and Services

The Office of English Learner (EL) Programs and Services oversees and maintains services provided to ELs and immigrant children and youth (IY) in support of state and federal regulations. The main functions are to provide comprehensive registration services and ensure high quality school-based programs that assist ELs to reach proficiency in English, while meeting and exceeding state content standards. Central Registration Services responds to requests for information and assessment for EL Program eligibility. Instructional Services supports educators in implementing best-practices for successful EL instruction. Translation Services facilitates parent communications.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

Why was my child identified as an English Learner?

When families register a student in Prince William County Schools, they complete a Home Language Survey. When the answers to some questions indicate a language other than English, we administer a screening test. Based on the results of this English language proficiency screening test, the student may be eligible for English Learner Program Services.

What is an English Language Proficiency (ELP) Level?

An ELP level describes a student's level of English language performance in speaking, listening, reading and writing based on a VA-approved WIDA Consortium assessment. There are five levels from "Level 1- Entering" to "Level 5- Bridging". When a student reaches "Level 6- Reaching", the student no longer receives direct English Learner Program Services, but his/her academic progress is monitored by school's teachers and administrators for two years.

How was my student's ELP level determined?

Students are first identified with a WIDA MODEL test. If determined eligible for English Learner Program Services based on this initial screening, they are assessed

each year with a WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 assessment.

The Alternate ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 and the Virginia ELP Alternative Checklists are also available for eligible students. Families receive the results of these tests from the school or Central Registration Services staff where the test was administered.

When will my student be re-assessed?

The language progress of students at ELP levels 1-5 is measured in the late winter or early spring of each year as approved by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE).

When will my student exit the English Learner Program?

The VDOE establishes a proficiency criterion. Your student's school or Central Registration Services can provide you more specific information about the current criteria and your student's scores.

Can my student also be eligible for and participate in other special programs?

Yes. English Learners may be found eligible for participation in other educational programs such as gifted education services, special education services, as well as specialty, advanced, and/or nontraditional programs available at your student's school or as necessary when your student is eligible in support of advancing academics and achievement.

PWCS provides **gifted education**

services for students in grades K–12 within the framework of the Virginia "Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students." Parents or guardians may refer students for consideration for identification and placement for gifted education services. Additional information about the referral process and about gifted education services may be found at gifted.education.pwcs.edu, or call Gifted Education and Special Programs at 703.791.7400.

PWCS provides **special education**

services to students with disabilities who require specialized instruction. If you suspect that your student may have a disability affecting your student's development or academic performance, or may have a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, please contact the Director of Special Education at 703.791.7287 for further information. English learners eligible for special education services will receive it along with English language development instruction. If you have questions, please contact your student's school.

K-12 EL PROGRAM SERVICES AT SCHOOLS

How is instruction to improve English language proficiency provided to students?

We provide instruction for English language development (ELD) during English and language arts to students at ELP levels 1-5. Instruction focuses on academic content from grade level curriculum.

We provide sheltered instruction (SI) during one or more core content area classes of math, social studies, and science. Instruction assists students at ELP Levels 1-5 to become proficient while meeting state content standards.

Who provides the instruction for English Learners participating in the program?

Certified ESOL teachers and collaborating teachers certified in other content areas (e.g. Reading, English, Math, Social Studies, Science and Special Education) who are also trained in EL instruction.

What standards are utilized for instruction of English Learners?

Virginia's Department of Education joined the WIDA Consortium and adopted the five WIDA English Language Development Standards for implementation in core academic subjects. The WIDA ELD standards represent how English learners:

- 1) Communicate for social and instructional services in schools.
- 2) Communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.

For more information, please visit the WIDA website at: wida.wisc.edu

The Virginia Department of Education K-12 Standards of Learning (SOL) are implemented in both inclusionary and

English Learner-only classrooms using a sheltered instructional approach.

For more information, please visit the Virginia Department of Education's website for SOLs and testing at: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/>

What does "sheltered" mean?

Sheltered means academic instruction is specifically designed to make grade level subject matter concepts understandable to ELs while promoting their English language development.

What types of service delivery models are provided?

To maximize language and content area support, we provide the following service delivery models: Co-taught; Pull-out; EL-only; Push-in; and Inclusion.

- Co-taught = two or more teachers instructing the same group of students within the same classroom space
- Pull out = ELs removed from general education classroom for instruction
- EL-only = A class comprised only of English Learner students
- Inclusion = ELs instructed in the same class alongside general education peers
- Push-in = ELs supported individually or in small groups within the general education classroom

Can beginner learners of English earn credits?

Yes, this is an important feature of our high school EL program. Beginner learners of English earn credits, including verified credits, toward graduation while receiving support for developing academic language skills and literacy skills. The grades 9-12 math screening assessment determines transfer math credits and math course recommendation.

For more information on English Learner Programs and Services, please contact your student's school. Additional information may be found on our website at: www.pwcs.edu/departments/elprograms/services or by calling 703.791.8745.

TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION SERVICES

What language services does the county offer?

PWCS offers **free** language assistance to parents. We provide access to professional interpreters, to help our families understand important information about their child's education. We also provide translations, of many of our important documents and information, to the five most-commonly requested languages in our area— Spanish, Urdu, Arabic, Vietnamese, and Korean.

How can families get language assistance?

In person—when visiting your child's school or one of our central registration sites, you can ask for an interpreter that speaks your language. You can also point to your language using one of our language assistance posters. Our staff will immediately have an interpreter on the phone to help you. Face-to-face interpreters, for most languages, can also be obtained with prior notice.

Over the phone—If you have any questions about how to get translation or interpretation services, please call 703.791.7568.

Online—many of our documents and information are available in Spanish, Urdu, Arabic, Vietnamese, and Korean. Go to our website at www.pwcs.edu and select your language icon to see the translated documents that are available. You can also use the "Google Translate" option offering translation in more than 50 languages, to see a translation of our Website. Computerized translations are often imperfect, but can help familiarize you with information not yet translated by the school Division.